

Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee (UMRCC)

Recreation and Water Use Technical Section
2008 Fall Technical Meeting

August 21, 2008 2:00 pm to 4:30 pm
Wireless Center, Moline, IL

Meeting Minutes

Technical Section Members present at the Fall Technical Meeting

Scot Johnson, Chair, MDNR, Lake City
Cindy Samples, USFWS, UMR HQ, Winona
Dorie Bollman, Corps, Rock Island
John Knoble, Corps, Rock Island
Cindy Wheeler, MDNR, St. Paul
Janet Sternburg, MODOC, Jefferson City

Agenda Item 1. Co-Meet with the Education ad hoc Committee

We discussed overlapping areas of interest between the Education and Recreation Committees. The Education Committee will be leading the Connecting Kids with Nature effort. Cindy will be obtaining the sign-up sheet from this year's Annual Meeting of the Education Committee and contact interested folks to get started.

Agenda Item 2. Update on Action Plan

The Action Plan is a work in progress but is sufficiently developed to lead our activities in the near term. We are moving forward in accomplishing the Action Items identified by the Technical Committee.

Action Item 1. Leave No Trace –Scot Johnson will work with Tim Yager, Tim Loose and UMRCC Coordinator Scott Yess to put a package of information together, based on the Pool 9 experience, to distribute electronically to the other Technical Section members listed as contacts in the Action Plan. Those contacts are expected to make connections with other organization on the Mississippi River within their designated reaches to see if they will take the lead applying the Leave No Trace philosophy. It is recognized that the Pool 9 brochure will need to be tailored to an individual reaches resources and concerns.

Action Item 2. River Friendly Boating – The program criteria has been rewritten as guidelines. The tone is softer and contains ideas or principles to strive towards. The Committee really liked the new approach and suggested only minor changes to the document.

The Technical Section will ask the for UMRCC Coordinator's assistance in developing the draft guidelines into a brochure that will be posted on the web page to make it available for downloading and printing. If you have any comments on the draft language (see attached file) send them to Scot Johnson.

We will also develop some signage that can be downloaded and posted by individual agencies and organizations. Once we have agreement on signage, the Technical Section may ask the Executive Board for money to make and distribute signs to member agencies and organizations.

Action Item 3. Water Trail Maps –Scot Johnson contacted IL, WI, MO and IA reps for links to maps already posted on the web in the pdf format. Available web links were provided but more may exist. Scot Johnson will compile the links identified so far and forward them by email to Cindy Samples for posting on the UMRCC web page in a user friendly way. Cindy will work with Heide in the UMRCC Coordinator’s office to complete this task.

Action Item XX. Connecting Kids with Nature – Cindy Samples will be taking the lead on this effort as Chair of the UMRCC Education Ad Hoc Committee. This will be removed as an Action Item for the Recreation Technical Section so if you want to work on it plan to participate in the Education Ad Hoc Committee.

Action Item 4. Stronger and more Consistent Participation in the Recreation and Water Use Technical Section - The Recreation Technical Section’s Fall Meeting was scheduled for Moline, IL in conjunction with the Upper Mississippi River Conference - “Weaving Multiple Uses into Sustainable River Communities” - sponsored by River Action and supported by the Corps, USFWS and USCG in an attempt to attract more Technical Meeting participants.

You are encouraged to take a more active role in the Recreation and Water Use Technical Section’s activities.

The Technical Section will work with the UMRCC Coordinator to encourage more participation in the UMRCC - particularly the Recreation Technical Section.

The Technical Section will work with the UMRCC Coordinator to schedule the ad hoc and committee meetings in such a way that members can attend more than one technical meeting during the Annual Meeting.

Action Item 5. Standardize a Visitation Accounting Methodology – The FWS counts visits or visitors but not visitor hours. The Corps has a standard way to measure visitation that is different than the FWS. The Corps method uses information collected from random surveys completed from 1978 to 1981 to develop loading factors. Apparently the St. Louis District has updated their loading factors but the Rock Island and St. Paul Districts have not done so yet.

Next meeting we will invite the St. Louis District to present their methodology for determining visitation and how they have updated their loading factors.

Additional visitation and use information may be available. The Technical Section will work through UMRCC Coordinator Scott Yess to gain access to the survey information presented by Jeff Potter, Biodiversity Group, for the River Action Network as a keynote speech during the UMR Conference.

The Technical Section also thought it would be helpful to review past Pool Recreational Use Surveys for information and methodology. The Chair will review the Pool 5 (1979) and Pool 9 (1979) UMRCC Recreational Use Survey documents and report back during the Spring 2009 meeting.

Action Item 6. Update the 1994 Economic Report – We need to work on Action Item 5 (see discussion above) to provide some kind of standardized input into any report update.

Agenda Item 3 - draft NESP Overarching System-Wide Human Use Goal

Following a recent Navigation Environmental Coordinating Committee meeting, Chuck Spitzak sent out a list of draft NESP Overarching System Goals – Navigation, Ecosystem and a new one – Human Use. See the attached file. We discussed how agencies currently handle and monitor human use on the river but recognized that we fall short in many reaches of the Mississippi River.

Please provide any comments you may have on the Overarching System-Wide Human Use Goal to the Corps through your NECC representative.

For next meeting we should consider inviting Chuck Spitzak to talk about how NESP will define objectives or implement activities to reach this new Human Use goal and how this fits with the NESP communications effort.

Action Items continued Greener Meetings - send the Chair one concrete action/step the UMRCC can take at the next Annual Meeting in LaCrosse, Wisconsin. Scot Johnson will then bring the suggestions forward to UMRCC Coordinator for consideration.

Action Item continued Web Page Development - Cindy Samples is the lead on web page development for the Technical Section. She will help with the web page design, post documents and provide appropriate links. If you have additional documents or links to post, please send them directly to Cindy.

Action Item continued Newsletter Articles - Technical Section members are encouraged to submit a recreational based article to Scott Yess for publication in the quarterly newsletter. This year we've done a great job!

The Upper Mississippi River Conference was a real hit! The sessions were well attended, accommodations were comfortable and the speakers' presentations were very informative. Congratulations to River Action and their supporters on a job well done. Please consider attending this conference next year.