

A-Team Notes-Summarized

April 14, 2015

Recorded by J. Sauer & S. Strassman

Attendees:

Phone:

Walt Popp

Janet Sternburg

Chuck Theiling

Ken Barr

Marv Hubbell

In Person:

Shawn Giblin

Mike McClelland

Steve Winter

Andy Casper

Derek Ingvanson

Nick Schlessner

David Potter

Karen Hagerty

Jeff Houser

Jennie Sauer

John Chick

Scott Gritters

Sara Strassman

Approval of November 6, 2014 minutes. S. Winter 1st, A. Casper 2nd

Budget presentations:

- Plan for base funding FY16 \$4.5M
- Science in support of restoration: \$963K. Ultimately work done under “analysis under base”
- Steps in budget process: Presidents budget then House, Senate, to Conference Committee, to ASA Work Plan. Potential extra funding thru Work Plan
- Potential 5% sequestration in FY16. Can spread throughout the whole year.
- What projects can be funded by additional dollars in ASA Work Plan? (Jeff Houser). Marv’s response: mainly construction, potentially adaptive management or work closely tied to restoration.
- What is included in Habitat Evaluation Funding line? (Shawn Giblin). Marv’s response: Goes to all 3 Corps districts, adaptive mgt. work, pre-monitoring evaluation reports (e.g., Pool 12). 30% St. Paul, 30% St. Louis, 40% Rock Island. Could go to states
- Timeline for Congress unknown—May be May-August
- More likely to have CR or Appropriations bill? (John Chick) Marv: Guess CR, spending rate previous year or Presidents budget. Likely hold back something from \$963K for 5% sequestration.

- Need 2 scopes this year for LTRM. Corps Headquarters can look down into the details.
- Jeff Houser: primary challenge to show that the scopes are dependent on each other. Using science to address what is happening on the river because of restoration.
- Rob Maher: \$4.5M not “MSP”
- Marv Hubbell: Brian Johnson helping out to see what is happening in budget process

A-Team Charter & Responsibilities:

State Contributions, Travel & Commitments: Most states felt that they could support participation, but that it can be challenging to pay for travel and to explain the importance of the program and meetings to agency administration that may change relatively frequently. Corps agreed that there are coordination and planning burdens that they might be able to help with. Corps also has data compiled from the UMRR Leadership Summit that summarizes funding spent in each state, project impacts by state, etc. that could be shared with the agencies and utilized in travel justification processes.

In terms of priorities, there was discussion of the evolution of the role of the A-team from advisors on technical matters related to LTRM sampling procedures to advisors on potential analysis, applications of our data set, and program administration.

Roles & Responsibilities, Priorities: There was agreement that a current A-team strength is the ability to represent state perspectives while also being open to collaboration and negotiation. We discussed at length the desire to incorporate more technical conversations/presentations to the A-team meetings. Everyone agreed that technical topics fall within the responsibilities of the A-team and that there are plenty of potential topics including science issues in debate, setting agendas for science priorities, the Strategic Plan-defining health & resiliency, next S&T report, HREP data needs, interior programs from participating agencies (USFWS HMP, WI TSS standard, IL LTER data). A suggestion was made that perhaps making/arranging one presentation every 2 years should be an obligation for all A-team members.

We discussed the obligation of the A-team to deliver budget information to their agencies and get through business tasks, such as the proposal reviews. It was suggested that we try to find ways to move more quickly through the business items in order to make time for technical discussions. There was agreement that one priority must remain as keeping a steady LTRM program that has the budget and structure to keep collecting and sharing world class data. The Minimum Sustainable Program discussions were an example of the very tough decisions & negotiations that had to be made in lean funding years. Those challenges may remain, but it will also be our role to leverage the data and demonstrate the value of the data through unparalleled analyses.

The proposed H-team was discussed briefly. It wasn't clear to A-team members how a parallel group would improve integration of science and HREPs. A suggestion was made to hold at least one joint meeting annually, but there were reservations expressed about how the science research priorities would merge between the two separate entities.

There was an expressed desire for the A-team members to be discussing 'ecosystem breakthroughs' and other summary scientific trends that can be readily shared up through their agencies as well as through UMRR-CC.

The A-team primarily operates on a consensus basis and the recommendations of the A-team are almost universally adopted by the decision-making body at UMRR-CC.

A-team minutes and agendas are updated to the A-team corner and the Corps is trying to serve the same info within the 'Meetings' section of UMRR website through Rock Island District. There was agreement that quarterly meetings should still be the expectation and that we always have the flexibility of cancelling a meeting if there is no business or presentation. The quarterly basis is meant to occur prior to UMRR-CC meetings, which this year are (May 6-St Louis, Aug 5-La Crosse, Nov 18-St Paul, February-TBD). The April & October meetings have typically been in person meetings and the January & July have been conference calls.

Quorum: we previously discussed what constitutes a quorum. Two-thirds of the voting members present establishes the quorum and phone participation is acceptable. The meeting minutes should articulate all opinions and dissenting votes. When a vote is scheduled, representatives need to make sure to delegate an alternate to attend. On some occasions, we have deferred a vote to email to allow for greater participation from all agencies if an issue was controversial or if participation was poor. Getting agendas out in advance would help agencies plan for casting a vote at an upcoming meeting.

Rotation of the Chair: When Maher was new to A-team, IL was immediately up for the chair. John Sullivan of WI took the chair to avoid burdening a new A-team member. When the chair was set to rotate to WI in 2013, Maher took the chair to return the favor to WI when Strassman was new. At a subsequent meeting, it was clarified that it is the chair's responsibility to take/assign note-taking and Strassman has taken notes for past year to prepare for WI chair. With WI reposition moving to Giblin, it was suggested that MO take chair. However, WI has not been chair in ~12 yrs and agreed that between Giblin and Strassman, they could manage the position. Since the rotation has been out of sequence relative to what is designated in the charter, it was confirmed that after WI's tenure, MO would take the chair. Members were asked to consider for the next meeting whether we'd like the chair to rotate to the USFWS and it was suggested that a review of the authorizing language for EMP, A-team charter and other historical documents be conducted to ensure that agencies other than the states are permitted to be chair. Jennie suggested that the chairmanship designations were probably an artifact of the previous EMTC/USFWS administrative structure which afforded USFWS a role more akin to the Corps and USGS currently occupy.

Next meeting: Wisconsin will arrange for the July meeting (with support from Jennie). It was suggested that a technical topic be scheduled as part of the agenda.

Agency Updates:

MN: Walt Popp will retire in May, will keep busy with potential for lower water this year and

lakes sampling

Corps: Capoli Slough completed P9 (trees next year), Harper mobilized (staking on M5), N&S (PAR complete, flood stage impact & sponsor issues), Conway in prelim feas draft, ISRS attendance still being ironed out (partnering on session with TNC on P8 Islands), discharge measurements being taken, embankment repairs at 4, 5, 5a (mussels)

WI: Strassman will be busy with dredging & low water issues, new staff Deanne Drake and John Kalas at the LTMR, Giblin investigated some winter fish kills and believes supersaturated conditions are at play, deployed continuous temp loggers at HREP sites, looking for optimal flow rates in Pettibone Lagoon, continuing analysis on stable state and plankton dynamics

USFWS: draft chapters from HMP contractors are coming in, fine tuning species of concern, just started (yesterday) introducing biologists to the I&M process that will determine what types of data will be collected to support the HMP

IA: train derailments have clobbered their time, ethanol in particular, DJ Vogeler took Josh's position, all fisheries staff have been assigned some hatcheries work, Bernie is now managing a hatchery and the field station, Josh will soon vacate his fisheries position, P12 work has been completed—crappie netting was unsuccessful (nets under ice, anglers, etc)

IL: agency has shuffled duties, Maher now manages Carlisle Lake reservoir fishery in addition to Commercial Fisheries manager role, Casper has hired new staff at Havana, IL has 9 fisheries positions posted, but none are specific to the Miss, Asian carp money has created 8 new positions-Chicago area