

**A-Team conference call on 2/19/2013**  
**Draft Meeting Notes**  
**Chair: Scott Gritters- Iowa DNR**

1. Introductions

**USGS:** Nate De Jager, Barry Johnson, Jeff Houser, Mike Jawson, Jennie Sauer, Jim Rogala, Jennifer Dieck

**USFWS:** Steve Winter

**UMRBA:** Kirsten Mickelsen

**USACE:** Chuck Theiling, Kathryn McCain, Karen Hagerty, Marv Hubbell, Dave Potter, Brian Anderson, Nate Richardson

**MN DNR:** Walt Popp, Kevin Stauffer, Nick Schlessler

**WI DNR:** Jim Fischer, Pat Short

**IA DNR:** Dave Bierman and Scott Gritters

**IL DNR:** Andy Casper, John Chick and Rob Maher

**MO DOC:** Janet Sternburg and Dave Herzog

2. Approval of past A-team Minutes of August 27, 2012 and October 23, 2012 (attached)

Discussion: Jennie Sauer found one minor error still occurred in the August 27, 2012 meeting notes. Jennie will fix the error and post it on the A-Team Corner. Motion was made by chairperson Gritters to approve amended August 27, 2012 notes approved by Pat Short, seconded by Rob Maher and passed without opposition. Motion was made by chairperson Gritters to approve October 23, 2012 conference call meeting notes. Some discussion made by Marvin Hubbell concerning the wording and of the Budget item in meeting notes specifically concerning the statement on the carry over money from the State of Iowa Pool 12 project. Dave Bierman explained that a very small amount was part of the Pool 12 HREP and that is now built into his MSP (base monitoring) budget. Most of the carry over money came from employee turnover. Marvin did not want the Chairperson to amend the notes just wanted clarification. Motion was approved by Steve Winter and seconded by Pat Short and passed without opposition.

**Action Item: Chairperson Gritters will work with Jennie Sauer to get all meeting notes UTD on the A-team corner web site.**

3. LTRMP Budget and Travel

Hubbell discussed the new buzz word called Sequestration which has mandatory cuts to the Federal budget if the discussion on the "Fiscal Cliff" is not reached. Range of cuts was 2-3% to 15%. The long and short of it is that all aspects of the EMP will be subject to lower funding scenarios, possibly lower than was planned in the 4% and 9% shortfall planning scenarios. Marvin reminded the group that we have gone through low budget scenarios before but this one is certainly serious and recognizes the deeper cuts will greatly affect the program possibly even full time staffing. The Corps is planning on holding back ~10% from the planned \$5.129M budget for LTRMP.

Marvin Hubbell also reminded the group there is a low funding Ad Hoc conference call on 2/20 /2013. Many members of the A-Team are represented on that Ad Hoc committee. Pat Short asked if the budget cuts would be necessary if UMRR-EMP received a higher authorized amount. Marvin said no Rather than a lot more discussion here about the budget; **Chairperson Gritters will try to have the notes from the Ad Hoc discussion sent to all members of the A-Team (Action Item).**

Budget items will affect us all as they always do. Marvin and Karen promised to keep the A-Team and all members of the UMRR-EMP-LTRMP partnership informed to the often changing situations regarding funding.

Federal travel restrictions have been draconian. It will be difficult at least in the next few months to get our Federal partners too many of the partnership meetings.

#### 4. April Face to Face meeting of the A-Team

April is the usual time when the A-Team holds its face to face meeting in La Crosse. This usually corresponds to the MRCC meeting to help eliminate travel to both meetings. Despite travel restrictions it seemed most Federal and State partners were still planning on having the face to face meeting. Chairperson Gritters will work with Jennie Sauer on arrangements for that meeting. Certainly the USFWS or the USGS visitor center would work.

Some discussion took place on what needed to be covered at the face to face meeting. A strong message from the last year's A-Team meeting that many of the participants would like to discuss more of the "science" going on in the program. Janet Sternburg brought up the point that the A-Team needs to go through the Research Frameworks and make sure we see how they are being applied in the work being done. Chuck Theiling brought up the idea of the "path to the future" - how we are now using the AM scientific process to move projects, research and monitoring ahead into the future. He would like us to discuss links or connections between project, monitoring and future modeling and research. Barry Houser suggested discussion on critical questions. Karen Hagerty suggested discussion on the Indicators Report.

**Action Item: Chairperson Gritters will try to solicit more ideas from the A-Team and gin up an agenda by April 1. Gritters will work with Jennie Sauer on arrangements to keep costs low. Time frame is possibly April 24 and meeting would need to conclude by 4:30 so participants could attend the MRCC mixer that night.**

#### 5. When is A-Team chair rotation, whose next?

Marvin Hubbell has worked some on the A-Team's roles and responsibility changes needed discussed in last April's face to face meeting, but some items are not quite done. One issue is exactly when the chairperson of the A-Team is transferred and who is next in line.

Right now it appears that the Wisconsin DNR will be next in line for the Chairperson seat. That change-over will start after the April face to face meeting. The Wisconsin DNR may however replace Pat Short, who has temporarily been assigned to the A-Team, with a new person potentially being hired to fill Jim Fischer's old slot. If the new individual is not UMRR-EMP LTRMP savvy it may put Wisconsin DNR in a difficult position. Rob Maher of Illinois offered that he would take the chairperson position if Wisconsin found them in this situation. Thanks Rob!

## 6. UMRR-EMP LTRMP strategic planning effort

Marvin Hubbell led the discussion of this item. A strategic planning process has been in place for the LTRMP side of the EMP but never has both the Science and the Project sides of the program undergone such a review. Many think it is long overdue. Marvin is planning for a kick off meeting in the March/April time frame to start this process of a comprehensive program overview. Marvin is thinking the strategic planning team will consist of 15 individuals made up representatives from the states (3), NGOs (1), EPA/NRCS, UMRBA (1), USGS (3) and Corps of Engineers (4). Marvin is asking the A-Team for a potential representative on the planning effort.

This will be a 5 year planning effort; it will tackle the large issues on how to make this regional program compete with funding on the national scale. Marvin feels that there is plethora of information already available such as the Report to Congress, NESP integration, project sequencing framework, and committee charters. Marvin hopes that the meeting will be professionally facilitated and expect 7-8 meeting (mostly conference calls) to complete the process.

Discussion on the efforts centered on the makeup of the committee with A-Team members expressing that all agencies (states) need to be represented in this planning effort. Also, Chuck Theiling introduced the possibility of using a “structured design matrix” instead of the facilitation meeting option that has been successful used recently by the Corps. Marvin thought that some “hybrid” of the two meeting styles could possibly be arranged.

**Action Item: Marvin will send Chairperson Gritters more information about the process and Chairperson Gritters will share with all members of the A-Team. Chairperson Gritters will solicit membership to see who will want to be on this planning effort.**

## 7. Critical questions/ Science Plan update

Barry Johnson gave an overview of where we are at with the Science Plan and introduced the A-Team to the critical questions component. The science plan is done and on the web in the A-Team corner. A-Team members need to review this document. Next year Barry hopes to secure dollars in the budget to fund a meeting on the Science plan and further develop the SOW.

(The Following is from LTRMP FY13 Scope of Work):

Since its inception, the UMRR-EMP has gained considerable knowledge about how the UMRS functions and responds to management actions. Managers have much experience with some types of management actions (e.g., backwater dredging, island building, and drawdown's) and can reasonably predict local and near-term effects of these actions for achieving management objectives. However, there are still many uncertainties and untested assumptions that affect managers' ability to predict the long-term effects of management or to make predictions about types of management actions with which they have little experience.

There have been previous efforts to define management or research needs and questions, both within and outside of UMRR-EMP (e.g., GREAT documents, UMRCC publications, LTRMP science questions (2003), LTRMP research frameworks). This project will begin with a review by the LTRMP Science Director and UMESC staff of previous efforts, then including categorizing and summarizing questions across documents to look for recurring questions or themes as they relate to river science and management objectives. The consolidated list, with background material, will be reviewed by UMESC staff, and discussed with the Science Director for revision. It will then be sent to the Corps program managers and A-Team for review, discussion, and initial prioritization. The goal is not to present an exhaustive list of questions, but to come to agreement on major questions and critical uncertainties that are most directly related to research and management needs. The discussion will include potential approaches for addressing high priority questions (e.g., within UMRR-EMP or outside of UMRR-EMP, through traditional focused research or by incorporating HREP evaluations, comparisons among different river reaches), including limitations on UMRR-EMP's ability to undertake some questions.

A report documenting the review process, the list of prioritized questions, and potential approaches and limitations will be prepared by the Science Director and then presented to the EMP-CC. The report and prioritized list will be used within the science planning process for help in developing LTRMP annual Scopes of Work, as a resource for UMRR-EMP strategic planning, and for sharing with researchers outside UMRR-EMP who are interested in collaborative research. The report and question list will not replace the priorities identified in the LTRMP Strategic Plan. Most research within LTRMP is still expected to be led mainly by the LTRMP research frameworks developed under the current Strategic Plan. The prioritized questions are expected to include more topics than the research frameworks. This should provide guidance for a broader range of research interests both within UMRR-EMP-HREP and with outside collaborators, and provide input to the LTRMP Science Coordination Process and to the UMRR-EMP strategic planning effort due to begin in FY13. Questions that provide a bridge between the research frameworks and broader research interests should be especially productive.

**Action Item: The A-Team will need to review the prioritization and this will need to be a topic discussed at the face to face meeting in April.**

#### 8. Indicators report (budget has set back time line?)

Karen Hagerty gave an update on the status of the Indicators report. Karen reports that the budget scenarios have been playing havoc with the final editing of the Indicators report, but the project is 85 to 90% completed. Some discussion ensued about further edits to the document. Karen commented that people are allowed to give any edits or comments they feel are necessary and she will incorporate them the best as she can. Major edits or changes are probably not practical, especially since the comment period cutoff date of November 20, 2012 was agreed to by the A-Team. Karen still hopes by the April face to face meeting she will have the final revision ready for A-Team review. At that time the A-Team can endorse the document or ask that more revisions be made. It would be good to have the document fully endorsed by the A-Team by the May EMP-CC meeting but another schedule may need to be considered at the April face to face meeting.

#### 9. Connectivity Framework update

No real new update of this item was received. Barry spoke to the fact that Ken Lubinski is still working on summarizing the information that was gathered from the Connectivity conference and online survey. He stated that Ken is making progress and the report was on track to being completed on time. Ken

gave an excellent summary of his preliminary findings at the fall UMRCC meeting. Once Ken et al. has completed work on the framework, LTRMP will get a chance to review and see if parts can be used by LTRMP.

#### 10. Agency Reports

John Chick reports the UMRCC meeting will be held in Collinsville, Illinois on March 19 to 21, 2013. People will have an opportunity to see the Great River Center at the social. He can help arrange tours. John is participating in a discussion of partnerships, such as the UMRR-EMP LTRMP partnership we all work so hard to maintain.

Rob Maher reports that the Illinois legislature passed a sustainable funding initiative that will put stable funding into the Illinois DNR to the tune of \$32 M a year. They will be paying for that with a \$2 fee on license plates.

Pat Short stated that those having troubles with travel issues to the UMRCC need to contact him, especially if the issue is the types of receipts or bills needed for travel claims.

Jennie Sauer reported that the LTRMP FY13 first quarter activities can be seen on the A-Team Corner. Lots of great stuff being done by LTRMP folks at the field stations and UMESC.

[http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/ltrmp/documents/fy13\\_1st\\_quarter\\_activity\\_list.pdf](http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/ltrmp/documents/fy13_1st_quarter_activity_list.pdf)