

Final Minutes
LTRMP A-Team Meeting
December 1-2, 2010
National Great Rivers Research and Education Center
Alton, IL

Participants: Illinois – Rob Maher, Greg Sass, John Chick, Eric Ratcliff
Iowa – Kirk Hansen
Minnesota – Kevin Stauffer, Walt Popp
Missouri – Janet Sternburg, Bob Hrabik, Quentin Phelps, Mark Boone
Wisconsin – Jim Fischer, Terry Dukerschein
COE – Karen Hagerty, Kat McCain, Len Kring, David Potter, Chuck Theiling
USGS – Barry Johnson, Jennie Sauer, Nathan DeJager
USFWS – Tex Hawkins

Agenda: December 1
Guided Tour of NGRREC
Roll call, introduction – Stauffer
Budget and Program updates – Hagerty, Johnson
Presentations by Nate DeJager and Lyle Guyon
LTRMP Research Frameworks and Coordination - Johnson
2009 Field Station Products List - Stauffer
Agency Updates – all
December 2
Indicators ad hoc update – Hagerty
Analysis of additional Indicators – Hagerty, Johnson
Participation in USGS National Field Quality Assurance Program – Johnson
LiDAR demo
Potential to add Asian carp sampling to LTRMP protocols – Sass
Wrap up, next meeting, open discussion

December 1, 2010

Budget and program updates – Karen Hagerty, Barry Johnson

No new budget is expected for this year, so planning will be based on similar amount of base budget as received last year. Probably around 5.0 million for LTRMP. Last fiscal year LTRMP had a budget of 8.3 million, which included ARRA funds and some roll forward from the previous fiscal year.

Lidar flights for Pool 13 and north are done. Rest of pools will be flown next year. Data processing, including accuracy assessment, are underway.

Base monitoring for this fiscal year is estimated at just under 5 million. Priorities for remaining funds were assessed and presented to EMPCC: 1) bathymetry processing & serving, 2) Tier 1 LiDAR processing & serving, 3) additional ecological indicator analyses (ad hoc), and 4) equipment refresh, most critical.

LTRMP Showcase at EMPCC meetings (Barry J.) – we would like to maintain science content and presentations of LTRMP products to the EMPCC. Travel restrictions may make it difficult for some LTRMP staff to participate, but can use web format and other options. Also need to be proactive and plan in advance. Need people that are willing to give presentations and have them present when the EMPCC meets near their work location.

Presentations of LTRMP funded projects.

A-Team invited two speakers to share results of projects they have been working on as we continue to try to expand our knowledge ongoing and recently completed projects. Presentations were:

Nate DeJager, UMESC - Quantifying landscape patterns of the UMRS in Space and Time.

Lyle Guyon, NGRREC - Ecological assessment of floodplain forests.

Both of these works were funded through LTRMP as part of the FY09 Additional Program Elements (APE's). A-Team has agreed to regularly include presentations to help stay focused on the technical aspects of the program and to provide opportunities to share and discuss work that is occurring throughout the program. A-Team members are encouraged to suggest presentation ideas, including proposed, ongoing, or recently completed projects.

LTRMP Research Frameworks and Coordination

Barry Johnson gave an overview of the Research Frameworks and Science Plan they have been working on. Completing the frameworks will allow us to focus research efforts on high-priority questions and issues more quickly than we would have through the APE process. Powerpoint presentations were given for the Vegetation (Barry) and Landscape Patterns (Nate DeJager) frameworks. A deadline of January 31, 2011 was set for A-Team to review and provide comments on these two frameworks. Stauffer will compile comments from states, USEPA and USFWS.

2009 Field Station Products List

Stauffer distributed the most recent draft of the products list prior to the meeting and asked for any final additions. Several people indicated that they had additional items and it was agreed to have these submitted by the end of December. (Note – products list has been finalized and LTRMP stations will begin compiling accomplishments for 2010. Plan is to have 2010 list completed by the April A-Team meeting.)

Agency Updates

Jim Fischer and Terry Dukerschein, WI DNR – major changes in elected officials, potential for lots of agency changes in next few years. Field station is working on data, finishing manuscripts, etc.

Chuck Theiling, Rock Island COE – has been spending most of his time working with Division and research groups. Hoping to spend more time with LTRMP related work in the future.

Walt Popp and Kevin Stauffer, MN DNR – merger of Ecological Resources and Waters Divisions into one Division is proceeding. LTRMP staff will eventually be part of a sub-regional team, instead of being under Central Office administration. Still waiting for recount in Governor's race, likely will see change in DNR Commissioner following election of new Governor.

David Potter, St. Paul COE – has been working at certifying existing HEP models for habitat planning. Capoli Slough Definite Project Report is out.

Len Kring, Rock Island COE – reported that there will be GLMRIS (Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study) report coming out on all known aquatic invasive species in these basins. This will include species that have not moved from one basin to the other, and what potential there is for movement.

Quinton Phelps, MO DOC – introduced himself to the group. Quentin will be the new LTRMP team leader at the Open Rivers field station.

Karen Hagerty, Rock Island COE - The Report to Congress is finished! Next up is the Issues Implementation Assessment and work will begin on that next week. Also noted that the HREP strategic planning process will start soon.

Greg Sass, IL NHS - Kevin Irons and Matt O’Hara have both taken positions with IL DNR working on Asian carp issues. Their knowledge and skills will be missed in the LTRMP. Hope to move quickly to refill these positions, so watch for job announcements and refer high quality applicants to them. They are also looking to hire an Assistant Director (PhD level) and hope to have that approved soon.

Bob Hrabik, MO DOC – their field station is co-hosting a Side Channels Workshop on January 10-13 at the SE Missouri State campus. The workshop will cover conceptual models, a research framework for studying side channels, and developing good restoration designs. Expecting 45-50 participants.

Kirk Hansen, IA DNR – Iowa voters passed (by 63%) a Constitutional Amendment that would provide dedicated funding for natural resource conservation. However, funding will not begin until the next time the state sales tax is increased.

Mark Boone, MO DOC – introduced himself to the group. He is the new Big Rivers Fisheries Specialist for DOC. Has been with the department since 1986. Focus of his new position is to coordinate department efforts on big river issues with external groups and agencies. They will be hosting a Big River Confab next week.

Tex Hawkins, Upper Miss. Refuge – Kevin Foerster is the new Upper Miss Refuge (and other refuges) manager. A dedication ceremony was held in Trempealeau, WI in October for the official designation of the Upper Miss. Refuge as a Wetland of International Significance under the Ramsar Convention.

John Chick, IL NHS – hope to move into the new field station at NGRREC soon. Waiting for lease to be finalized. NGRREC will be hosting the 7th Annual Bottomland Ecosystem Restoration conference March 8-10, 2011 in Collinsville, IL.

Rob Maher, IL DNR – LTRMP’s loss is DNR’s gain, recently hired Kevin Irons and Matt O’Hara. Also will be posting four new positions soon. First new hires in a long time.

Barry Johnson, UMESC - Research Coordination Plan draft has been submitted to COE for review and be out for partner review later on. This is the “over-arching” plan for the research frameworks that are under development. Yao Yin now working under an interagency agreement (1/2 time) with the Nature Conservancy. He will be working to help create monitoring frameworks similar to LTRMP on other large rivers around the world. They will back fill duties with existing UMESC staff and maybe some contracts. Yao will still be the Vegetation component leader.

Jennie Sauer, UMESC – working on equipment life cycle and replacement plan. Also working on a Work Force plan for all of LTRMP that was called for in the Strategic Plan. Everyone will have a chance to review this at some point.

December 2, 2010

Indicators ad hoc process and updates

Barry Johnson gave an overview of the evolution of the Status and Trends report and how ecological indicators have, or will be, used. The S&T has evolved from Conceptual (1998) to Empirical (2008) to Diagnostic (next S&T) and eventually to Adaptive. To move from empirical to diagnostic, we need 1) a reference framework, 2) responsive and informative indicators, 3) numerical criteria for judging ecosystem health, and 4) establish long-term benchmarks/goals.

Karen Hagerty gave an overview of the participants, progress, and timeline for the Indicators ad hoc and subgroups (macroinvertebrates, fish, and landscape patterns). As laid out in the Purpose Statement, the first task of the ad hoc was to review indicators that were used in the last Status and Trends. The ad hoc has completed this review and has made recommendations as to which indicators should be kept, dropped or modified. In addition, the ad hoc identified a number of potential new indicators that should be considered.

Following the overview, Karen led a group discussion on the indicator recommendations from the ad hoc. Recommendations were categorized as to whether additional funding would be needed, data exists or needs to be collected, more research needed, etc. Stauffer will email the spreadsheet of recommended additions, modifications, deletions to the partnership for additional review and priority ranking. Hagerty, Johnson and Stauffer will meet to finalize A-Team recommendations after broader review is completed (Before next EMPCC meeting).

A draft report will be prepared in February 2011 and distributed to A-Team for review.

Participation in USGS National Field Quality Assurance Program

Barry Johnson – the water quality lab at UMESC participates in annual testing through USGS that rates accuracy of results. The lab has had excellent ratings. USGS also has a national field quality assurance program designed for field personnel that take water quality measurements. Process is pretty straight forward and we can pick parameters we want to check. Barry suggested this might be a good thing for the field stations to participate in, and asked if there would be interest. Consensus was that field stations should participate and hopefully start in 2011. Jeff Houser will take the lead and coordinate with field stations.

Potential to add Asian carp sampling to LTRMP protocols

Greg Sass introduced this topic for A-Team discussion. In reaches where Asian carp are present, LTRMP protocols are not sampling effectively. We are not able to describe relative abundance, population trends, etc. We also know that we have not been able to detect presence/absence when populations are at low levels. He would like to have A-Team at least consider the addition of trammel nets, or other protocols, in some habitat types to see if the additional sampling would allow us to better track Asian carp populations. A good discussion ensued. A brief summary of major discussion points follows:

- LTRMP does not have a single species focus, but if focus was on sampling a different habitat type, it might be more in line with LTRMP purpose.
- Would need funding above base program level if we were to add additional sampling.
- LTRMP also doesn't sample species like paddle fish, sturgeon and buffalo very well. Addition of something to target Asian carp might also benefit sampling these species.

- LTRMP is the best monitoring program in the country, and it is reasonable to expect this program to be able to adapt strategy to assess this significant change in the fish community. (i.e. be adaptive and responsive to the situation)
- What are the questions we want to address with the monitoring data?
- There is a lot of funding being directed at Asian carp nationally, but UMR is being overlooked. Need to build the case for better monitoring and management in the UMR.
- How would we standardize efforts between reaches?

Consensus of the group was that this topic does warrant further discussion and there is a lot of interest among the partner agencies. Greg Sass, John Chick, Bob Hrabik and Quentin Phelps agreed to develop conceptual strategies and bring those to A-Team for further discussion at the April meeting.

Upcoming Meetings

The A-Team will tentatively plan to hold a conference call sometime in late February. Stauffer will poll A-Team for topics and potential dates. April meeting will held in conjunction with the Mississippi River Research Consortium in La Crosse. MRRC meeting dates are April 28-29 at the Radisson.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 am.