

**A-Team Meeting – April 22, 2020
Webex Webinar**

Attendance:

A-Team Reps:

Nick Schlessler (Chair and MN Rep)
Shawn Giblin (WI Rep)
Scott Gritters (IA Rep)
Matt O’Hara (IL Rep)
Matt Vitello (MO Rep)
Steve Winter (USFWS Rep)

USGS:

Jeff Houser
Jennie Sauer
Jennifer Dieck
Molly Van Appledorn
Brian Ickes
Brian Gray
Deanne Drake
Kevin Hop
Kathi Jo Jankowski
Jayme Strange
Jennifer Dieck
Nate De Jager
Teresa Newton
Kristen Bouska
Shirley Yuan

USACE:

Karen Hagerty
Dave Potter
Kat McCain
Kjetil Henderson
Marshall Plumley
Eric Hanson
Steve Gustafson
Nicole Manasco

UMRBA:

Andrew Stephenson

MN:

Megan Moore
Steve DeLain
Eric Lund
Chris Dawald

WI:

Jim Fisher
Deanne Drake

IA:

Dave Bierman

IL:

John Chick
Jim Lamer

MO:

Dave Herzog
Molly Sobotka

Introduction and Roll Call, Nick Schlessner

Time, place, and type of next meeting and approval of October A-Team meeting minutes

Next meeting will be webinar with date determined by Doodle Poll

Motion to approve minutes made by Matt Vitello and Shawn Giblin (second) passed with unanimous approval.

UMRR Update from Marshall Plumley

Program has gone virtual for all meetings including PDT meetings for HREP planning, the A-Team meeting, and the upcoming May UMRR Coordinating Committee meeting.

FY2020 Plan of Work

Construction contract awards in next few months will get us closer to our total appropriations. Science proposals will contribute to that as well. Making good on the commitments made in FY20. Everyone is doing well and adjusting due to COVID-19 circumstances.

FY2021

President's budget recommended full funding for UMRR. Projecting a budget similar to 2020.

Some funding shifts across districts, but much the same.

President's Budget reflects confidence administration has in our program and all the great work you all are contributing to. Dollars isn't how most of us think about restoration and science on the river, but it is a reflection of the work we do and signals that decision makers have confidence in our ability to appropriate funds and do good work.

FY2020 Monitoring, Research, and Science in Support of Restoration

- Fully funded Base monitoring FY20, 49 milestones
- FY2020 Science in Support of Restoration and Management
 - Analysis under base SOW – Fully Funded
 - 4 high priority efforts fully scoped and funded
 1. Chloride monitoring
 2. Seamless wind fetch (all pools)
 3. Data to web mapping services
 4. Ecohydrology support
 - FY2020 Science Proposals
 - Corps ranking April 16
 - A-Team ranking April 22
 - UMRR CC endorsement May 20
 - FY2020 IWW Consolidated closure monitoring
 - Fully funded

Effects of COVID-19 on Monitoring, Research, and Science in Support of Restoration

- April 6, 2020 LTRM Fixed Site water quality sampling cancelled
- April 20th LTRM Fixed Site water quality sampling cancelled

Additional discussion of efforts to keep staff safe while sampling were also discussed.

Project Milestones

MVP

- McGregor HREP: Complete P&S 27 April with an anticipated contract award for first stage in 4th quarter FY2020
- Bass Ponds HREP: Re-issue solicitation on 27 March 2020 and award construction contract in May 2020.
- Conway Lake HREP (Pool 9): Construction to begin in spring 2020.
- Lower Pool 10 HREP: Feasibility study continuing. TSP scheduled in FY2020.
- Reno Bottoms HREP (Pool 9): Feasibility kickoff in August. Data collection (borings, topo, forest inventory, mussels) underway.

McGregor Lake and Bass Ponds looking to move into construction, with \$10-\$15 million worth of work between the two projects. Bass Ponds advertisement is out now and looking for bids by end of month.

MVR

- Steamboat HREP Pool 14: ATR kickoff is scheduled for April 17th. PDT working on MDM package. MDM milestone – June 15, 2020.
- Lower Pool 13 HREP: Planning a mini-charrette to finalize features with Sponsors in May. Lower Pool 13 – in feasibility. Contemplating WLM and adjustments to how gates at dam are run to benefit the ecosystem. Will require some coordination with division office. This is first time UMRR has incorporated WLM in a project specifically – need to address some policy issues.
- Green Island HREP Pool 13: Measures workshop was cancelled in March. Review Plan milestone completed on March 16th.
- Pool 12 HREP: No work.
- Beaver Island HREP Pool 14: No work due to COVID-19
- Huron Island HREP Pool 18: Some tree planting left, but most construction wrapping up. Construction is scheduling the final pre-final inspection.
- Keithsburg HREP Pool 18: Contractor on hold due to new eagle nest for Stage I. PDT is working on Stage II plans and specifications. 65% review scheduled for May 15th.

MVS

- Yorkinut Slough HREP: Continue feasibility. Interagency Virtual Scoping Charrette scheduled for April 2020. Virtual Scoping Charrette ongoing. Will document lessons on how to hold team meetings virtually.

- Clarence Cannon HREP: Continue Construction of multiple awarded individual contracts (water control structures; pump station; berm setback)
- Crains Island HREP: Stage 1 contract award (sediment deflection berm and channel excavation): Contract Awarded February 20, 2020; Clearing completed ahead of bat season restrictions, Contractor demobilized due to high river levels
- Oakwood Bottoms HREP: DQC for feasibility initiated. ATR, MDM & final draft report scheduled 3rd-4th Quarter FY2020
- Piasa and Eagles Nest Islands: DQC for P&S initiated. Contract award for 1st Quarter FY21

Other updates

Report to Congress due end of calendar year 2022. Starting a number of independent but related initiatives to pull stuff together in beginning of May. CC and river team chairs will be meeting for two purposes to do review of HREP planning and sequencing process – how that went, what else we could do in the future. Spend some time reflecting on the Program’s strategic plan. Document completed in 2015 and looked out 10 years. Want to take stock in where we’ve been and what adjustments we might make. Leads up to the CC meeting at end of May.

Status and Trends report and HNA II will contribute to Report to Congress as well.

Questions

John Chick – Question about COVID 19 vehicle policies changing budgets due to 1 person occupancy limits.

Nick Schlessler – Follow up question. With states shifting driving policies to 1 person per vehicle and potential higher expenditures for gas than what had been budgeted is there any way to adjust for that?

Marshall Plumley -- Haven’t made a decision on that, but have had discussions about folks needing additional vehicles and how to get personnel in place. Didn’t discuss fuel expenditures specifically, but will need to talk about in the future.

Regarding Science Proposals – All proposals developed and funded – folks will be collecting data and interacting with environment on refuges likely. For those proposals and going forward, need to be mindful in communication with particular refuge managers for where work will be done. Have that list of refuge managers – if you are thinking about science proposals – want to ensure that engagement and coordination is happening with the refuge managers.

Karen Hagerty – Steve Winter put together a spreadsheet of refuge managers – would it be appropriate to share that with the A-Team distribution? Make sure PIs engage with refuge managers.

Steve Winter -- Yes, and a good guide to understand where the refuges lay out over the system. Please check and make sure the Corps side of districts etc are correct.

Andrew Stephenson – PPT will be in May

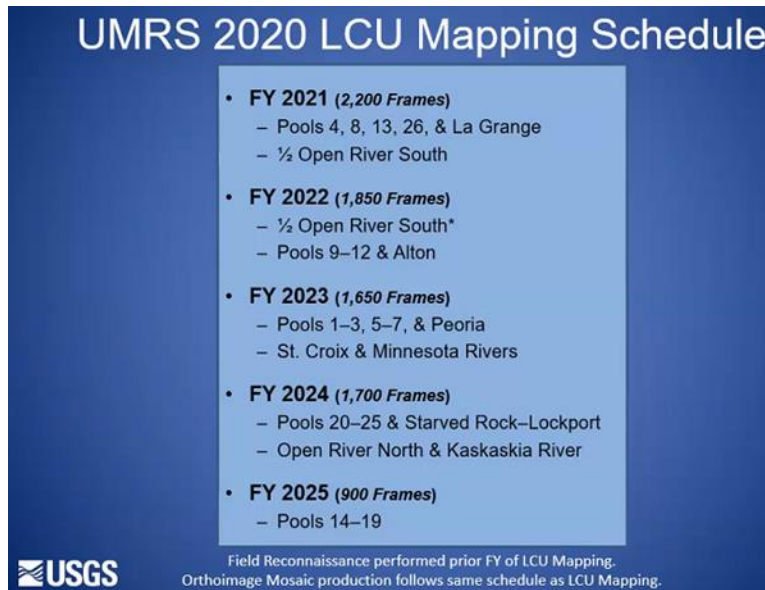
Dave Herzog – The FY2021 budget is relatively unchanged. What is the rationale in the \$100k shift from science to other areas?

Marshall Plumley – It is based on what was scoped and what folks were asking for. Line item for Report to Congress – FY20 – HNA-II and regional project and sequencing. Shifting that work to the Report to Congress. Instead of 375K shifted to 275K. LTRM Base is the same, Science in support of restoration is the same. Habitat is the same. Acknowledgement that we've shifted from HNA-II and identifying new projects to moving into the report to congress. One HREP project is looking at a construction project and additional funds went there.

Update on Aerial Imagery Collection from Kevin Hop

Will be collecting Aerial imagery this summer – 4th systemic capture of LCU. Aerial flight plans developed to capture imagery – Mid-August and early-September. High resolution. 100 MP sensor and 4-band – color, infrared and true color. Our mapping schedule (see below) – want to make you aware of how we'll move forward across multi-year mapping effort. With Pool 9, previous mention of priority, since resolved. Moving along with mapping schedule that was approved.

Tackling key pool areas first – as was done in the past systemic imagery efforts. Orthoimage Mosaic production will follow same schedule as LCU Mapping.



Questions

Dave Herzog – Does the ½ Open River south scheduled for FY2021 include the Open River trend reach? If not can it be prioritized?

Jennifer Dieck - trend pool area should be covered in Open River South. Want to complete all the trend pools in the same year. Difficult to get it all done in FY 21 – will be completed first in FY 22.

Jennie Sauer – Calendar year 2021 is more likely.

Steve Winter – Requested slide (included above) be shared.

Andrew Stephenson – Will orthoimage mosaics be available the following year?

Jennifer Dieck - Yes, they will be released as completed after going through USGS review, and before mapping.

Discussion of LTRM invert sampling in response to decline in burrowing mayflies -- Shawn Giblin

- Need to be aware of burrowing mayfly trends on the river
 - Important locally.
 - Major food source in river ecosystem
- Recent evidence of reduced mayfly numbers
 - Hatches have been more subdued.
 - Radar imagery on Lake Erie and Upper Miss – found declines in burrowing mayfly hatches on the system.
 - Japan showing declines in zooplankton and fish coinciding with increasing use of neonicotinoid pesticides
- One advantage of neonicotinoids is that they have low toxicity to vertebrates but high toxicity to invertebrates. Used as a seed dressing. Large change from integrated pest management to seed coating. 90% of active ingredient is lost after planting
- At low levels of neonicotinoids – burrowing mayflies will leave their burrows. 1-10 mg/L. Sub-lethal effects related to presence of neonicotinoids.
- Most work has been done on the Great Lakes, but it would be good to have on the UMR
- Both Neonicotinoids and other pesticides like Bifenthrin have seen dramatic increases in use in recent years.
 - Recent drop in use (2015-2016) of neonicotinoids believed to be due to a reporting issue

Draft Recommendations to the A-Team from Shawn Giblin: (would need a 2/3 majority to proceed)

Preliminary thoughts:

1. Resume benthic invertebrate sampling for a 3-year period beginning in 2021. It is acknowledged by the A-Team that the prior benthic invertebrate method wasn't statistically robust enough to detect year-to-year status, but the power to detect long-term temporal trends was sufficient had the monitoring continued. The A-Team would be open to a different method as long as a defensible inference can be made between the former data (pre-2004) and new data (post-2021). We would like to see the benthic sampling conducted in conjunction with radar analysis to examine correlation between the two methods.
2. The A-Team would also like to see focused research to elucidate potential drivers of the burrowing mayfly decline (neonicotinoids, pyrethroids (bifenthrin), climate change (physical/geomorphic/hydrologic), cyanotoxins, increasing hypoxia, improving water quality, etc.). Possibly a new focal area.

Questions to Explore Further

1. What major data sources exist?
2. Lessons learned regarding existing LTRM design? If we were to design from scratch to address those questions, what, if anything, would we do differently?
3. Specific questions/objectives to be addressed over the next 3 years?
4. How to most effectively synthesize 1, 2, 3 and additional data collection to address those objectives?

Discussion

Dave Herzog – Have been wanting to do this in the Open River. Molly Sobotka's side channel work includes consideration of invertebrates in typology of services provided. Need to pay attention to guild creatures on lower trophic level. Strong advocate – would love to see this get done.

Shawn Giblin – We have a substantial blind spot we need to address related to this.

Matt O'Hara – Illinois is interested also. Some issues with methodology – Dr. Chick has pointed out with PONAR – would like to see that worked out. Dr. Lamar proposed invertebrate sampling with Asian carp and nuisance species. Would like to see if those could be integrated with this somehow. Always a proponent of the invertebrate sampling. Keep us posted and we will provide our suggestions to you to keep this going.

Karen Hagerty – Curious – when talking about IWW closure sampling – proposal came out of IL to include macroinvertebrates for 3 years – challenge was that it wasn't long enough sampling period to provide necessary data for these questions. How does this differ?

Brian Gray – Would be glad to help people think about answering the research questions they have and the necessary sampling timeframe.

Teresa Newton - Alerted the A-Team to something that would be of interest to a lot of people. Suggests there may be an issue happening on the river and pesticides may be contributing to it. Suggest getting a team together to discuss this – lots of questions here and the approach we take would be dictated by the questions. I could envision more focused sampling to answer question – sample mayflies across pesticide gradient. Lab work to be done, targeted field sampling, something to corroborate radar and PONAR data? Radar looks at emergence of adults, PONAR looks at nymphs. Encourage you and A-Team and folks to get together to activate this timely research.

Shawn Giblin – Good logical next step – identify folks who would be involved and the A-Team. Recommendations from A-Team would help get this on more peoples' radar.

Scott Gritters – Thanks for bringing this up. Have been fascinated by the mayflies – seen in Paddlefish stomachs in the Spring. Could keep this on the agenda for the July meeting. Could as A-Team members to ask their state colleagues about other possible data that would be available – also the USFWS. Example – wetland studies that captured that?

Shawn Giblin – Good idea – some sources of data we could take a look at.

Scott Gritters – Will ask Jackie in Iowa about what she's seen with mayflies. Wildlife folks are also talking about mayflies and potential impacts. Suggest keeping this on the A-Team agenda going forward.

Karen Hagerty – Want to talk to UMRBA WQTF – looked at invert sampling. Have done sampling in the upper reach and doing a section of the lower impounded reach now.

Matt Vitello – Don't want to limit to mayflies – consider other macroinverts as canaries in the coal mine.

Kathi Jo Jankowski – how benthic data link up with radar in the field would be useful.

Steve Winter – Could this be addressed under themes and focal areas – develop subcomponent of existing working group to get this started?

Shawn G – Have had some of those discussions – could make a focal area for next science proposal meetings – would be good focal area to add.

John Chick – It might be that we can come up with sampling plan using old methods. Most of problems in Pool 26 was sampling in areas with sandy substrate and problem of sample washing out as PONAR grab was being brought up. Could look at leaving out some habitat types with certain sampling techniques.

Karen Hagerty – Molly Sobotka work also looks at different sampling types.

Nick Schlessner – From A-Team – there is interest to discuss going forward – I will include in July meeting agenda. Shawn, would you like to contact folks from state to flesh out questions we should consider and sampling approach?

Shawn Giblin – I think I have time and interest to do that before next meeting. If there are people who are interested in this – Brian (stats) and Teresa Newton with past experience. Would like to convene a meeting to talk about this and how best to proceed. Send me an email if you have interest in this and we'll try to get this discussion going before the July meeting to report back.

Karen Hagerty – like Scottie's idea for everyone to check within their agency about other data sources.

Matt O' Hara – Could you go through LTRM data and determine where our sampling was at and get some idea about a preliminary level of work hours etc.

Shawn Giblin – Believe there is a paper about the power analysis necessary for this.

Karen Hagerty – Yes, paper is on LTRM website. https://umesc.usgs.gov/ltrmp/power_plots.html

Teresa Newton – Suggest convening group to discuss questions first before spending time on how past sampling design could be modified. If the decision of the group is to reinstate past sampling, then review that work.

Shawn – Could establish that at the kickoff meeting and work in that direction. If you are interested, send me an email and we'll set up a time to discuss.

Dave Herzog – There seems to be invertebrate emphasis in side channel project – could incorporate that discussion into this. Project trying to identify inverts and relevance to the system. Take your ideas and concepts and questions emphasis that Teresa mentioned – could start with side channel project and then consider how to make methods more systemic and habitat specific.

Nick Schlessner – Shawn will try to gather preliminary group to develop questions. Those with an interest in assisting contact Shawn. Check with agencies for available datasets.

Matt O’Hara – Can Shawn check past data to see what the power of the former method was?

Action Items:

Shawn to consolidate questions; framing the questions is critical first step

All interested parties, let Shawn know

Project Ranking Process – Nick Schlessner

Results of A-Team rankings

FY20 UMRR SCIENCE IN SUPPORT OF RESTORATION AND MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS					A-Team Scores and Comments						
Page	Proposal Title	PI (affiliation provided on first appearance)	Total Cost	A-Team AVG Score	USFWS Total Score	IA Total Score	IL Total Score	MO Total Score	MN Total Score	WI Total Score	
WG1: Hydrologic and geomorphic changes											
1	Geomorphic Assessment Techniques for Baseline Assessments and Monitoring Related to Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project (HREP) Planning, Design, and Evaluation	Faith Fitzpatrick (USGS UMW/SC) Jon Hendrickson (USACE MVP) Jeff Janvrin (WDNR)	\$ 247,776	33.33	34	39	24	34	33	36	7
5	Mapping Potential Sensitivity to Hydrogeomorphic Change in the UMRS Riverscape and Development of Supporting GIS Database and Query Tool	Jayne Strange (USGS UMESC) Faith Fitzpatrick	\$ 346,032	32.17	38	36	26	29	30	34	8
13	Improving our understanding of historic, contemporary, and future UMRS hydrology by improving workflows, reducing redundancies, and setting a blueprint for modelling potential future hydrology	Lucie Sawyer (USACE MVR) Molly Van Appledorn (USGS UMESC)	\$ 224,560	37.17	39	42	38	29	35	40	3
WG 2: Side channels											
26	Understanding physical and ecological differences among side channels of the Upper Mississippi River System	Molly Sobotka (MDC)	\$ 144,357	34.17	38	38	29	37	31	32	6
WG3: Vegetation and Wildlife											
33	Refining our Upper Mississippi River’s ecosystem states framework	Danelle Larson (USGS UMESC)	\$ 288,637	31.33	34	34	18	31	34	37	12
42	Evaluation of how HREPs, aquatic vegetation, and management activities influence waterfowl distributions on the Upper Mississippi River Navigation Pools 4, 8, and 13	Luke Fara (USGS MESC) Steven Houdek (USGS UMESC)	\$ 315,910	30.50	37	35	19	28	34	30	13
49	Expansion of wild rice (Zizania aquatica L.) in the UMR: Drivers, restoration risks and opportunities, and implications for waterfowl management.	Deanne Drake (WDNR); Alicia Carhart (WDNR); J. Kimball (U of MN); Danelle Larson; Eric Lund (MNDNR); B. Sedinger (UWSP)	\$ 221,385	31.50	38	31	19	28	34	39	11
WG 4: UMRS fish community dynamics											
57	Augmenting the UMRR fish vital rates project with greater species representation for genetics and otolith microchemistry	Andy Bartels (WDNR) Jim Lamer (INHS)	\$ 306,915	36.83	36	32	45	33	36	39	4
65	Functional UMRS fish community responses and their environmental associations in the face of a changing river: hydrologic variability, biological invasions, and habitat rehabilitation	Brian Ickes (USGS UMESC) John Gatto (INHS) John Chick (INHS)	\$ 121,810	37.67	40	38	42	37	29	40	2
WGS: Water quality and eutrophication											
71	Connectivity and cyanotoxin production	James Larson; Shawn Giblin (WDNR); KathiJo Jankowski; John Manier (UMESC)	\$ 287,296	31.83	36	34	23	27	32	39	9
79	Understanding landscape-scale patterns in winter conditions in the Upper Mississippi River System	KathiJo Jankowski; Hilary Dugan (UW-Madison); Becky Kreiling (UMESC); Madline Magee (WDNR)	\$ 325,349	35.50	35	37	32	34	38	37	5
89	Microplastic abundance in fish and water column in relation to spatial heterogeneity and constructed habitat improvements in the Upper Mississippi River System	Eric Strauss (UW-La Crosse); Jessica Fulgoni (MDC); KathiJo Jankowski	\$ 119,716	31.83	39	28	35	30	29	30	9
WG6: Floodplain ecology											
97	Forest Response to Multiple Large-Scale Inundation Events	Robert Cosgriff (USACE); Lyle Guyon (NGRREC); Nate De Jager (USGS UMESC)	\$ 206,029	38.00	41	43	31	34	39	40	1
GRAND TOTAL			\$3,155,771								

Karen Hagerty – ~\$1.9 million available. Will follow up after meeting to verify that proposals selected will fit into budget. LTRM management team and A-Team Chair will meet for one more step

Nick Schlessner – Redid ranking process with Jeff Houser, Jennie Sauer, and Karen Hagerty to produce broader range of scores and eliminate crowding. Restricted folks to whole number data entry in

rankings. Other than small error in sheet found by Scott Gritters – the excel sheet seemed to work fairly well. Others?

Steve Winter – thought it worked well – got input from a lot of folks and able to incorporate into final ranking.

Nick Schlessner – With knowledge that so many people will collect information from a lot of folks – may add an extra tab that would automatically produce a ranking tab for each individual.

Shawn Giblin – Substantial improvement from the past. Had 10 people weigh-in on the process. Extra tabs would help, but good.

Matt O’Hara – worked well for IL – went smoother than last year. Were happy with it.

Scott Gritters – went smooth for Iowa – extra tabs would be good addition – did that on our own, but would be good to incorporate. We had a lot of range from reviewers. No project that wasn’t in someone’s top 5. Easy to condense down those rankings.

Matt Vitello – worked well in MO. Had some groupings in numbers, but artifact of the ranking process generally. Excel file worked well.

Nick Schlessner – MN ended up with a couple ties in rankings, but didn’t end up in any of the final top ranked projects, just in the middle. Seems like the sheet and process helped spread out project rankings. Will look to incorporate way to collect information from variety of folks. Will likely still require whole number ranking by individuals and not whole number aggregated scores. Can Karen or Jeff address how the Corps or USGS fair with the sheet?

Jennie Sauer – Jeff and I used the sheet and it worked well enough.

Jeff Houser – Organizational effort you put into this ahead of time is really paying off – thanks. For future, individual numbers go in as whole and aggregated scores can go into decimals. You raised the bar substantially here – thanks!

Karen Hagerty – Echo that.

Nick Schlessner – Combining whole numbers – once you switch over to decimals you essentially eliminate ties. At the state level ties will be gone. Think that’s a good point to bring forward.

Karen Hagerty – Really appreciate what you’ve done with the spreadsheet. Like the idea of adding tabs for multiple reviewers – will be helpful as most of us use that process. Great job!

Matt O’Hara – Can respond to Vegetation and Wildlife being lower value from IL compared to other states – didn’t seem like a systemic project – just upper pools. Wild rice had more upper pool-centric vibe to it. That was in part why we ranked it lower. Good projects and have their place, but that was a consideration.

Nick Schlessner – had that comment within MN as well.

Karen Hagerty – Corps noted that comment as well.

Shawn Giblin – in terms of IL – how many people were involved in ranking?

Matt O'Hara – 3. Myself, Jim Lamer, and John Chick.

Shawn Giblin - Range across IL is broader than other rankings – range 18-45.

Matt O'Hara – Tiered projects out and then tried to rank projects within those tiers.

Steve Winter – Not first time vegetation projects have been scored low because of that. We should further develop rankings for these projects in the future – how to scale localized vs systemic. Potential is that vegetation work would never get funded through this program is always assessed based on localized vs systemic. Much of the system used to have vegetation and projects are trying to understand why vegetation exists where it is to better understand why it isn't where it isn't.

Karen Hagerty – HREPs in MVR is looking to establish emergent Vegetation at Huron Island. Also IL River 519 project looking to restore vegetation in Starved Rock pool.

Matt O'Hara -- Believe vegetation projects are important. Above Peoria though, we don't have a field station to assess vegetation. Would love to have vegetation and figure out how to have it. Important projects, but in La Grange and Pool 26, vegetation is down to almost nonexistent. Projects where vegetation exists happens to be in upper pools.

Jeff Houser – Conversations about focal areas – collectively the work we fund needs to address issues systemically. Given diversity within the system, some issues are regionally important that are not systemic and we do need to continue to address those. Remains an open challenge as to setting up a review process to have projects that have systemic coverage and still have room for projects that address locally/regionally important issues. Assembling projects here as a group.

Scott Gritters – Lower river projects have been harder to fund historically. Need to consider projects that are systemic. Maybe vegetation proposals need to be funded through other means?

Nick Schlessler – Want to review comments for each project.

Scott Gritters – Like to see all the projects.

Shawn Giblin – Concerned about IL scores – when giving one an 18 and another project 45 – killing one project and selecting another

Matt O'Hara – looked at systemic value pretty highly within scoring. Looked at price tag to value of project. Some discrepancy across our scores, but those projects did rank out lower for us.

Jeff Houser – We tried to structure 4 questions with system of scoring so folks could consistently apply across proposals and so that scores would reflect content of proposals. Presumption is that individuals are doing that process in good faith and assessing questions and criteria in best way they can. If that assumption holds, then the disparity is what it is. If system becomes subjugated to trying to game it out, then any system will fail. Maybe the systemic question will be something to consider in the future. Idea is to set up system to evaluate criteria...

Jeff – Hoped we would not go down this road at this meeting.

Matt O'Hara – Thought we wouldn't call out specific states or agencies at this meeting. Our scores are what they are, some are high and some are low. Feel the other rankers are happy as well.

Scott Gritters – Have to go with the scores that are there – know IL did this in good faith as well. We all consider our state priorities in our rankings as well. Partnerships will have different opinions.

Matt Vitello – I agree. Score is based on average, not cumulative.

Scott Gritters – Iowa had 6 people ranking projects. Looked at top 5 here and there, but it came out pretty close even with diverse rankers in the state.

Nick Schlessler – Now will look at adding in Corps and USGS scores to see how that affects final rankings.

Combined Rankings of USGS, USACE, and A-Team

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89	Microplastic abundance in fish and water column in relation to spatial heterogeneity and constructed habitat improvements in the Upper Mississippi River System	Eric Strauss (UW-La Crosse); Jessica Fulgoni (MDC); KathJo Jankowski	\$ 119,716	28.61	34.00	20.00	31.83	12
WG6: Floodplain ecology								
97	Forest Response to Multiple Large-Scale Inundation Events	Robert Cosgriff (USACE); Lyle Guyon (NGRREC); Nate DeJager (USGS UMESC)	\$ 206,029	38.67	40.00	38.00	38.00	2
GRAND TOTAL			\$3,155,771					

Karen Hagerty – are the states comfortable with what is presented in the spreadsheet?

Scott Gritters – Iowa is comfortable with the presentation of scores and likes the double ranking of the first question to emphasize the importance of that issue.

Nick Schlessner – MN is.

Matt O’Hara – IL is.

Matt Vitello – MO is.

Steve Winter – not comfortable, but service will endorse.

Shawn Giblin – not comfortable, but will endorse.

Nick Schlessner – Are you comfortable with process and not results or not comfortable with the process?

Steve Winter – I think the process could be adjusted to address this issue. Process has been improving, but I think the vegetation consideration could still be improved.

Nick Schlessner – Do we need a vote of acceptance or is verbal commitment good enough?

Karen Hagerty – Don’t know, this is the A-Team’s recommendation.

Nick Schlessner – Feel we’re okay with what we’ve received from the group.

Jeff Houser – We provided comments in the file.

Nick Schlessner - States weren’t able to view the comments that came in from the USGS and Corps prior to seeing it now. We will need to consider setting up the system to address that

Andrew Stephenson – Should we look at averaging A-Team scores before combining with USGS and Corps scores?

Nick Schlessner – That’s how the process works. A-Team advises – also A-Team scores don’t count for 5 of 7 scores, but 1 of 3 scores.

Jennie Sauer– Suggest conversation around projects that changed the most and why.

Jeff Houser – When working your way down the list – eventually run out of funding – need to determine if best to partially fund a project for fully fund a lower ranked project.

Karen Hagerty –Looks like there may be enough funding for the top 8 projects right now.

Corps drove change on fish communities – USGS on geomorphic assessment, and Microplastics down from Corps’ ranking.

For Geomorphic assessment – USGS – Interest for folks, need for rehabilitation – concern was around methods. Methods need to be more fleshed out before willing to increase that.

Nick Schlessner – Top 8 projects being funded would mean one project in each working group could be funded this cycle. Does that do anything to alleviate concerns from WI or the Service?

Steve Winter – Still think it is an issue that needs to be looked at more. Vegetation work will always be handicapped if scored this way. Would think that we would want to consider augmenting vegetation sampling.

Shawn Giblin – Still some concerns – Vegetation projects will be handicapped moving forward unless we can address the process.

Scott Gritters – When you look at systemic issues – when part of the river has that resource and another doesn't.

Karen Hagerty – venture looking at the process – Feel some projects may be unique to the lower parts of the river. While its vegetation right now, would want to consider addressing localized projects in the future.

John Chick – Seem to remember this happening years ago. Lower stations would put in proposals to look at Asian carp. Same geographic differences would show up. There will always be a little bit of this.

Karen Hagerty – There is just a dynamic tension between HREP and LTRM about where science should be directed.

Matt O'Hara – Pretty happy with this. Brought projects that weren't going to get funded that may now get funded. Some projects that will get funded that didn't have a chance.

Scott Gritters – Getting one project out of each component. Getting a vegetation project funded – alleviates some concerns. Going with the recommendation.

Dave Herzog – As a branch in our agency- suffer with similar thing. Feel like our project wasn't prepared well enough. How good these projects may be relative to the rank. Process seems to be working well. Often times, get good group of proposals that apply to broader context of criteria and rank higher. Seems like we're really good at putting together quality proposals that address systemic issues.

Karen Hagerty – Because we have the science meeting now, caliber of proposals is higher. Before there was more variability. Now, when choosing amongst a variety of good proposals – there will be some disagreement, but all the proposals are good. Jeff made a similar point after the 2018 process.

Nick Schlessner – Echo that, part of the reason for going through this change in the scoring system. Wanted numbers to drive selection. MN is happy with how this is falling out. Understand concerns with vegetation projects scoring lower. Think Asian carp is a good example of how that might go the other direction.

Karen Hagerty – Still one more step in process LTRM Management team and A-Team chair (Nick) will meet to determine final recommendations.

Shawn Giblin – Can Nick share if adjustments occur after meeting?

Nick Schlessner – Yes I will provide update

Steve Winter and Shawn Giblin – Still concerned vegetation projects are handicapped.

Motion for approval of A-Team scores made by Matt Vitello and seconded by Scott Gritters.

WI – Yes (with noted concerns), MN – Yes, IA – Yes, IL – Yes, MO – Yes, Service – Yes.

Karen Hagerty – Will send Corps comments to be integrated before final score sheet is distributed.

Matt O’Hara – Appreciate you taking on this task Nick. Think this was done very well. Thanks!

2019 Flood Updates

Nick Schlessor – (MN) Floodplain forest project delays. Asian Carp catch by commercial fisherman in spring 2020 - Every haul they made contained Asian carp – 51 fish. 31 silver, a number of grass carp in Pool 8, also one silver caught in Pool 6

Pool 4 angling pressure decreased – maybe pushed pressure to more skilled anglers. Creel surveys show angling specialists that are targeting specific species. Change from 70% targeting walleye to 90% targeting walleye.

Shawn Giblin (WI)– Island dissection, levee breaching, island loss all exacerbated. Bankline stabilization HREP coming online is good. Rate of change is fast. Studies of residence time of water in backwaters – flows through backwater functioning almost like side channels. Lots more Asian carp showing up in WI and MN waters. Other studies related to cyanobacteria in main river and some isolated backwaters. Cyanotoxins are almost nonexistent in high flow conditions. Pretty concerned about habitat disruption occurring.

Scott Gritters (IA) – On UMRCC Asian Carp ad hoc committee. Seeing a lot of Asian carp records now. Was declining, but last year we saw a lot of pass-through fish – adults. First time seen in Maquoketa and Wapsipinicon rivers. Lots of tree die off, bank erosion, island dissection. From our anglers, there were about 3 weeks of “normal” conditions. Anglers saying they’re running aground in places they haven’t before – sediment movement. Our permits – construction permits are way down because equipment can’t be mobilized. If we have normal water conditions – expect to see increase in construction permits (pipelines, etc). Angler survey done recently, Mississippi River is still the number one destination for Iowa anglers.

Matt O’Hara (IL) – 2019 – saw resurgence of zebra mussels – when flood decline, zebra mussels were attached to everything available – willows, trees, rocks. Haven’t seen that in many years. Generally, prolonged floods are good for IL fish populations. Sport fish seem to be doing well. Flood helps them get to habitat that is usually not accessible on the IL River. Asian carp also benefit from that though.

John Chick – (IL) Sampling done during height of flood – saw fish using typically terrestrial areas. Buffalo produce big spawn during these situations, so do Asian carp though. What we expected.

Jim Lamer – (IL) Had first year of lock closure project (IWW) – coordinated across agencies for Asian carp monitoring. IL River was flooded last year, so slow to start. Pulled off the sampling though. Hoping for less flooded conditions this year to see effects in lower three pools from reduced navigation. Have harvest work and saw movement through 14 and 15 which are traditional pinch point dams. They were opened for a long time which probably contributed to what is being seen up river in Pool 8.

Matt Vitello (MO) – Finally starting to reevaluate how we manage floodplain areas - had lots of high water and levee breaches. Discussed changing management in those areas to allow the river to do what it needs to do.

Dave Herzog – (MO) Field work in MO – zooplankton project had great participation from field stations – hope to do more with SRS in spring. Time intensive. Flooding didn't impact that much. Biggest issue was in sampling some unique structures like wing dams and chevrons. Backwater sampling has been increased – levee breaches from years ago. Have been able to maintain backwaters in some areas to monitor. Working with Lewis and Clark University. Have continuous data from spring through _____. Asian carp – noticing weird pattern and synchronicity in fish populations and flooding. Take a hit when hydrology and temperature don't align with their life patterns. Looking at tributary influences as well. Look at broad reaching impacts to levee and other infrastructure failure and how changing climate and precipitation patterns will exacerbate those issues.

Steve Winter (US FWS)– Operations were affected – closed boat landings for safety reasons. Sharonne Baylor would have a whole list of HREP projects and contractors she would be meeting with, but progress wasn't able to proceed on many of those. Concern with resource management is the forest loss. Reno Bottoms – tree death that occurred is startling.

Karen Hagerty (USACE)– Did affect work on some projects. Vegetation planting scheduled for Huron Island. Construction held up due to high water. Also considering damage and erosion on Beaver Island.

Marshall Plumley (USACE)– High water impacts to all construction projects in each district.

Jeff Houser (USGS) – Perpetual high water has made it hard for Jim Rogala and John Caless to do work on sediment transects. 13 is still pending. One project that is being recommended is floodplain forest – so connection there.

Jennie Sauer (USGS) – Milestones chart – delayed using dendrochronology to understand historic forest growth – sample size was low due to high water, but still out there. Delays in field work and thus analysis. Environmental pool management was postponed due to high water. Reforesting forest canopy opening was delayed due to high water.

Steve Winter – LTRM funded wild celery project – spring sampling was cut short by river conditions.

Nick Schlessler – Lost a lot of long term sampling capabilities due to recurring high water impacting gear types

Andrew Stephenson – Vegetation sampling couldn't be conducted? Or vegetation emerged later in the year? How is it addressed in the data?

Dave Bierman – Sampling missed peak biomass. Did not go back and resample. MN and WI may have done some of that, but IA did not.

Jennie Sauer – Concern that people wouldn't be able to get out and do sampling. Not a major issue to do it. Sampling windows provide flexibility to work around water conditions. Looking yesterday, 2019 vegetation data is on graphical browser.

Jeff Houser – Pool 13 – strongest version of that – sampling missed peak biomass last year.

Deanne Drake - Re: vegetation sampling, my sense was that we were detecting vegetation where it was growing, but getting less of it on the rakes in 2019 due to delayed development. I.e. percent frequency occurrence was probably close, but rake scores/abundance were lower than they would have been if sampling was 2-4 weeks later.

Jeff Houser – Open question about best way to address that going forward – reason we have fixed window. Different species have biomass peak at different times. That design is a compromise and set up to meet broad scale needs – lots of strength in doing so. If need to have discussion about augmentation.

COVID 19 Updates

Nick Schlessner – Effects on projects. Limits to one person per vehicle. Mileage may not be a great issue due to states stay at home order, but may impact how we're able to do work. Working on approving field work activities. Right now can't gill net or trap net. Have cancelled all egg takes for all species – very telling for walleye egg take – impact on public perception. Don't know when we might expect to be freed up to travel to meetings. Given rapidly changing nature of this, states may not be able to provide accurate interpretation of this either at this time. Want to try to establish expectations for each of the different agencies, but may not be able to do that at this time due to frequent changes.

John Chick - One person per vehicle. Will be taking multiple vehicles to boat ramps – no way to social distance on a boat. Right now saying that's okay – go out with PPE and do best you can – could change next week. No way for us to predict.

Nick Schlessner – MN DNR allowed to electrofish with one person on the bow. Would be different from protocols.

John Chick -- So far, approach that prairie research institute and INHS, is saying vehicle issue is most important at this time. Not saying you have to change things with boats at this time, but known risk. Will have to implement lots of protocols and get those approved by PRI to do our stuff. Believe we can do it, but will have to write up safety protocols and get approval before doing field work.

Final Comments

Scott Gritters – Data from over the winter from Capoli HREP - crappies were within bounds of HREP. After ice broke up – blue gill and crappies scattered. UMRCC meeting has been postponed until October 5-8 (?). Could consider holding A-Team meeting in conjunction with that. [note-UMRCC meeting has been cancelled]

Nick Schlessner – UMRCC – Completed the UMRCC Fisheries Compendium 4th Edition.

Motion to adjourn made by Shawn Giblin and seconded by Scott Gritters. Unanimous approval.

Adjourn 11:27 a.m.