

FINAL MINUTES

32nd Meeting of the NECC
October 12 & 13, 2001
Holiday Inn – Davenport, IA

CEMVR-PM-A

Navigation Environmental Coordination Committee (NECC)

October 11 & 12, 2001
Holiday Inn, Davenport, Iowa

October 11, 2001

1. WELCOME

The 31st meeting of the Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study Navigation Environmental Coordination Committee (NECC) was called to order by Ken Barr, Chairman. No additions or changes were made to the Agenda. An attendance list is provided at **Attachment 1**. The minutes from the 31st NECC also were discussed, with no recommended edits.

2. STUDY STATUS - KEN BARR AND DENNY LUNDBERG

Denny Lundberg gave a presentation on study status, events of the last year, changes in Corps Headquarters guidance for the study, and an outline of the study schedule. Presentation is provided at **Attachment 2**. Key dates for consideration include February of 2002 for a draft interim report, and July of '02 for a Final Interim Report for the UMR-IWW System Navigation Study. Discussion during the presentation included issues such as comprehensive environmental management and project planning. These are generally captured as below:

Stein: We must be careful as we move forward that we do not continue to treat the environment as a constraint. Much of this conversation is moving back towards the direction of constraints, and not toward overall ecosystem management.

Barr: We will look at the global perspective during the complete planning process. As a part of this study, we will need to acknowledge environmental impacts resulting from specific navigation improvements. These specific environmental impacts would then be addressed in the context of overall ecosystem planning.

Wilcox: Keep in mind that we are directed to define "ecological sustainability." This is extremely difficult if not impossible, and is an issue that we will need to work through. We may be able to identify a desirable future condition, with a desirable management approach for the UMRS, and approach from that angle.

Beorkrem: With this new approach, we are certainly thinking "outside of the box," but at the same time we are not way outside. We will still likely have finite navigation improvements, along with finite environmental improvements. Each can be definable and quantifiable. We can identify these, and move forward to achieve these.

Fenedick: Regarding this use of scenario analysis, a scenario analysis may be appropriate for evaluation in 10-yr time intervals. These are easier to predict, and may lend themselves better to adaptive management. We essentially can evaluate the status of the project after each of these 10-year periods, as opposed to locking into one path for a 50-yr period.

Further discussion was held on what potential scenario analyses would produce: what the analysis would consist of and what would be considered. To be effective, it was suggested that the analysis might need to focus on a few possible scenarios for navigation traffic improvements, as well as a few possible scenarios for environmental issues.

General discussion then moved to the issue papers.

Nelson: We put a lot of work in at the regional level in developing the issue papers than did the regional task force in review.

Benjamin: Why weren't the States a part of the teams that developed the issues papers. Why was this only federal agencies?

Lundberg: I'm not certain. I suspect that we were trying to get the federal act together first, before we get the states involved.

Nelson: We brought this same question up this past year. We said at the time that it was o.k. to only work with federal agencies at that point, but that we would eventually need to coordinate with the States for the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act report.

Break

Barr Presentation

Beorkrem: Would you please provide the raw data for the increase in tow traffic resulting from the 2nd Lock?

Barr: Yes, we'll provide that to you.

Nelson: To be sure, the Issue Papers were not addressed by the Principles Group. We need to have something in place that discusses how these Issues will be addressed.

Collins: Will the Corps put this in a summary form? Can we get a summary of what the Corps will and won't address within the Issues Paper?

Barr: The Concepts Paper from Headquarters captured how we will address the Issue Papers. However, we will need to address how these issues from the Issue Paper will be addressed within the Comprehensive Management Plan.

Fenedick: The Concept Paper was to address these 11 issues. However, I'm not clear on how tightly these are tied together. A diagram or further explanation would be useful to demonstrate how the issues in the Concept Paper relate to all of the 11 Issue Papers.

Discussion moves back toward scenario development.

Wilcox: We can identify what the common goals are that we want, and evaluate likelihood. But this is different than navigational scenarios.

Nelson: Maybe we should consider environmental scenarios. Maybe we should consider scenarios for affects to various aspects of the environment.

Fenedick: remember a scenario-based analysis is one of many tools we'll be using. This approach will have an environmental component for equal consideration, but yet what is driving the need for this analysis is the navigation system. We have goals and objectives for Navigation, but we don't have these for environmental considerations. Words like sustainability and adaptive management are new. This is one component of a new way of thinking.

Wilcox: The Concept Papers assumes and enables the Corps to plan for the future without redefining the issues.

Fenedick: The guidance does provide a lot of latitude, but we need to capture the burning issues.

Beorkrem: During review of Corps policy, I came across something that the group may find useful. This is ER 1110-2-8154, Water Quality and Environmental Management for Corps Civil Works Projects (Attachment X). This provides good guidance and language for environmental concerns. It also addresses some of the O&M issues, and some of the funding issues, we have been and will continue to discuss.

Break out for group discussions

5:00 Adjourn for Day 1

October 12, 2001

Day Two of the 32nd meeting of the Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study Navigation Environmental Coordination Committee (NECC) was called to order by Ken Barr, Chairman. The floor was opened up for initial discussions prior to breaking out into small groups to conclude group discussions.

General discussion was held on the need for effective collaboration for the near future. This should include contacts with directors and key policy people with both State and federal agencies. People with the power to make policy level decisions need to be involved for quick and efficient decision-making. It was suggested that for the Interim Report, we should keep existing management structures and frameworks. Following completion of the Interim Report, we could consider developing a UMR management team, where the Corps is no longer the sole leader.

Concern was also held about the general direction of the Interim Report. Although the group had a general, broad understanding of where the Navigation Study was going, we need to better develop a clear list of goals and objectives for the Navigation Study, the Interim Report, and any accompanying Comprehensive Management Plan. This is especially important to complete prior to the upcoming joint ECC/NECC meeting in November.

Jon D. It would seem that the joint ECC NECC meeting is valuable to move forward on this. But I need a concrete list of objectives; otherwise, I will be wandering. This upcoming meeting seems like the time to lay out these objectives.

Barr: I think that is a valuable point, and we are moving point, and we are taking info from some of the ECC folks, now you folks, and modifying our approach. And we'll need to keep updating you on how things change and morph over the next months.

Concern was voiced about the relatively short time frame for completion of the draft Interim Report. Special concern was voiced by the State agencies, which have limited funds for travel, participation, and work time to complete the large amount of work in the next few months.

Whitney: which emphasizes the need for efficient collaboration. I think the HNA does the best job of this, as we have been through this collaborative effort. We need to keep this thing moving, and people will need to review what we have developed, and be prepared to move on that information. There is a lot of information on sustainability, etc. Now we have guidance to move on this information.

Barr: What do we want the states role to be in pursuing sustainability?

Brummett: and I think we need to pull in Policy level people, as I can make that decision for MO.

Barr: For this interim report, we should keep existing structures. But maybe after that, we develop a UMR management team, where the Corps is no longer the sole leader.

Nelson: 'Can we have an outline.

Barr: I think we can develop a working schedule.

Nelson: I think there is a lot to be done in the next few months, and we need to see a more fleshed outline to direct us.

Jon D. It would seem that the joint ECC NECC meeting is valuable to move forward on this. But I need a concrete list of objectives; otherwise, I will be wandering. This upcoming meeting seems like the time to lay out these objectives.

Barr: I think that is a valuable point, and we are moving point, and we are taking info from some of the ECC folks, now you folks, and modifying our approach. And we'll need to keep updating you on how things change and morph over the next months.

Beorkrem: talking with the directors will be valuable. I also think that most of the environmental NGO folks are already involved in the collaborative process that need to be.

Break out into group discussions 9:20 (Break-out discussions at Attachment X)

Resume at 10:30

Barr: Lets resume. Lets go back to Jon and Rich for a quick summary.

Duyvejonck. We don't have time to collate the results from both groups, but maybe Rich and I can sit down and put down a documentation summary of the flip charts and circulate. This would be a summary of ideas we all discussed in the small groups.

Fristik: We will circulate and look for feedback just to make sure we accurately characterize everyone's feelings.

Duyvejonck: You could also circulate to others within your own agency, to get the word out where we are going.

Barr: We're meeting with federal task force on 6 November. I was hoping for a conference call on or around Halloween.

Brummett: The beginning of the week is booked for some of us.

Barr: Can we shoot for morning of November 1st at 10:00 a.m.? Good, we'll tentatively plan this, but get something out to you folks to confirm this.

Wilcox: we may need to get out a draft outline for NECC review, so we have at least a refined outline before our next meeting. We won't have a lot of time to work with.

Barr: We'll get out a working outline to you folks before this meeting.

Fristik: For dates, lets look at November 28 and 29 for a Joint NECC/ECC meeting.

General consensus for a meeting location is the Quad Cities.

Closing Comments:

Gutreuter: I think your approach in general is a good one. Because we are a science agency, we have no formal role in shaping policy.

Brummett: MO will participate as much as we can to move this forward.

Bertrand: I am still apprehensive as far as what our agency can do to collaborate as we move forward on this.

Benjamin: I now have a better understanding of where are we going. I think WI wants to be involved for the next couple of months. I am encouraged by what we are doing.

Fenedick: Nothing additional to add. Cautiously optimistic.

Nelson: Nothing else to add. We do appreciate your efforts for collaboration. We see your agency making an effort to be collaborative and not just coordination. I don't think we get a lot of credit for how well the NECC works together.

Stein: We don't shun the expedited time line. The collaboration atmosphere is very positive. We'll be working hard on this.

Beorkrem: Basin Alliance. I echo Rick Nelson's comments. We are glad to see the new guidance. We are going to work hard over the next months to take advantage of this open window. We may take political stands that seem opposite the collaborative force. But we are in favor of this approach. There may be some actions for O&M issues in the future. But these are for past sins.

Keevin: Nothing to add.

Wilcox: Nothing to add.

Updates on current studies.

Gutreuter: We have two ongoing efforts. First, the adult entrainment study. We also did a modeling study and looked at methods for evaluating entrainment. The results are good in that the model seems to be unbiased. We are still in an evaluation mode. The second effort is a 5-year initiative evaluating fisheries resources of main channels. Evaluating the hypothesis that existing tow traffic denies habitat. We are measuring abundance of fishes in side channels, as well as the adjacent main channel. Admittedly, there are no great matches for comparison. We are working in Pools 26 and 25, as well as 10 and 11. If the hypothesis is true, then some of that difference should be proportional to amount of tow traffic

Keevin: Kilgore is working with a net designer and will soon test the nets. They hope to get into the field in December. We are going to be towing directly behind the tow, hope to get 100% of the entrained water. They will be traveling at speeds similar to that of barge traffic.

Stefanik: We performed larval fish sampling in Pool 18, 22 and 26 this past field season. Unfortunately, we weren't able to begin until June, which may have missed the early drift period. We realize that this isn't ideal, and will consider this in the analysis.

Following discussion of larval fish work, NECC recommends sampling earlier in the larval drift season, including March and April.

Adjourn