

## Upper Mississippi River Commission Notes

April 16, 2002  
Winona City Hall  
Winona, MN

**Present:** Bill Howe, John Campe, Bob Mullally, Robin Grawe, Kent Pehler, Jim Sieben, Bob Drieslein representing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The meeting was called to order at 10:02 AM by chair Bob Mullally.

**Moved by John, seconded by Bill to approve the agenda. Motion passed.**

**Moved by John, seconded by Bill to approve the minutes of the last meeting. Motion passed.**

**Organization:** John reported that we had officially filed for incorporation in the State of Minnesota and had filed for a tax number. Bob offered to fill out the application for 501-c-3 status. Bob Drieslein offered to copy the by-laws of the Friends of the Upper Mississippi River Refuge as a model for discussion.

**State-of-the-River Meetings:** It was generally agreed that the SOR meetings were quite successful though long. Discussion focused on recreational issues raised by USFWS Cindy Samples' recreational boating presentation and MDNR Scot Johnson's presentation on bank erosion and recreational boat wakes. Bill Howe suggested that changes in boat design might reduce wakes. Bob Mullally emphasized the need for boater education, noting that a series of slow-no wake zones would discourage boating. John Campe noted that licenses and in some instances training were required for a host of recreational activities, such as hunting, fishing, and ATV's. He also commented that anything which threatens how people spend their leisure time is likely to get a strong reaction. Kent Pehler noted that each year the National Boating Safety organization takes up the question of boating license fees and drops it. It was noted that houseboat renters give instructions only so far as to protect their property. Bob Drieslein noted that fishing guides on the refuge are required to be licensed. It was noted that the Minnesota DNR is less inclined to rip rap eroding banks than is the Wisconsin DNR. John Campe suggested that he and Jim Sieben alert Congressional offices to the issues of boater responsibility on their next trips to Washington, D.C.

### **New Business:**

**Suggestions of Iowa participants from Mike Griffin:** It was agreed that Robin should contact all three of Griffin's nominees (Doug Mullen of Lansing, Jerry Ensler of Dubuque, and Marian Meier of Bellevue) and invited them to become involved in the MRCC.

**MPR picnic:** It was generally agreed that the MPR picnic was a great opportunity to raise public awareness of the issues of boater safety and boater responsibility as well as to increase the visibility of the MRCC. It was agreed that Robin and Bob would attend the Rivers Q&A session on April 29 at St. John's and that Bob and Jim would officiate a MRCC table at the picnic on May 11. Kent and Robin would gather materials for a balanced display and contact other river entities regarding possible inclusion. It was agreed to create a visual to focus on boater responsibility.

It was also noted that the Inland Waterways Association and the USFWS had not been invited to the MRP picnic and that the Mississippi River would be better represented by as many river stakeholders and agencies as possible. It was agreed that members would pass the word to see if the opportunity could be extended to more organizations and agencies.

**La Crosse Area Middle School Science Fair:** Kent and Robin agreed to coordinate in providing displays. Bob Drieslein agreed to provide FWS materials. Kent offered to provide a TV and VCR to run the Pool 8 drawdown video.

**Selection of next meeting time, place:** It was agreed to meet May 14, 10:00 AM in Winona.

**Selection of next acting chair:** It was agreed that Jim Sieben would next serve as chair.

Robin announced that the Greater Blufflands Forum was holding a planning meeting at the Holland Township town hall April 18-19 and that she had been asked to make a presentation on organizations representing the Upper Mississippi River Basin as they related to watershed conservation issues.

The meeting adjourned at 11:58 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin A Grawe, Secretary

Robin reported on progress on State-of-the River meetings and passed out draft fliers. Bob suggested that the founding members get permanent nametags. It was agreed by consensus. Marc suggested trying to incorporate into the meetings brief reports on program budgets.

John said he would be in Washington around April 24 and planned to visit Congressional offices, and he asked for suggestions about what he might address. He was pointed to the EMP budget.

**501-c-3 designation:** John reported that his research indicated that it would be best to incorporate in Minnesota since the designated office was in Winona. He reported estimated out-of-pocket costs to run \$550 for IRS filing, \$250 legal fees (reduced rate) and \$500 to \$700 for incorporating in Minnesota. Bill offered to write a check immediately for \$500 for seed money. John said that the federal process normally takes 6-8 months but might be shortened a bit with encouragement from Congressional offices. Karrie Jackelen volunteered help from Congressman Kind's office. Gretchen provided articles of incorporation and by-laws of another non-profit organization as a boiler plate model. John thanked Gretchen for her help and acknowledged the help of Maureen Kinney, attorney in La Crosse. **It was agreed that John should move forward.**

Robin resented a new draft mission statement which made as its first goal “to provide an open and impartial forum for the discussion of issues concerning the UMR.” **Moved by Robin, seconded by Bob to adopt the full mission statement as presented. Motion passed.** Discussion and amendments followed. Kent noted that the Upper Mississippi Waterways Association mission included all five states but that their active membership was confined to Minnesota and Wisconsin and that he felt this inconsistency was not beneficial to the organization. Other members noted the desire to be able to grow and also to function in the other states, particularly Iowa, in cooperation with the agencies. John noted that the UMR Refuge lay in four states.

**Moved by Kent, seconded by Marc to amend the fifth goal to read “facilitate studies” rather than “conduct studies.” Motion passed.**

**Bob suggested the statement be edited to eliminate repetitious use of “the UMR.” Agreed by consensus.**

Robin proposed that a “neutrality policy” be considered, perhaps as a separate statement to strongly affirm the impartial role of the organization. **Moved by Bill, Seconded by Bob to add as the third paragraph to the mission statement the following:**

**“It is the function of the MRCC to advocate the democratic process on UMR issues through holding public meetings for the purposes of public education, public questioning, and public expression of views; fact-finding and investigation; and mediating between disputing parties.” Motion passed.**

**Organizational structure:** Discussion of possible structures ensued. Bob noted a need for balance between different river interests represented on a board but suggested the form of balance should not be dictated by the by-laws. Marc stressed the need for a balanced structure that could not be taken over by special agendas. It was suggested that terms be staggered and of a definite time period, that a place be made for state and federal legislative liaisons. Robin suggested three levels of involvement: a responsible, decision-making core; a loose advisory committee or committees open to anyone wanting to be involved; and affiliation or membership. Marc noted the need to accommodate different desires for involvement. Bob suggested a core of 11, with vacancies filled by appointment by the existing core. Marc suggested that Roger Steinberg, an organizational facilitator, might be useful in suggesting a structure, noting that the centrality of impartiality to the group’s mission might make an ordinary membership structure unworkable. Gretchen suggested that agency representatives not serve on the board but rather serve as technical advisors. John suggested a board of 5 to 15 members. **Moved by Robin, seconded by Gretchen to make Bob and Marc an ad hoc task force to work up a structure or several structures for consideration at the next meeting. Motion passed. Moved by Bob, seconded by Bill that the formal incorporators be the four former commissioners. It was decided by consensus to recommend to the task force a governing board of 3 to 15 members, allowing eventually three from each state.**

**Wisconsin legislative resolution:** State Assemblywoman Jennifer Shilling reported on the Wisconsin legislative resolution to urge funding for navigation improvements introduced by Rep. Freese. She reported that she and Reps. Johnsrud and Heubsh had offered on the floor an amendment submitted to them by Marc Schultz, Kent Pehler, and John Noyes which would urge full funding for the EMP and funding for an EMP trust fund. The amendment failed 50-49. Rep.

Shilling reported that another amendment to recognize the Mississippi River flyway was ruled non-germane. The group thanked Rep. Shilling for her efforts. It was not known where the resolution was in the Senate.

Kent Pehler announced that Ingram Barge was cooperating in another towboat safety seminar at RiverFest in LaCrosse on July 4<sup>th</sup>. **It was agreed by consensus to participate as the BAC participated last year.**

Robin reminded the group of the LaCrosse area middle school science fair on April 24 as an opportunity to set up river booths. Meeting participants agreed to seek participation from their organizations.

Marc Schultz announced an EPA seminar at the Town of Holland hall on April 18 and 19.

Robin suggested working with the Water Level Management Task Force to sponsor an excursion in August which would feature Phase II of the Pool 8 drawdown. **It was agreed by consensus to move ahead.**

The meeting adjourned at 12:15.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin A. Grawe, Secretary