



Wisconsin Conservation Congress
 Mississippi River Advisory Committee
 Meeting Minutes

WCC Meeting Minutes
 Form 8300-026 (R 11/17) Page 1 of 7

ORDER OF BUSINESS	03/29/2022	6:30pm	ZOOM
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I. ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

A. CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order by	Mike Britton at 6:30pm
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B. ROLL CALL

ATTENDEES	Wes Domine, Ed Peters, Michael Britton, Travice Burce, Mark Noll, Daniel Heidel, Marc Schultz, Rick Wayne, Ted Engeliem, Charles Gauger, Lester Ryder, Tim Morgan, Robert Ziel, Wayne Stietz, Barbara Dahlgren, Lester Ryder, Reed Kabelowsky. DNR - Christopher Tall, Bob Jumbek, David Heath,
EXCUSED	Hugh Hatch, Maurice Amundson, Tad Beutin.
UNEXCUSED	Pearl Holmstead, Jody Bigalke, Andrew Novak, Juliee de la Terre, Rick Wayne, Kelly Tollefson
GUESTS	Kristen Wallace - Upper Mississippi River Basin (UMRBA), Tim Miller USFWS, Ray Marinan - Corp. Jim Fischer - DNR (UMRBA) Fritz Funk & Ray Heidel

C. AGENDA APPROVAL/REPAIR

DISCUSSION	Prior to the meeting, I was advised by Chair Britton of a possible move of agenda item H in front of item E.
ACTION	Motion by Marc Schultz and 2nd by Mark Noll to repair the agenda as introduced by Mike Britton by moving item H. (Blackdeer water quality information) ahead of item E. (Brice Prairie gap rip-rap/closure project) - carried.

D. REVIEW COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

DISCUSSION	Reed read the committee mission statement aloud for the group. Within and to the support of Wisconsin Conservation Congress process; it is the mission of the Mississippi River Committee (MRC) to advise the Wisconsin NRB and Department of Natural Resources on issues, rules, or policies which affect the river and/or other associated natural resources. The MRC strives to stay acquainted with current river resource management; the science in support or opposition to that management; and with public opinion thereof. The MRC encourages river management agencies to seek public participation in management decisions or policy. Influence stemming from the MRC shall be generated with greatest intentions toward long term benefits to all fish and wildlife resources; and with an emphasis toward preserving public access and harvest of game resources, (i.e., preserving outdoor heritage activities of hunting, fishing, and trapping).
ACTION	Motion by Wes Domine and 2nd by Tim Morgan to keep the MRAC Mission Statement as is - carried.

E. PUBLIC COMMENTS

DISCUSSION	I was notified of two members of the public requesting to address the committee. Ray Heidel - Fritz Funk - Ray Heidel: Ray had given notice that he would like to address the MRAC and its guests. Ray indicated that he wished to speak directly to item E. from the agenda – Brice Prairie dike gap rip-rap/closure project. -Ray spoke of his experience on a windy day while duck hunting that became quite perilous due to building wind and white-cap conditions on the lake. Ray felt the day could have turned out differently if he had not been able to use this “cut” in the dike to slip through to safety. -Water quality issues have remained unchanged for years. -This “cut” should remain in place as a safety outlet for boaters/users. -Treacherous stretch of water in windy conditions. -Encourage planners to keep this “cut” open. Fritz Funk: Fritz had given notice he would like to address the MRAC and its guests. Same issues.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -President of Brice Prairie EMS & Rescue -Also encourages this group to do everything possible to keep this safety outlet open. -Talked about some incidences where EMS personnel were called to act on incidences on this body of water. -Ray commented again = a case of common sense and safety over science.
ACTION	

II. INFORMATION & ACTION ITEMS

A. DNR Informational Updates

David Heath and Bob Jumbeck

DISCUSSION	<p>David Heath – Wisconsin DNR Fisheries:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Spoke about the overall and area wide poor fishing reports and complaints. Many of which came from Lake Onalaska. 2. Contributing issues could be low water levels and changing water flows. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Wayne Stietz also experienced widespread poor fishing from there south. -Chuck Gauger also poor fishing in the Alma Area. -Marc Schultz asked about presence of shad – lots of northern during summer months. -Tim Morgan fished a lot and heard lots of complaints of poor fishing. Also stated that there were many guides on Pools 7-9. 3. DNR Guide Permits = \$40. Not much regulation of the guiding beyond the \$40 fee. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -No word on revising this situation – no action expected on guiding licensing and requirements 4. Asian Carp removal set to begin next week and run all week. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LaCrosse Area mainly. 2. Similar to last years activities. 3. Pool 8 and the gravel pits will be targeted. 5. Habitat Projects. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Big Lake – in planning process/step b. Pool 9 – LTR data being sought. c. Conway Lake – Upper Pool 9. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -final stages of completion. d. McGregor Lake – Prairie du Chein Area. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Stage 1 completed. -Stage 2 – starting now. -Dredging and water control structures installations. -65% planning stage level. -Bidding season - \$8 million. e. Lower Pool 9 – Planning and Instruction stage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Comments sought early. -\$28 million. f. Sarah from Corp. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Corp construction project near Fountain City Area. -Pools 4-6, 8, 10 – similar to Lock & Dam 7. <p>-Chuck Gauger – How is sauger population doing? Recruitment? Down 85%?</p> <p>-Dave Heath – Poor recruitment for last 12-13 years – below average.</p> <p>-May need some regulation changes.</p> <p>-Previously no interest from public in reg changes.</p> <p>-Water clarity is clearing – more a turbid water fish.</p> <p>-could also be habitat issue.</p> <p>Bob Jumbeck – DNR (Buffalo County Warden) Law Enforcement update:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Echo Dave and MRC member concerns regarding ice fishing reports. 2. The river team is mostly full except one vacancy in the Grant County Area. 3. New Recreational Safety Specialist <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Great asset for accident investigations. b. Kirk – LaCrosse and Grant County Areas. 4. Recently completed an airboat training program put on by Warden Rainmaker from Minnesota. <p>Questions:</p> <p>Wayne Stietz – How far from tips can you be during ice fishing?</p> <p>Bob Jumbeck -No distance requirement</p> <p>-Must respond to a bite.</p>
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	<p>-Case by case basis – judgement. -Minnesota has distance requirement, but not sure what it is. -Open water it is 100 yards. Mike Britton – Sound complaints – what is happening with this currently? -Big tournament in Winona Area. -Big stir from folks – lots of traffic. -Since then – not much going on with this. -One issue near Trempeleau – lights and generator noise.</p> <p>Reed Kabelowsky – Issue with Voluntary Avoidance Areas? -No more issues since the video incident. -A couple of unrelated complaints. -This is a volunteer effort – no law.</p> <p>Wes Domine – Bow fishing – and as it relates to Buffalo fish resolution. What is happening with this? -Haven’t heard much – non-game fish and not a top priority. -Ed Peters – American Fisheries Society has a committee for “underappreciated fish species.” -Bow fishermen were concerned about this resolution – thought it was directed at them. -Was not intent to target them specifically.</p> <p>Marc Schultz – Is there an opinion from UMRCC about the poor fishing? -Have not heard.</p>
ACTION	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE

B. Corp of Engineers Updates.

Ray Marinar

DISCUSSION	<p>Corp of Engineering Update – Ray Marinar</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. LaCrescent Office. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mainly land management items – on river areas. b. 24,000 acres. 2. Fountain City – Install warning bouys and some shore structures (sheet piling). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Auxiliary Lock – Originally for recreational crafts. 3. Conway Lake (Lansing) – Final stages of completion. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Tree plantings. b. Capoli Slough Islands <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. These islands have been built ii. Already repairs on going. iii. Tree planting to start soon. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Willows. 4. Brice Prairie Access – blow down blocking access. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. At least 12 trees removed. 5. French Lake culvert. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Onalaska Area. b. Serious issues this fall. c. Needed heavy equipment to clean area out. d. Worst buildup in many years – more than can remember. 6. Shoreline Management Projects. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Programs under way – looking at changing the way things are done at national level. b. Discuss how projects have been done in the past. c. Changes coming to make project management more consistent. d. Dock agreements will go up in cost. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. This will be combined with shore real estate items/side. e. Many changes coming in the way things are done. <p>Questions: Wes Domine – Continued awareness of our timber projects -Leaner tree management/repair. -Better maintenance programs – don’t wait so long.</p>
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	-Island preventative maintenance so important. Ray – Corp has made recent efforts to look into this. -Will bring up with Corp.	
ACTION		
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

C. USFW Service Updates

Tim Miller

DISCUSSION	<p>USFWS Updates – Tim Miller:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some recent new arrivals and some vacancies coming up in personnel. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Retirement of ?? 2. Invasives Management. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Flowering Rush <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Pool 8 had an explosion of this. Bringing in contractor to perform removal. ii. Some use of herbicides. b. Brittle Niad – also Pool 8. 3. Habitat Work. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. McGregor, Savannah, and Winona Projects. b. Converting some agricultural fields to planted trees. c. Forestry is big focus d. High water and high winds have created many challenges. e. Looking at new ways to manage forest/ecosystems succession. 4. Onalaska sedimentation levels. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Agencies working together on problem. b. NESP (Navigation and Ecosystems Sustainability Project) project is in top 5 projects on the River 5. Airboat enforcement. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Working with tournaments. b. Several complaints – especially from campers. c. Slow-no-wake areas. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Some issues. d. Black Tern nest disturbance issues. e. Noise, lights, and waves. f. Working with tournament sponsors to avoid problem areas. 6. Conflicts – last year fishing tournament at same time as duck opener. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Created some aingst amount users. <p>Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is USFWS doing regarding Purple Loosestrife? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Beetle release. -Gal at Winona Station working on this. -Partnering with a local high school to raise the beetles. Ray Heidel – only limited success – issues with overwintering. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -USFWS is mostly concentrating on small upland (ish) areas – use of some herbicides. -Too many new invasives showing up. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Japenese Hops – effective if treated early. -True of many invasives. 	
ACTION		
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

D. UMRBA Updates

Kiersten Wallace & Jim Fischer

DISCUSSION	<p>UMRBA Updates – Kiersten Wallace & Jim Fischer.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Working with many agencies, other states, and other federal partners. 2. Federal Appropriations – NESP. 	
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ACTION		
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

- a. \$45 million.
- b. Planning funds, but currently no work funds.
- c. Lock and Dam's 22 & 25.
- d. 9 projects improved.
- e. Soon to be implemented.
- f. Full funding for last 7 years @ \$32 million.
- 3. UMRR – \$32-55 million
 - a. Only needs congressional approval at this point.
 - i. Protecting and restoring projects.
- 4. Status & Trends Report.
 - a. 25 years of data.
- 5. Establishing a new landings page.

E. H.* Blackdeer water quality information.

Marc Schultz

DISCUSSION	H*. Blackdeer water quality information. 1. Marc Schultz <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Brice Prairie channel. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Temperature studies. ii. This is an important overwintering location for fish – warmer water. iii. Lots of sedimentation annually. iv. Ground water inflow – warm, but poor oxygenation. v. Poor dissolved oxygen in this area. b. Want to decrease the flow of water from river. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Narrow the small break in the dyke – “cut”. ii. High water periods have widened the break/cut. iii. Increasing inflow of water – poor conditions worsening. iv. Need more data/time. 	
ACTION		
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

F. E. Brice Prairie dike gap/cut rip-rap/closure project.

[PRESENTER]

DISCUSSION	E. Brice Prairie dike gap/cut rip-rap/closure project. 1. Dan Heidel shared some slides – feels it seems deceptive on how conditions can be so bad at these sampling sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Showed representation of the “cut” other nearby points that have been discussed. b. Questions that the “cut” can have this drastic an influence on quality issues. c. Water quality was marginal before cut started opening up over last few years. -Ray Heidel suggested some sort of wing dam structure?? 2. Blackdeer channel at landing area – fast, cold water. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Lengthy discussion on how these areas are all tied together. 3. Brice Prairie gap (“cut”). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Many considerations/designs being considered 00. b. Altering, adjusting, closing this gap. c. From rip-rap placement, to narrowing to closing with ability to drag a canoe/kayak across wall. 	
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ACTION		
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

G. F. * Pool 7/Lake Onalaska flow and sediment conditions. [PRESENTER]

DISCUSSION	<p>F. Pool 7/Lake Onalaska flow and sediment conditions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One page fact sheet developed. 2. Ideas being considered. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Fine tuning up coming. b. Most sedimentation since 2019 – very sudden process. c. The Brice Prairie “cut” is on USFWS property. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Will need to get some public input. 	
ACTION		
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

H. G.* DNR boat landing at Lock & Dam 6. [PRESENTER]

DISCUSSION	<p>G. DNR boat landing at Lock & Dam 6.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reed asked for clarification – is this the landing we were calling the Trempeleau landing? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Yes – this is the same landing we have talked about for several years. 2. Ted Engelen stated that this has been issue for several years. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Still and issue – only one slip is usable and one slip is completely silted in. The other is marginal. 3. Dave Heath – the biggest issues is money – no money source available. 4. Les Ryder – Corp activity in the area seems to be a big part of the cause. 5. Ray Marinan – currently outside of Corps dredging area. 6. This a boat landing – therefore infrastructure. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Could be a candidate for NESP funding?? 7. Reed discussed the history and the fact that all parties are present at the meeting to get the discussion on this moving forward. Perhaps it could become a Conservation Congress project. Find funding and bring resources together to get this issue resolved for the people of Wisconsin. Called on Ray, Dave, and Tim to bring the information from this discussion back to their agencies. All the resources, except money, is right at the site. 8. Mark Noll stated that the landing is only about 200 yards from the main river channel. 9. Ray Marinan – spoke to the inter-agency struggles of this type and for this site. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Did vow to bring it to the Corp’s attention again. 10. Cost of the project was once estimated at \$50,000. 11. Committee discussed drafting a letter to the appropriate parties asking for resolution. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Reed agreed to write the letter – get the talking points to him. 	
ACTION	<p>*Motion by Marc Schultz and 2nd by Chuck Gauger to draft a letter from the committee to the appropriate parties asking for assistance in bringing together the appropriate resources for this boat landing project to reach a final solution. – carried.</p>	
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	Committee & Reed Kabelowsky	DEADLINE

I. Spring Hearing Protocols

Mike Britton

DISCUSSION	I. Spring Hearings Protocols. 1. Will be held on-line again this year. 2. Need to get the public interested in expressing their thoughts at the spring hearings survey. 3. Reed advised that there are more than 700 county resolutions this year.	
ACTION		
PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE		DEADLINE

III. MEMBERS MATTERS

DISCUSSION	Reed Kabelowsky - Gave a brief summary of the work of the Resolution Review Team's work. Folks from the Congress (about 22) helping to edit and approve resolutions. 783 resolutions received. Chuck Gauger - Thanked Mike for a good meeting and bring folks together. Remind everyone how important the spring hearings are - get other folks involved in the spring hearing questions. Wayne Stietz - Wants to write a resolution to reduce perch limits to 15 on river from Onalaska south to Iowa line. Wes Domine - Spring hearings - please support question 5 - personal bait use. 5th time being a question on the hearings. Also question 36 - Land purchase from Excel Energy. A matching funds purchase (federal money). Needs approval by Joint Finance Committee - vote yes please. Dan Heidel - Please seek public input for final decisions on the Brice Prairie "cut" project - needed for safety outlet. Showed photos of historical hunts that took place near this location. Mark Noll - Miss getting together in person to do our work. Barb Dahlgren - Thanked Mike for getting meeting together. Talked about how long Wes's bait resolution has been in the works without further movement. Would like congress to become more democratic in organization to get solutions through. Ted Engeliem - Thanks for the meeting and spirited discussion on the landing project. Lester Ryder - Want to see committees be able to stop resolutions that are bad ideas at the committee level. Mike Britton - Thanked each agency guest by name for attending a long but informative meeting and for providing their much respected input. Wants a 2-meeting year for the committee to stay in front of some of these issues/ projects/topics.
ACTION	

IV. ADJOURNMENT

MEETING ADJOURNED	Motion by Dan Heidel and 2nd by Wes Domine to adjourn the meeting at 9:09PM - carried.
SUBMITTED BY	Reed C. Kabelowsky
DATE	[Date]

