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MINUTES
COMPUTERIZED RIVER INFORMATION CENTER (CRIC)
ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
ROCK ISLAND, ILLINOIS
SEPTEMBER 10, 1987

1. Joe Wlosinski opened the meeting noting that the program is behind the original IDMS hiring schedule. At present, he is the only CRIC employee.

2. Computer Acquisition.

    a. CRIC is planning to acquire a Prime 9955 mini computer. ARC/INFO acquisition is not viewed as a problem. The contract will be technically reviewed by FWS and Department of the Interior on September 15. Delivery is anticipated before June 1988.
    b. Bill Shaw commented that the original IDMS concept was to use $40K in FY 87 to get equipment out to the people in the field who need to be able to use the computer if the program is to succeed.
    c. Al Behm proposes that some underutilized equipment be "rented" from the states. Possible ways to do this were discussed, as was the possibility of minimizing overhead removed as money passes from the Corps through FWS to the states. State committee members noted that they usually do not have underutilized computer equipment.

3. Space Requirements.

    a. Space is not available for the EMP computer or additional LTRM personnel at the Fisheries Research Center in La Crosse. The Director, Region 3, has decided to move the computer center and technical staff of LTRM to the Post Office Building in La Crosse. GSA and the Post Office must get together on space allocation and agreements enabling construction. It was suggested that this process can be very slow and that outside pressure may be necessary to expedite action. Alternatives were discussed.
    GSA is supposed to give permission for use of the space this week. Joe Wlosinski will prepare a tentative schedule following communication with GSA and the Post Office to present to the EMPCC meeting September 22-23.
    b. The Advisory Committee recommends that the entire LTRM staff be located in the La Crosse Post Office, but progress of arrangements/construction must be closely monitored so that pressure can be applied as necessary.

4. The CRIC Advisory Committee

    Joe Wlosinski will recommend the current membership. Appointment letters will be sent by Joe Scott. The Chair will rotate among the states with one year appointments. Joe Scott will distribute the minutes.
    Glenn Radde was elected Chairman by acclamation.
    Andy Breuzewicz agreed to be the meeting secretary.

5.   Initial Expenditures

The issue of spending money early in the program on the mini computer versus assessing data needs, applications, and format was discussed. It was decided to support the early acquisition of the computer, but to also stress the ultimate purpose of the program - getting the field staff to utilize the information gathered during the program - and to initiate discussions of data needs and applications.

6.   Role of the Advisory Committee

a.   It was noted that if the Advisory Committee's recommendations are consistently ignored, its continued existence is pointless. Differences in the amount of effort that committee members can contribute were noted, given that additional committee duties will be forthcoming.
b.   Quarterly meetings will be held:
                    Dec. 2-3, 1987 Twin Cities
                    Mar. 2-3, 1988
                    June 8-9, 1988
                    Sept. 14-15, 1988
c.   Another EMAIL communication network would be useful. Joe Wlosinski and Jim Jacques will investigate possiblities through their agencies.
d.   Concerns of Advisory Committee members regarding issues before the EMPCC will be made known through each individual's EMPCC representative. Members will be responsible for distributing minutes of these meetings to their own EMPCC representatives.

7.   Major Work Tasks

CRIC 1 and 2 were combined as a single ongoing task. It was decided not to change the time allocation as portrayed, but noted that the actual effort must be reexamined. Much discussion centered around the need to consolidate CRIC 5-7 and to initiate meetings with the Ecology Advisory Committee and HREP people to determine specific monitoring needs. A case study approach centered on an ongoing project, such as Island 42, was supported by the committee.

8.   Budget

a.   It was explained that the three expenditure levels shown in the handout do not include overhead. Joe Wlosinski stated that the cost of a moderate level land cover/land use classification at 5 year intervals will be added to the document. It was noted that this component is critical and needs to be specifically commented on in the Operating Plan narrative. Joe Wlosinski stated that he would do so.
b.   The Advisory Committee recommended that to reduce the 1988 operating budget to fit the anticipated funding level, budget items be cut in the following order:

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($000)
    95        construction
    30        field station equipment
     9        other
    50        electrostatic printer
    30        SAS ____ (mainframe)
    13        computer equipment specialist
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   The Advisory Committee also recommended that the 1000 lpm printer be replaced with a laser printer since the latter would be both less expensive and able to produce graphic products. It was noted that there are no laser printers available in the contract with Prime and that there might be difficulties involved in such a switch.

   c.   The Advisory Committee further recommended that the prospective field stations be identified in each state so that the IBM ATs can be transferred to them as soon as possible. It was also recommended that computers with capabilities more appropriate for word processing and spread sheets be used in the LTRM office.

   d.   Joe Wlosinski noted that it is hoped that some or all of the FWS overhead money going to the Regional Office will be returned to the operating budget in FY 88 as it was in FY 87.

   e.   Members from all of the states said that should funding become available, their states would be willing to work on data base updates.

9.   Additional Recommendations

   a.   It is essential that the ecology and CRIC groups (or portions thereof) meet to discuss the what, how, where, and formatting of monitoring data. CRIC 5-7 and 14 need joint discussion and should be included in the ecology group's work tasks. This meeting should include HREP people, the statistician, and possibly an expert from a major riverine monitoring effort. It was noted that some of the state field biologists are starting to comment on the apparent lack of coordination between the two groups.

   b.   The LTRM program manager needs to know that a larger staff is necessary to handle the burgeoning LTRM work load.
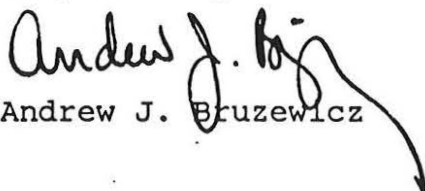
   c.   More thought needs to be given to the logical structure of the data base(s) to be developed: how is the data to be used? how will it be aggregated and disaggregated? who will maintain the data? etc. Data base design and implementation need more support and consideration.

   d.   Personnel brought into the program should be full time/permanent to insure that the best people are hired and can be retained.

   e.   More time must be allocated in the operating plan to training prospective users of the CRIC system. Communication and training are critical.

f.   The question of whether system-wide land cover/land use can be effectively accomplished at a smaller scale needs to be reexamined. Given the available budget, a satellite data set for the system with higher resolution data for areas receiving specific attention might be more cost effective. Alternatively, large scale photography of the entire system might be acquired, but interpreted only as projects require.

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew J. Bruzewicz

COMPUTERIZED RIVER INFORMATION CENTER

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October 22, 1987

Dear CRIC Advisory Team Member,

Thank you for your interest and help as a member of the Computerized River Information Center (CRIC) Advisory Team. With your help, we will be able to provide the tools needed to better manage the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS). Your recommendations will be addressed each time the minutes are provided to the Team. It was recommended that we maintain close coordination between the Ecological and CRIC Advisory Teams. I will distribute the recommendations of either Team, along with my response, to both Teams. The following information is in response to your CRIC meeting minutes:

3b. The decision of whether to keep the EMTC staff together or separated belongs with the Regional Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. The same recommendation was made to the Assistant Regional Director by the Environmental Management Program Coordinating Committee (EMPCC) at their last meeting. Your recommendation has been made known to the Regional Director for his consideration.

4. The EMPCC agreed to the membership of the CRIC Advisory Team.

5. Computer acquisition is still being planned for FY 88. With the addition of staff planned over the next few months, we will be in a much better position to discuss data needs and applications.

6a. CRIC Advisory Team recommendations, including those in the IDMS Action Plan Report, have not been taken lightly. The LTRM is closely following the recommendations given the budget constraints the EMP is working under. The efforts of the Advisory Team are appreciated and your efforts and support will be instrumental in accomplishing the goals of the EMP.

6c. An ELECTRONIC MAIL communication network is on our list of "things to do."

7. Tasks CRIC 1 and CRIC 2 have been combined in the most recent version of the Operating Plan for the LTRMP. Everyone agrees to the importance of CRIC tasks 5, 6 and 7 and these tasks are receiving high priority for FY 88. I will ensure coordination between the CRIC and other activities of the EMP.

Your idea of a case study approach is a good one and such a study will be initiated as soon as possible, but probably not until CRIC tasks 5, 6 and 7 are well underway.

8a.   The Operating Plan now addresses land cover/land use classification.

8b.   Your recommendations for reducing the FY 88 budget for CRIC will be implemented if need be; however, we are still not sure of possible construction costs for the computer center. This question may be resolved at a meeting among the EMTC staff, GSA, Post Office, Prime Computer, Inc. and our contracting office on October 14.

The possibility of replacing the 1000 lpm printer with a laser printer was brought up at a meeting among the EMTC, Region 3 Information Resource Management and Washington personnel representing their contracting office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Dept. of the Interior. Because the laser printer is not a part of the Prime Contract and because a change would delay authorization for purchasing the Prime Computer, we are ordering the 1000 lpm printer. The possibility of purchasing a laser printer will be reexamined in the future.

8c.   The decision has been made to send one IBM PC AT or possibly IBM PS/2 60 to one field station in each state. The exact location is still being discussed. The assistant program manager for CRIC will recommend the computer equipment to be provided to the states.

8e.   The states will be provided the opportunity to work on data base updates. The mechanism will be through cooperative agreements with the Fish and Wildlife Service.

9a.   I agree with this recommendation and will ensure it will be complied with to the extent possible.

9b.   A larger staff is necessary to handle the LTRMP workload. Needed staff is proposed in Figure 19 of the Draft Operating Plan. However, the Plan was based on funding at the authorized level, which allocated $6 million per year for EMTC activities. The EMTC staff will be increased at a level commensurate with funding. A statistician began working on the Program on October 5, and the process to hire a computer programmer analyst and a biologist with systems experience has been initiated. A computer equipment specialist will be hired before the Prime Computer is installed.

9c.   This will be one of the major tasks of the CRIC staff.
9d.   The following appears in the Memorandum of Agreement Between the Department of the Army and the Department of the Interior for Implementation of the Upper Mississippi River System Environmental Management Program (UMRS-EMP).
1)   "Use of state and Corps of Engineers personnel through

inter-governmental and interagency personnel actions or transfers will be pursued as an essential element in program staffing" (IV.2).

2) "The DOI recognizes that all aspects, including funding, of the UMRS-EMP, like any other authorized Corps project, will be subject to action by the Chief of Engineers, ASA(CW), OMB, and the Appropriations Committees" (IV.2).

The possibility of full time permanent positions remains a management option that will be considered on a case by case basis.

9e. More resources are allocated to training in the latest version of the Operating Plan.

Your input concerning the following would be appreciated:

1) Any information you may have concerning tasks 5,6 and 7 in the Draft Operating Plan. For standards and conventions this could be a complete and detailed set of instructions or the name of an individual or other program that could provide us with their examples.

2) An indication of your willingness to serve on a temporary subcommittee for establishing standards and conventions.

Joseph F. Scott, Jr.

Attachment - 1) Minutes of September 10, 1987 CRIC Meeting
             2) Distribution List