Draft Minutes: A-Team Conference Call 2-11-03

Approval of past minutes--Tom Boland asked members to comment on the minutes from the November, 2002 meeting and there were no additions or deletions.

FY03 Fiscal Update--Roger Perk said we are still under a continuing resolution. The FY03 budget will be decided either in 1 week (before President's Day recess) or go all year under continuing resolution. If we do not get a budget, our total FY03 funding is unknown. Past precedent has been to spend at the same as the previous year, but this year they are holding us to the lowest amount. It may end up being somewhere in between last year and this year, or some new amount they come up with. Currently all Corps Districts are working towards \$15 million as in Senate version and Omnibus bill. The House uses those as a basic framework. Steve Cobb said they would work as hard as they can to get EMP adequate funding in 03 to gear up for 04. Our guess is \$15 million for 03-just a gut feeling, but with war looming, no one knows how they'll split dollars up to fund the war if there's a war. No war is funded currently.

FY04 Fiscal Update—Perk said EMP is fully funded in President's budget--\$33.3 million—which deserves a huge pat on back from agencies, the environmental, and the navigations Communities—he said to pass on his thanks to all agencies. It is now one the of top 8 projects in Corps, but it's only step 1-- now we need to fight the battle to convince Congress \$33 million is where we need to be. There is a good chance Congress will feel there are other funding priorities. We need to continue to push and show that the funds will be spent well.

In view of the FY04 budget, Corps Districts will be accelerating lots of things in 03 that were on back burner, so they are ready for 04 to go to construction. Perk is laying out all product schedules for EMPCC in a couple weeks. For state reps there will be increased coordination duties associated with these. LTRMP will be close to a \$10 million budget. A good chunk is the part UMESC works with. UMESC will also pursuing work that has been on back burner. There will also be work done in the corps Districts, contract work, and work at WES (Barko's group).

Gary Christoff commented that they have concerns about how additional money, especially on LTRMP side will be spent—staffing vs. data vs. informational needs. "We're not looking for a bunch of people", he said. "We don't want to get right back into the situation of having to let people go."

Roger Perk said all discussions with Leslie have been along the same lines—what amount of monitoring and what staff do we need? They will be planning with UMESC to determine what is the right amount of staffing and what additional funds there are for research—they are working toward a smaller baseline monitoring and baseline number of people in case the budget goes down again, Perk stated.

John Sullivan asked, "When will we see something that outlines what base is? Will some of these analyses be completed on time?" Perk replied he is already planning with

UMESC and the A-Team will see it by 3rd Qtr, August EMPCC meeting. Plans will be out for comments by then. We're really shooting towards having an SOW and plan a couple months before the end of the year.

Barry Johnson said all analyses are underway as planned and will be useful.

Another question—"Could someone clarify what base scope for monitoring is? 02? 03?" Perk replied need to they determine where that line is. He said he would like to see it somewhere in between those two—"02 is a base program of \$17 million or higher—we would like to see it stay there, but likely it will not," he said. Barry J. said UMESC tried to look at 02 work and figure out a cost for that, inflated to 04 \$. "That will be part of entire thing we look at," he said.

Gary Christoff suggested he would like to see Leslie Holland-Bartels come to EMPCC meeting in February and "EMPCC could have philosophical discussion of where we'd like to go."

John Sullivan asked for clarification on the base LTRMP budget. Roger Perk said his gut feeling is between where we were in 02 and where we were headed in 03 (before we stopped sampling). He said they are aiming to find comfortable base program. Extra money would still go into LTRMP, but would be towards focused pieces of work. So if budgets do get cut back, we don't get into the wailing and grinding of teeth, cut staff, cut monitoring, etc. The additional \$ will be targeted towards answering the big science questions in the science planning effort. He gave the example of looking at over wintering of Centrarchids for 1-3 yrs.

Gary Christoff made the point that it might not be just monitoring—"People need to complete information, such as new bathymetry, aerial photography, etc."

John Chick had a comment that got back to Gary's earlier comment—"there seems to be an underlying philosophical assumption that everyone in EMPCC and States have agreed they would like to see more focused research rather than baseline monitoring. He said, "We are proposing to cut monitoring. Bob Hrabik said he and other colleagues have real concerns about cutting monitoring and adding research--real concerns, he emphasized.

Tom Boland said that he'd like to know when the broader partnership comes into play with discussions about these topics. He stressed that we don't want to wait until 3 rd qtr. of the year to have it be the first time we are looking at it. We need to talk about that at the next A-Team meeting at end of April. "Would that be too soon?" he asked.

Perk agreed that it should be discussed then—that's why he asked Leslie to come and get feelings of EMPCC, he said.

Tom Boland said, with additional funding, come many opportunities—we need broad discussions to make sure we agree. "Frankly, I would rather do it sooner than later."

Dick Steinbach had to leave the call at that point and commented—"This is on the track I thought it might get on—as far as even addressing monitoring program in 04, I'm curious to get feed back from the data evaluations this fiscal year.

Roger Perk replied that we'd have to let that run its course and see where it's heading.

Dick Steinback said that as far as this year, is concerned, everything in Leslie's letter looks fine and he will defer to the rest of the group to make the choices.

Discussion of FY03 "Under \$15 Million" Budget Scenarios

Barry walked us through potential sampling under 15 million budget. (See Feb. 6, 2003 letter Leslie Holland-Bartels sent to Tom Boland.) There is a range of \$12.2--\$15 million and variety of ways to spend extra money. Appendix C indicates how much and there is not all that much difference between the two. \$124K is real the real difference. Some additions under \$12.2 won't occur under 15 million (HREP transfer, field station contingency funds, etc.) There is about \$90K in spendable funds once overhead is taken out.

Fisheries, macro, vegetation, and others—LCU and Bathymetry are relatively expensive. Enhancements—exploratory sampling fish and inverts P13-26. Getting more information in those areas may help us make better decisions for 04 monitoring and beyond. Acquisition of maps and photos for trend pools is another possible enhancement. In response to a question about the exploratory sampling, Barry Johnson said we need to design monitoring to include more systemic information—it includes a fixed design now, but there are different ways to get at the system as a whole.

Some asked for more detail about the exploratory sampling. Barry Johnson said we need more information Outside of the 6 LTRMP study reaches. A variety of sampling designs would allow us to do that. It is desirable to keep sampling at some or all locations we do now, but maybe randomly select from other pools on "x" year cycles. Barry emphasized it would give us some idea of whether long stream of information we have on the six reaches applies to the rest of the river—we can test it.

Tom Boland asked, "Have these discussions taken place with the Team Leaders to see if they are logistically doable. Barry he had only had some discussions.

John Sullivan said he's all in favor of systemic analyses, but we need to look at our evaluation of the monitoring data first. What components are most important? His other concern was that sections of river within existing study reaches are not monitored—"What are we missing?" he asked. "We don't do the Black River—yet it covers a substantial portion of Pool 8. If we monitored Pool 7, would we omit Lake Onalaska because it was part of the Black River? Before we start jumping down out pool road, I'd like to see some basis and support for doing it."

Barry Johnson agreed that we need to determine what information we need and if potential designs in the 6 reaches are adequate. He also explained that some deadlines come earlier than others—Macroinvertebrates need to be decided by March 15 or so. For fisheries we could probably do exploratory work in pd. 2 and the decision needed on that is by June 1. "We can use the current analyses to help us do a better job of deciding," he concluded.

John Sullivan commented, "I don't see how doing the out pool sampling is going to benefit the out pool sampling design until the analyses are completed on the existing LTRM pools."

Tom Boland suggested he can note it now or later if folks want to provide us with their thoughts on what they think is most important.

John Chick—I did propose this awhile ago—in terms of fish in table 1 under A, alternative would be Day Electro fishing all 6 pools, all 3 time periods--cost would be the same as doing all in the 3rd time period. Barry Johnson replied that from our discussions here (at UMESC) using 3 different gears 3rd period gives us a better indication of the total community over time.

Terry Dukerschein noted that the Onalaska Field Station staff could do it as Chick proposed, but due to the amount of sampling and other work they are already tasked with in FY03, it would be a real squeeze and would be cutting it close without having to hire extra help.

John Sullivan said he was confused from the Water Quality component's side where we left it in November verses where we are today regarding the add-in for fixed sites and doing chemistry. Barry Johnson claimed it was discussed in fall meeting along with other fish work and bathymetry. It includes what was in Scenario A plus enhancements with fixed sites and updating spatial queries. In Appendixes A, B, C, and D there are no fixed sites or water chemistry monitoring described, Sullivan said.—It was apparently added in for Scope A for FY03 later and included in 12.2 million budget.

John Sullivan asked for clarification and reconsideration of the chemistry variables— Total Nitrogen, suspended Phosphorous, suspended solids, and suspended Chlorophyll a. "My comment is that it should include ammonia and nitrate nitrogen," he said. "My point is we had no input in terms of parameters or sites sampled.

"The details of how it will be implemented are being worked out by Dave Soballe with other water quality folks," Barry said, "but the concept is what was discussed."

Dukerschein repeated concern about the about total workload for the Onalaska field station this spring and summer if fish, vegetation, and all water quality is implemented as described in Pool 8 without extra help. [Water quality staff in Pool 8 are also helping with the lab work and likely will be continuing to help with methods development and component coordination.]

John Sullivan suggested starting in March to catch the nutrient loading earlier in the spring flood pulse—"The point is these were comments I would have made back in November had this been on the table," he said. Pete Redmon agreed that to maintain at least part of the continuous record, it is important to get—"The spring flush part is a real critical piece," he said.

Lesile's table is gross costs. Tom Boland asked for ideas on how we might proceed—for broad input.

He suggested we could provide individual comments—and said he was reluctant to talk about where to put money without having a face-to-face meeting. "Would it work out if we individually provide comments to Barry?" he asked. It was eventually decided the A-Team would provide comments to Tom Boland ASAP and he would make forward them to Barry with A-Team recommendations.

UMESC needs to be moving on this quickly, Gary Christoff reminded people. "I'm a real data/information person—give the information to people who need it so they can use it. Bathymetry, aerial photography are good places to spend money."

Tom Boland said another option we have is to go through this item-by-item and give individual feelings on each. Which is preferred—do it now or send comments?

John Sullivan said he was prepared to give his comments right now.

Tom Boland suggested that the 11 items might go faster than we think.

Mark Cornish asked if we should give equal weight to each feature or are they already prioritized?

Barry said they are equal ways to spend money, no priorities.

TB asked for comments on using the hierarchy as is.

J Sullivan said he supports the scheme that describes analyses on sampling designs on table 1 and requested that it be raised to the top priority. "Also, how do we better integrate components, what's important to monitor, how should it be done?" he asked.

Many others agreed—Tom Boland asked if any opposed making that analysis top priority. No opposition was voiced, so that analyses got moved to the top of the table. The A Team wants it to rise above even restoration of core activities.

Tom Boland asked when we look at range of funding, should we shoot for a middle figure?

Someone else asked what are exact products we would expect on the analysis?

Barry said he would expect a write-up that indicates a few different types of sampling design than what we are doing now—something that brings some of the new thinking in monitoring to the group and to the project as a whole.

John Barko cautioned that if there ever is a new design put in place, that at least for a couple years we must go with new design along with the original to tie back to the old data. "That doubles the expense for a 2-year period," he pointed out.

Tom Boland reaffirmed that the statistical analysis is at the top level of priority and moved the discussion to restoration of core activities. Megan Moore questioned why vegetation sampling in Pool 4 cost \$14K and Barry Johnson clarified that figure included vegetation and the associated Water Quality sampling for light regime to go into the modeling effort.

JS asked if the sampling would compromise the component data analysis, and Barry Johnson replied that they tried to include costs for backfilling so as not to compromise the analyses.

John Barko left at 10 am.

After confusion over the cost of the core activities, Barry Johnson updated other core activity costs—in Appendix B, LCU=\$ 67K, Bathymetry=\$ 26K-129K per pool. Someone made the point these would use up all the money and we probably could postpone them.

Eric Laux asked about unfinished business in corps work like the dike data on Open River. "I want to see finishing Open River added in he said, but he did not have a \$ amount at this time.

Barry Johnson said the bathymetry depends on how the Corps wants to do it and their availability.

It sounds like something if budget goes way up, we can tool it in, someone else said.

Kevin Stauffer brought up a need to finish bathymetry on Pool 5 because of a possible upcoming drawdown. Barry said that Jim Rogala says it is near complete, but not complete yet on lower P5—that might be an area to look at as far as spending money.

No plan is in place for reinstating bathymetry sampling at UMESC through the future. The money is kept in the Corps and they get it done. Tom Boland suggested leave it open for P5 and let players at UMESC decide what bathymetry is critical to get done.

LCU--\$67K. Is that something we feel critical for 03? Linda Leake said it accelerates areas noted under B—that's the cost and capability the Center has this year. It's Photo Interpretation of those pools, which would allow milestones to be moved up next year for completion.

Rob Mayer asked why accelerate in a year when we're looking at a reduced budget?

Tom suggested that we leave the other core activities in the scope of work and next look at enhancements—assuming there's something of interest.

John Sullivan emphasized that exploratory analysis doesn't necessarily have to be in the field, could be in terms of data analysis. Tom Boland added that the fish, macro invertebrate and vegetation sampling listed is all exploratory sampling—to do it all would cost \$50-\$60 K or more.

In response to a question about how those 3 relate to the analyses we've moved to top priority, Barry Johnson said there is no specific plan, but it would help how we lay out the transition and how it might play into future sampling design.

John Chick asked if the macro invertebrate cost was figured independent of fish costs, and Jennie Sauer replied, "Yes." He suggested calculating cost assuming we go out and do fish work at the same time. Barry Johnson replied that time for sampling and labor would need to be allowed for and the cost wouldn't go down a heck of a lot.

Tom asked for any LCU that would be of critical need for FY03?

UMESC has capability to do some this year if need be, also aerial photos of lower HREPs, but its not necessarily critical at this time. Linda Leake said listed LCU efforts are independent of the 2000 LCU underway.

Mark Pegg brought up more vegetation. He pointed out the floodplain forest stuff cheap and it might be prudent to expand it beyond Pool 26 into some of the other pools. John Chick agreed, saying there were reasons for expanding sampling in other pools—it's considerably different from what we see in IL." Should it be a consideration to expand those areas?

Summary of suggested enhancements:

- 1. Move sampling design analysis by a statistical consultant--move up to #1.
- 2. Do core activities under A.
- 3. 3. Enhance fish, vegetation, and macro invertebrate sampling in out pools with a caveat to include invertebrate sampling with fish if possible to reduce cost.
- 4. Higher priority for water quality effort, start earlier to capture spring flood flush, and figure costs of the additional parameters recommended-- suggested nitrate series, ammonia, nitrate, etc.
- 5. Take out for LCU and bathymetry except consider including completion of Pool 5 drawdown.
- 7. 6. Do enhancements for vegetation and invertebrates with some exploratory work on floodplain vegetation. John Sullivan emphasized again that he is opposed to all exploratory sampling until analyses are complete. Kevin Stauffer

said he was leaning the same way, especially in a reduced budget situation. Leslie said exploratory efforts, not sampling. Look at the planning for FY04 and link it to the analysis to lay out sampling plans for 04. John Sullivan asked why exploratory sampling could not be done in the existing 6 study reaches. Barry Johnson clarified that we would not be testing techniques; we would be getting new information we don't have.

Tom Boland asked —"if we don't do exploratory sampling, what should we do instead? John Sullivan said look at what we dropped in 02, 03, fish, vegetation, and water quality sampling and other things, like bathymetry is high priority. "I don't support any outpool sampling this fiscal year," he said. "There is plenty of money already identified such as the statistical consulting and additional bathymetry. I'm opposed to outpool sampling until we've completed important analyses. I'm not opposed to getting information, but this year isn't the time."

John Chick commented that the selected Pools are the exact area of river we don't have information for. "We can't do an analyses that will tell us anything about those pools," he said. John Sullivan asked, Which component is more important to monitor?" Mark Pegg said we don't know. John Sullivan asked why couldn't we base the exploratory work on the 6 study reaches we already have to determine what is important to monitor?" Jenny Sauer said, "We know nothing in that stretch for pool 19—in Open River we monitored for 10 yrs and got nothing. Are there benthics there or is there some other method we should be using?"

Once UMESC sends costs and Tom Boland looks at comments, he will get a letter out. Tom Boland said he's willing to call anyone to discuss comments, especially if they are really opposed to something. E-mail Tom Boland with your comments.

Science Planning Update

Barry Johnson sent out e-mail including attachments and output from the January 9, 2003 meeting. Mark Cornish asked how it stacked up with the 13 big picture questions generated in HNA process? Barry had not yet specifically matched that up yet. He mentioned that next Tuesday Pat Heglund, Brian Ickes, and he were going to Rock Island to talk to USFWS. At EMPCC Leslie would cover it.

Team Leaders reported field stations all on schedule with data and 10-yr report. Barry said UMESC is looking at filling Dave's position. Nothing will happen before he leaves. They're trying to get position description together now, but it will be months before it's filled.

Report to Congress (RTC)

Mark Cornish reported for Roger Perk. RTC—1st 3 draft chapters ready for discussion at EMPCC. There will be a final draft by the end of July, ready for review and comments. The RTC is going towards a status and trends report for next fiscal year—will use some RTC material in Status and Trends Report.

Next Meeting

There was general consensus that an additional face-to-face A-Team meeting to discuss FY03 work was unwarranted, given the small difference in funded work between the \$12.2 and \$15 million scenarios.

The next Team meeting will be face to face, April 22-23, 2003 (to be finished by noon on 23rd), in La Crosse (with Leslie and UMESC staff there).

Tom Boland also wants us to consider face-to-face meeting in July to look at the FY04 budget and scope of work. Bob Hrabik asked for meeting time to update everyone on changes at Open River and work with new experimental sampling gears. Boland said he will be asking for agenda items later and will try to work it in. It was suggested Hrabik bring his MRRC poster about fish/habitat relationships to the A-Team meeting. The poster by Barko, Palmer, Herzog, and Hrabik is titled "Relationships Between Fish Communities, Habitat Types, and Environmental Gradients."

The conference call adjourned at 11 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Terry Dukerschein



United States Department of the Interior

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14 April 2003

To:

LTRMP Fish Component staff

From:

Brian S. Ickes

Subject:

2003 Spring Fish Component meeting agenda

First, please disregard my previous memo and agenda dated 8 April 2003. Emerging travel related issues have made that proposed meeting unworkable.

We will convene our annual Fish Component Meeting in Onalaska, WI on April 23, 2003. Technical staff will convene a technical session all day on the 23rd while the Field Station Directors and I attend the A-Team meeting. Within the technical session, Andy Bartels will lead discussions and briefings on FY02 sampling, FY03 sampling needs and logistics, and observations from FY02 sampling with a reduced suite of gear types. With upcoming report deadlines looming, Andy will also brief the attendees at the technical session on UMESC review and product tracking procedures, and Georgina Ardinger will make a brief presentation on effectively interfacing with the editorial review staff at UMESC. Lastly, the afternoon of the technical session is set aside for discussion and orientation on the Electronic Data Entry Application.

Following the A-Team meeting, we will all convene again for a short evening meeting. I wish to keep this as brief as possible. My goal here is to simply have each analysis team brief the rest of the component on where they are at, where they are going, and what they have found. I'd like to keep each team briefing to 15 minutes.

I have chosen to drop the "programmatic uncertainties" portion of the previous agenda at this time. Once the A-Team and EMPCC meetings are behind us, I will arrange a briefing on these topics via teleconference in needed.

Please note changes in meeting location and times within the attached agenda. Have a safe trip and see you soon.

Agenda

LTRMP Fish Component Annual Meeting April 23, 2003 UMESC East Campus conference room Onalaska, WI 54650

Technical session

UMESC East Campus conference room

Morning session (8am – 11am)

Chair: Andy Bartels

Welcome and Role Call Bartels

Pool reports from FY02 sampling All

Logistics for FY03 sampling All

Observations on gear reductions in 2002 All

Technical / peer-review and product tracking procedures

Bartels

Interfacing with editorial review staff at UMESC Ardinger

Afternoon session (12pm - 4pm)

UMESC East Campus conference room

Chair: Andy Bartels

Electronic Data Entry Application Workshop Bartels / Hansen

Information Session

Evening session (6pm - 8pm)

UMESC East Campus conference room

Chair: Brian Ickes

Welcome and Role Call Ickes

Analysis Team Reports

Data Management Bartels
10-year Report Bowler
Exotics Irons
Life History O'Hara
Autecology Kirby

Synecology Hrabik/Ickes/Chick/Pegg

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All team leaders present

US65 Tom Kelly Larry Robinson

Jim Rogala Brian Grey

Brian Takes Jenny Sawer

Jim Fischer