

MRRIC ANNUAL REPORT

2010 - 2011

Missouri River Recovery
Implementation Committee

Submitted by Committee Chair, Michael J. Mac

Approved by the MRRIC on 10/20/2011

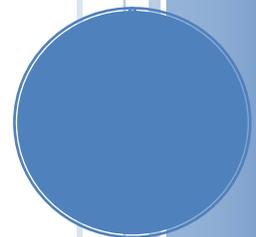


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MRRIC ANNUAL REPORT

2010 - 2011

TRANSMITTAL

2011 Annual Report of the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee

Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army
The Pentagon
Washington, DC

Dear Madam Secretary:

In 2011, The Missouri River Basin experienced historic flooding. This flooding, especially through the central part of the Basin caused extensive loss of property, crops, and farmland; disrupted the lives of many residents, and closed sections of the nation's transportation network. The property damage, economic losses, and destruction to Missouri River infrastructure has yet to be completely assessed, but certainly this flood will be extremely costly. The hardship some citizens endured is not even measurable.

Managing the Missouri River system is challenging without the added complication of the extreme precipitation events experienced in 2011. During these times, it's invaluable to have citizens in the Basin whose lives are directly tied to the River to be communicating and sharing information with the Federal Agencies charged with the managing such a complex system. This is where the existence of the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee pays dividends.

The Missouri River has received considerable Congressional attention in recent years, notably the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 which created the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC). This letter accompanies the committee's 2011 Annual report. MRRIC is a 70-member, sovereign-stakeholder committee dedicated to providing guidance and recommendations to the Federal Agencies that exert management authority over the Missouri River. This guidance focuses on recovering the endangered species on the River, and restoring the ecosystem.

The flood event of 2011 and the work of MRRIC are inextricably linked. MRRIC provides a forum for members representing River users, many of whom were greatly impacted by the flood, to provide advice, give feedback, and express concerns to the US Army Corps of Engineers regarding the recovery of the listed species and the ecosystem restoration plan. The value of MRRIC will grow in 2012 as discussions of the flood continue.

As noted in our 2011 Annual Report, two substantive consensus recommendations were forwarded to the USACE and USFWS. These included a recommendation to initiate work on one to three pilot projects to create nesting habitat for terns and plovers in areas adjacent to the

channel (within the floodplain) and / or within reservoirs instead of only using the current approach of creating habitat within the channel. A second recommendation advises that the USACE and the USFWS jointly conduct government-to-government consultation with as many of the 28 Missouri River basin Tribes as possible between the end of October 2010 and the first MRRIC meeting of 2011. The formal consultation will include sharing opportunities for involvement in MRRIC and gathering information on Tribal obstacles to participating in the MRRIC. The language in Section 5018 that prohibits federal funds for travel reimbursement remains a serious obstacle to tribal participation in MRRIC as described in the Committee's July 2010 recommendation to the USACE. Addressing this issue is of great importance as more and more basin stakeholders, not just tribal governments, are economically stressed by the 2011 flood events.

During this, our third year of operation, MRRIC also made nine process recommendations. These actions improved the way the Committee does business within its own deliberations and those interactions with the Federal Agencies. MRRIC also appointed a new Chair to replace the John Thorson, who so adeptly guided the Committee through its first two years.

MRRIC achieved these accomplishments despite several challenges. The July meeting, one of four annual face-to-face gatherings, was cancelled due to the flooding in the Basin. It was replaced with a 2-day web based information sharing session, which although successful, does not replace the value of in-person meetings.

As the flood waters recede and we begin to understand the damage that has been done, and the changes experienced in the physical habitat in the River, MRRIC will be at the table to collaborate with the managing Agencies. The Committee can be a powerful force, as the Missouri River itself, as we learn from the flood of 2011.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael J. Mac

Michael J. Mac
Chair

/s/ David Sieck

David Sieck
Vice Chair

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC or Committee) is comprised of 70 sovereign and stakeholder representatives from all parts of the Missouri River basin. The Secretary of the Army adopted the Charter for MRRIC on July 1, 2008, pursuant to congressional authorization set forth in the Water Resources Development Act of 2007. The Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works appointed MRRIC members during fall 2008 and the first Committee meeting was held in St. Louis, Missouri, September 29 – October 1, 2008. This report covers MRRIC's third year of activity (October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011).

Purposes

MRRIC's purposes include:

- Providing guidance to federal agencies on the existing Missouri River recovery plan including priorities for recovery work and implementing changes based on the results of adaptive management.
- Providing guidance to federal agencies on a long-term study of the Missouri River and its tributaries to determine actions required to mitigate losses of aquatic and terrestrial habitat, recovery federally listed species, and restore the ecosystem to prevent further declines among other native species.
- Developing recommendations that recognize the social, economic, and cultural interests of stakeholders; mitigate the impacts on those interests; and advance the multiple uses of the river.

Origins

In 1989, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) announced it would undertake a revision of the Master Water Control Manual for Missouri River Reservoir Operations, the basic water management tool for the river. The revision process coincided with the listing of the pallid sturgeon, least tern, and piping plover as threatened or endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act; the issuance by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) of two Biological Opinions on steps necessary to recover these species; and extensive federal and state court litigation on water management and species recovery issues. When USACE finalized the revised Master Manual in 2004, the agency committed to establishing a sovereign and stakeholder group, to be known as the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee or MRRIC.

Commencing in 2005, USACE, USFWS, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other federal agencies enlisted the assistance of the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR) to develop a process for establishing the MRRIC. These steps included a Situation Assessment that concluded that a group like the MRRIC was needed to assist in coordination of recovery actions in the basin and concluded that federal agencies take a leadership role in establishing the Committee. A Federal Working Group (FWG) was formed and convened a Planning Group to draft a governing document for the MRRIC. After numerous meetings in 2007-08, the Planning Group proposed a Charter to the Secretary of the Army in February 2008. Following Government to Government consultation with basin

Tribes, the Charter was approved by the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works at the Planning Group’s last meeting in St. Louis, Missouri, on July 1, 2008. Additional information on the background of the MRRIC can be found in Appendix A.

Membership

MRRIC’s membership includes appointed representatives of federal agencies (USACE and USFWS serve as lead agencies), eight states, and up to 28 tribes. The 28 stakeholder members representing 16 interest categories are selected by the USACE’s Northwestern Division Commander to serve for three-year terms. Additional information about MRRIC membership can be found in Appendix B.

Meetings

During its third fiscal year, the MRRIC continued to meet at different locations throughout the basin. Meetings were held at South Sioux City, Nebraska (October 19-21, 2010); Denver, Colorado (February 15-17, 2011); and Overland Park, Kansas (May 3-5, 2011). A meeting that was scheduled for Great Falls, Montana (July 26-28, 2011) was cancelled due to concerns for MRRIC members that were being impacted by the unprecedented flooding in the Missouri River basin. The July meeting was replaced by a Webinar held on July 26-27, 2011. In addition, eleven other Webinars were held, including a day-long MRRIC Annual Recovery and Adaptive Management Forum Webinar on March 31, 2011.



Organization

MRRIC selects its Chair and Vice Chair and has input into the selection of the facilitation team. USIECR provides support services to MRRIC through a Memorandum of Understanding with the USACE, and in turn contracts with the Chair and the facilitation team.

The Committee has established four standing work groups consisting of MRRIC members, alternates, agency staff, and others that have been approved by the full MRRIC. The ***Agenda Work Group*** develops the agenda for each MRRIC meeting. The ***Science / Adaptive Management (SAM) Work Group*** addresses the current work of the Missouri River Recovery Program (MRRP) including the scientific aspects. The ***Missouri River Ecosystem Restoration Plan (MRERP) Work Group*** works on issues related to the long-term restoration plan. The ***Communications / Information Technology Work Group*** advises on MRRIC websites, plans webinar programs and outreach materials, conducts annual self-assessments, and prepares the annual report.

There are also four Ad Hoc groups. The ***Membership, Process, and Procedures Ad Hoc Group*** develops and refines the processes as necessary to keep the MRRIC functioning. The ***Missouri River Basin Studies Ad Hoc Group*** established an efficient means to keep the MRRIC informed about various studies and programs underway in the basin. A ***Subcommittee on Tribal Participation*** is focused on increasing the interest of the Tribes in the Committee as well as bringing topics of Tribal interest to the MRRIC. The ***Water Quality Ad Hoc Group*** organized a series of Webinars on water quality issues related to MRRIC's purpose.

The work groups are indispensable for carrying out MRRIC's work. The groups meet by facilitated conference calls and occasional in-person meetings. They help prepare and review presentations for plenary sessions and develop recommendations for MRRIC's consideration.

Accomplishments

Because MRRIC approves its recommendations by consensus, each proposal is fully vetted through work group deliberations and discussions at one or more MRRIC meetings. While this process is often tedious, it encourages informed decision-making and widespread agreement for adopted recommendations.

Having now completed three years of operation, the Committee has accumulated an impressive list of accomplishments. The substantive recommendations made by the MRRIC to-date are listed in order of final consensus determination below:

1. Established a strategy for MRRIC engagement in continued consultation with the lead agencies about the MRERP (2009)
2. Submitted a letter to the USFWS requesting the agency expedite the release of the Similarity of Appearance of Shovelnose Sturgeon Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (2009)
3. Contributed content to the MRERP Purpose and Need statement (2009)
4. Submitted a letter to the Assistance Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, the Acting Director of the USFWS, and other federal agencies requesting assistance with federal legislation that would authorize and appropriate funds to reimburse MRRIC members for travel expenses (2010)
5. Transmitted summary information from a MRRIC Values Workshop to be used in the MRERP study (2010)
6. Recommended priorities for the MRRIC's FY2011 Work Plan (2010)
7. Recommended the implementation of pilot projects to create habitat for terns and plovers adjacent to the channel or within the reservoirs (2010)
8. Advised the lead federal agencies to conduct government-to-government consultation with basin Tribes to encourage more Tribal participation in the MRRIC (2010)



MRRIC Recommendations

[Section 5018 of WRDA 2007](#)¹ sets forth the Committee’s purposes (Figure 3). The Preamble to the [MRRIC Charter](#)² (Figure 1) reiterates that the Committee’s purpose is to “make recommendations and provide guidance on a study of the Missouri River and its tributaries and on the existing Missouri River recovery and mitigation plan.” The Charter also defines *recommendations* as “official suggestions, comments, or advice representing the consensus of the Committee and provided to the appropriate governmental or non-governmental agencies, groups or persons.” The Charter further states that the goal of the Committee is to reach consensus on all substantive [emphasis added] issues brought before it. *Substantive issues* are defined as “issues for which the Committee is considering developing

recommendations and other decisions identified as substantive in the Committee’s operating rules and procedures.” The [MRRIC Operating Procedures and Ground Rules](#)³ clarify that a *substantive issue* is an issue for which the Committee is considering developing recommendations and guidance consistent with the Committee’s Purpose and Scope as well as other issues identified as substantive by any member of the Committee.

Consensus recommendations made on substantive issues require a two-step decision making process with a tentative recommendation made at an initial meeting and a final recommendation made no sooner than the next MRRIC meeting. The two-step process is intended to allow time between the tentative and final consensus recommendation determinations for members to deliberate and consult with their constituents on the recommendations.

In its third year of operation, the Committee made two substantive recommendations. See Appendix C for complete texts of substantive recommendations and agencies’ responses.

¹ <http://www.moriverrecovery.org/mrrp/f?p=136:32:3322244731161251::NO>

² <http://www.moriverrecovery.org/mrrp/f?p=136:32:3322244731161251::NO>

³ <http://www.moriverrecovery.org/mrrp/f?p=136:32:3322244731161251::NO>

Preamble to the MRRIC Charter:

The Secretary of the Army (Secretary) hereby establishes the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (Committee) as authorized by Section 5018 of the 2007 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) to make recommendations and provide guidance on a study of the Missouri River and its tributaries and on the existing Missouri River recovery and mitigation plan. The Committee will provide a collaborative forum for the basin to come together and develop a shared vision comprehensive plan for Missouri River recovery. The Committee will help guide the prioritization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and adaptation of recovery actions. The Committee will include broad stakeholder representation to ensure a comprehensive approach to Missouri River recovery implementation while providing for congressionally authorized Missouri River project purposes and to ensure that public values are incorporated into the study and the recovery and mitigation plans.

July 1, 2008

Figure 1

Substantive Consensus Recommendations

Project Work Request on Tern and Plover Nesting Habitat:

At Meeting #12, the MRRIC reached final consensus on a project work request recommendation on nesting habitat for terns and plovers.

The MRRIC believes ensuring adequate availability of nesting habitat for terns and plovers (e.g., emergent sandbar habitat (ESH)) is of particular importance. As such, the MRRIC recommends Federal agencies expeditiously initiate work on the steps required to implement one to three pilot projects to create nesting habitat for terns and plovers in areas adjacent to the channel (within the floodplain) and / or within reservoirs instead of only using the current approach of creating habitat within the channel (and Lewis and Clark Lake). In order to assist with implementation of this recommendation, MRRIC further recommends the USFWS give the Corps credit for successful creation of nesting habitat in areas adjacent to the channel (within the floodplain) and / or within reservoirs.

Government-to-Government Consultation with Basin Tribes:

At Meeting #12, the MRRIC reached final consensus on a recommendation that the Corps and USFWS conduct government-to-government consultation with Missouri River basin tribes about participation in the MRRIC.

The MRRIC recommends that the USACE and the USFWS jointly conduct government-to-government consultation with as many of the 28 Missouri River basin Tribes as possible between the end of October 2010 and the first MRRIC meeting of 2011. The formal consultation will include sharing opportunities for involvement in MRRIC and gathering information on Tribal obstacles to participating in the MRRIC.

Significant Process Decisions

USIECR to Determine Meeting Length, Dates, Location:

At Meeting #12, the MRRIC approved a change to the committee's Operating Procedures whereby the US Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR), through collaboration with the MRRIC, the Chair, lead agencies, and others would determine the length, the date, and the location of each plenary meeting.

Prioritize Substantive Issues to Address in FY2011:

At Meeting #12, the MRRIC approved a process to prioritize substantive issues to address in fiscal year (FY) 2011.

Ideas to Improve Meeting Efficiency:

At Meeting #12, the MRRIC approved four process ideas to implement to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the plenary meetings:

- Utilize a consent agenda
- Allocate a half day for Work Group breakout sessions



- Provide decision and supporting materials to full MRRIC two weeks in advance in order to be on the agenda
- Hold an Agenda Review Session on Monday afternoons or evening prior to meetings

MRRIC Interaction Approach for 2012 Recovery Program Work Plan

At Meeting #12, the MRRIC approved the Interaction Approach and Timeline for the 2012 Recovery Program Work Plan.

Rotating Work Group Points of Contact:

At Meeting #12, the MRRIC approved a process requiring standing work groups to have two points of contact. The points of contact will serve for two-year terms, and the terms will be staggered between the co-points of contact for each standing work group. Ad hoc work groups will have one point of contact who serves for the life of the ad hoc group.

MRRIC Engagement Strategy with Adaptive Management

At Meeting #13, the MRRIC approved the engagement strategy on the development and implementation of adaptive management strategies for the Missouri River Recovery Program.

Communications Tool Kit

At Meeting #13, the MRRIC approved a generic version and an abbreviated version of PowerPoint presentations, as well as a newsletter and fact sheet as pieces of the MRRIC Communications Plan Toolkit.

MRRIC 2011 Work Plan

At Meeting #13, the MRRIC approved the MRRIC 2011 Work Plan.

Missouri River Basin Studies Semi-Annual Update

At Meeting #14, the MRRIC approved a recommendation for keeping the Committee informed about the results of the various studies and programs underway in the Missouri River basin.

Responses Received to Substantive Recommendations

Travel Funding:

In a letter dated 24 July 2010 to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) and the Acting Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the MRRIC transmitted a recommendation on reimbursement of the travel expenses MRRIC members incur in attending MRRIC meetings. The recommendation sought the assistance of the ASA (CW) and the other federal agencies participating in the MRRIC in proposing federal legislation to Congress that would authorize and appropriate funds to reimburse MRRIC members for their travel expenses. The ASA (CW) replied in a letter dated 25 October 2010 (see Appendix C).

Based on regulatory guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), my office is responsible for coordinating legislative proposals with OMB to ensure that any proposed legislation is consistent with Administration policy. I cannot comment on any proposed legislation until such time that these proposals have been coordinated with OMB and the Administration has submitted a legislative package to Congress. However, I can assure you that every consideration will be given to the Committee's recommendation.

Response to Travel Funding Recommendation 25Oct10

Government to Government Consultation with Basin Tribes:

In a letter dated 16 November 2010 to the Commander of the Corps' Northwestern Division and the Regional Director of the USFWS's Region 6, the MRRIC transmitted a recommendation that the Corps and USFWS conduct government-to-government consultation with Missouri River basin tribes about participation in the MRRIC. The Corps and USFWS provided a joint response (see Appendix C) on 20 December 2010. Letters jointly signed by both agencies were sent to all 28 federally recognized Tribes with ties to the Missouri River offering consultation on 15 February 2011. (A sample letter can be found in Appendix C) To date, no requests for government-to-government consultation have been received.

The USACE and the USFWS agree with the MRRIC that government-to-government consultation is appropriate at this time. Our staffs will work diligently with those Tribes that desire to participate in this process ... However, we would like the MRRIC to be aware that our previous experience in setting up government-to-government consultations is that these consultations are dependent on the interest level of individual Tribes, as well as the availability of federal and Tribal funds.

Response to Government to Government Consultation Recommendation 20Dec10

Project Work Request on Tern and Plover Nesting Habitat:

In a letter dated 18 November 2011 to the Commander of the Corps' Northwestern Division and the Regional Director of the USFWS's Region 6, the MRRIC recommended that a project work request on nesting habitat for terns and plovers be included in the Corps' 2012 Work Plan for the Missouri River Recovery Program. In a joint response (see Appendix C) dated 21 January 2011, the Corps and USFWS detailed the process to be used by the multi-agency Emergent Sandbar Habitat team to explore the recommendation.

As a result of your recommendation, and support by the USFWS, the ESH multi-agency team is currently exploring pilot habitat creation activities outside the channel. Locations and sites under consideration are discussed below [in the response letter] but the exact pilot locations will be determined following technical analysis that includes factors such as availability of adequate, suitable substrate and material for creation.

Response to Tern and Plover Nesting Habitat Recommendation 21Jan11

MEETINGS

Meeting Schedule and Locations

- October 19-21, 2010 – South Sioux City, Nebraska
- February 15-17, 2011 – Denver, Colorado
- May 3-5, 2011 – Overland Park, Kansas
- July 26-28, 2011 – Great Falls, Montana

Meeting #12 – South Sioux City, Nebraska

October 19-21, 2010

Pre-Meeting Field Trip:

On Monday, October 18, many MRRIC members, agency support staff, and others attended an optional field trip that consisted of visits to the local riverfront and stops at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, Welcome Center, and Sgt. Floyd Monument.



Information Sharing Sessions:

The MRRIC learned about:

- Application of Traditional Ecological Knowledge
- Recent activities of the Cooperating Agency Team (CAT) and upcoming MRERP technical team meetings
- The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Sediment Study (*Missouri River Planning: Recognizing and Incorporating Sediment Management*)
- The Emergent Sandbar Habitat (ESH) Adaptive Management (AM) strategy



Committee Consensus Agreements:

The MRRIC reached final consensus agreement on the following substantive recommendations:

- A project work request recommendation on nesting habitat for terns and plovers
- The Corps and USFWS conduct government-to-government consultation with Missouri River basin tribes about participation in the MRRIC



The MRRIC reached consensus on the following process decisions:

- Approved the July 2010 meeting summary
- Approved the MRRIC interaction approach / timeline for FY2012 Recovery Program Work Plan
- Approved an ad hoc group to recommend a process for MRRIC to learn about other studies in the Missouri River basin on a regular basis
- Approved selection of David Sieck as vice-chair
- Approved continuation of John Thorson as chair through the May 2011 meeting
- Approved the 2009-010 MRRIC Annual Report
- Approved criteria for appending documents to the MRRIC Annual Report
- Approved a process to update Work Group membership
- Approved the 2011 meeting dates
- Approved a change in the Operating Procedures whereby the USIECR will determine the length, the date, and the location of each plenary meeting
- Approved a process to prioritize substantive issues to address in FY2011
- Approved four process ideas to implement to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the plenary meetings
- Approved the continuation of the Subcommittee on Tribal Participation through the end of calendar year 2011
- Approved Work Group tasks
- Added participants to Work Groups
- Approved press release for the meeting



Meeting #13 – Denver, Colorado

February 15-17, 2011

Pre-Meeting Field Trip:

On Monday, February 14, many MRRIC members, agency support staff, and others attended an optional field trip to the Bureau of Reclamation's (BOR) lab, Denver Federal Center, for a tour of the Yellowstone Intake rock ramp model.

Information Sharing Sessions:

The MRRIC learned about:

- Independent Science Advisory Panel (ISAP) charge, timeline, members, and next steps
- New staff and recent activities of the USACE Missouri River Recovery Program
- Water quality monitoring at Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
- Attributes and indicators being used for the natural resources assessment of existing conditions for the MRERP study
- Through the MRERP workshop, members' perspectives about ways in which the Missouri River is linked to social, cultural, and economic interests in the Missouri River basin and, thus, how changes to improve the condition of the natural resources might affect people, either negatively or positively



Committee Consensus Agreements:

The MRRIC reached consensus on the following process decisions:

- Approved MRRIC Consent Agenda
- Approved the approach for MRRIC engagement in the adaptive management (AM) process
- Approved change of Nominating Ad Hoc Group to Membership, Process, and Procedures Ad Hoc Group
- Approved four Communications Tool Kit documents
- Approved Tom Graves interview with Comcast Newsmakers for October 2011
- Approved the 2011 MRRIC Work Plan
- Approved clarification in USACE MRRIC ISAP Charge Description
- Approved new Work Group tasks
- Approved press release for the meeting

Meeting #14 – Overland Park, Kansas

May 3-5, 2011

Pre-Meeting Field Trip:

On Monday, May 2, many MRRIC members, agency support staff, and others attended a field trip with stops at Dalbey Bottoms, a Missouri River Recovery Program mitigation site, and WaterOne's new plant and horizontal collector well.



Additionally, many MRRIC members, agency support staff, and others observed two informational sessions for the Independent Science Advisory Panel (ISAP). During the morning session, the ISAP learned about and discussed the spring pulse – managed and natural – monitoring program and the interpretation of results. The evening session provided the ISAP with the opportunity to learn about and discuss the pallid sturgeon, least tern, and piping plover and various river processes (flow, sediment transport, morphology, etc.), including tributaries, and dynamics below Gavins Point Dam.

Information Sharing Sessions:

The MRRIC learned about:

- Recent activities of the Recovery Program
- Tribal input related to the Focal Natural Resources baseline assessment for MRERP
- Efforts toward development of the Shallow Water Habitat Adaptive Management Strategy and the timeline for MRRIC engagement
- Progress of the ISAP toward completion of their spring pulse and adaptive management charge – the entire panel met with the Science / Adaptive Management Work Group and the Panel's Co-Chairs met with the full MRRIC
- Individual MRRIC members' involvement in the Missouri River Natural Resources Conference (MRNRC)
- MRRIC liaison observations about the first meeting of the MRERP Social Cultural and Economic technical team
- The MRRIC stakeholder member renewal timeline and application process
- Progress toward development of a potential MRERP Work Group recommendation on geographic scope
- Discussions about how to improve the MRRIC engagement in MRERP

Committee Consensus Agreements:

The MRRIC reached consensus on the following process decisions:

- Approved MRRIC Consent Agenda
- Approved a revision to the process of approving new Work Group members to make member, alternate, and agency staff approvals effective immediately and others effective at the following meeting
- Approved a process for learning about Missouri River Basin Studies
- Developed a recommendation to the USIECR on staffing
- Recommended a preferred Chair candidate to the USIECR
- Amended the MRRIC Operating Procedures to include consent agenda procedures
- Approved the formation of the Science / Adaptive Management (SAM) Work Group (to replace the ISP and Recovery Program Work Groups) and the corresponding charge document
- Approved Work Group tasks and new members
- Approved a process for drafting and finalizing the post-meeting press releases
- Approved a press release for the meeting



Meeting #15 – Great Falls, Montana

July 26-28, 2011

The leadership and facilitation team of the MRRIC, after soliciting feedback from members and the lead agencies, concurred that it was in the best interest of the MRRIC and its members to cancel the July 2011 meeting. Unprecedented flooding in the Missouri River basin, which had begun in late May, was continuing to impact committee members. The decision was made out of concern for those impacted members, as well as the uncertainty of being able to have enough participants to constitute a decision-making quorum.

To maintain momentum, the leadership and facilitation team reviewed the items for the July MRRIC agenda and identified those that could be shared via Webinar in July, items that were not time sensitive and could be deferred to the October 2011 MRRIC meeting for MRRIC decision, and items that could benefit from additional work group discussion between July and October.

Please refer to the Webinars section of this report for a summary of the July Webinar.

Facilitation and Leadership Meetings

The MRRIC Chair, Vice-Chair, points of contact for the Science Adaptive Management (SAM), MRERP and Communications/IT work groups, representatives from the USACE and FWS, and facilitation team met in June of 2011 to identify ongoing tasks of these three standing work groups and to determine key priorities for MRRIC in calendar year 2012. This meeting served as the basis for further discussion in each of the work groups and in the October 2011 MRRIC meeting in preparation of the 2012 MRRIC work plan.

Webinars

October 15, 2010 Webinar – Draft 2011 Work Plan

In preparation for the MRRIC meeting on October 19-21, a webinar was held to provide an opportunity to review and ask questions about the draft work plan chart and corresponding time allocation sheet, as well as begin a discussion around preliminary structural options for the MRRIC to consider for the February 2011 meeting and beyond (Facilitation Team).

November 8, 2010 Webinar – Draft PEIS for ESH

An over view was provided of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Mechanical Creation of Emergent Sandbar Habitat on the Riverine Segments of the Upper Missouri River (USACE).

December 2, 2010 Webinar – MRERP FNR

Focal Natural Resources (FNR) are the ecosystems and species that are the focus of the MRERP planning process. The FNR geographic boundaries are defined and characterized by the native / natural conditions, processes, and states that sustain aquatic and floodplain communities in a natural environment setting. Describing how the FNRs operate within the natural environment is important to understanding the health and condition of the Missouri River. This Webinar introduced the Ecosystem FNRs, the Species FNRs, and the Key Ecological Attributes and Indicators (USACE and USFWS).

December 17, 2010 Webinar – MRERP SCE

Social, Cultural, and Economic (SCE) Resources constitute the human environment. The resources will be defined on various scales, ranging from the basin level to the regional or ecosystem scale. For the purpose of assessing the acceptability of MRERP alternatives, the SCE resources are necessary to identify potential trade-offs and win-win solutions. The draft principle SCE resources are the human activities, uses, and services that are the focus of the SCE baseline assessment. They encompass the authorized purposes and also include other human connections that rely upon the ecosystems of the Missouri River. This Webinar presented the Draft SCE Resources and the proposed SCE Attributes and Indicators.

March 21, 2011 Webinar – Presentations for the ISAP

- Basis for the Biological Opinion (USFWS)
- Components of the Integrated Science Plan (USACE)

March 28, 2011 Webinar – Presentations for the ISAP

- Spring Pulse Implementation 2006 – 2010 (USACE)
- Flow and Form of Missouri River (USGS)

March 31, 2011 Webinar – MRRIC Annual Recovery & Adaptive Management Forum

- Missouri River Recovery Program Annual Report and Strategic Review (USFWS & USACE)
- Adaptive Management Update – Emergent Sandbar Habitat (USACE)
- Integrated Science Program Update (USACE)
- Pallid Sturgeon Progress and Activities (USGS)
- Tern and Plover Progress and Activities (USGS)
- Missouri River Recovery Program Budget Process (USACE)
- FY 2012 Draft Recovery Program Work Plan Base on the President’s Budget (USACE)

April 4, 2011 Webinar – Presentation for the ISAP

- Adaptive Management (USACE)

April 28, 2011 Webinar – Presentation for the ISAP

- Spring Pulse Socioeconomic Impacts (USACE)

May 2, 2011 Webinar – Presentations for the ISAP

- Gavins Point Spring Pulse Management (Nebraska Game and Parks Commission)
- Spring Pulse Monitoring for Piping Plovers and Least Terns (USACE)
- Habitat Assessment and Monitoring Program (HAMP) History (USACE)
- Standardized Pallid Sturgeon & Fish Community Monitoring in the Missouri River (USFWS)
- Pallid Sturgeon Populations Assessment Project (USACE)
- Spring Pulsed Flows, Environmental Cues, Migration, and Spawning (USGS)Great Plains Piping Plover Population Dynamics (Virginia Tech)Adaptive Management and the Missouri River Spring Rise (The Nature Conservancy)

- Pallid Sturgeon Migrations, Spawning, and Early Life Stages in the Upper Missouri River Basin: Applications to the Lower Missouri River (USGS)
- Spring Pulsed Flows, Spawning, Habitat Availability, Conditioning (USGS)



May 24, 2011 Webinar – Water Quality #1

- Water Quality Characteristics and Changes in the Lower Missouri River (USGS)
- Missouri River Recovery Program: Water Quality Monitoring (USACE)
- Omaha District's Water Quality Management Program: Water Quality Monitoring, Modeling, and Management Issues at the Missouri River Mainstem Projects (USACE)
- Missouri River Monitoring USEPA Region 7 (USEPA)

July 26-27, 2011 Webinar

Overview:

The July 2011 Webinar was provided as a substitute for the cancelled July in-person MRRIC meeting. As noted above, the in-person meeting was not held out of concern for those MRRIC members that were impacted by the 2011 flood event and the uncertainty of being able to bring together a quorum for the meeting. The time previously identified for the in-person meeting was used to present information sharing sessions via Webinar.

Information-sharing sessions:

The MRRIC learned about:

- Water Management Update
- Missouri River Recovery Program – Impacts of Flood to FY 2011 Efforts
- Tribal, State and Stakeholder Observations Related to the 2011 Flood and Its Impacts
- Independent Science Advisory Panel – Draft Findings from their first charge topic, the Missouri River Gavins Point Dam Spring Pulse Management Action and Adaptive Management
- An update on MRERP from the Cooperating Agencies Team
- The Social, Cultural, and Economic (SCE) Technical Teams Baseline Assessment for MRERP
- Observations of MRRIC Liaisons to the SCE Technical Teams
- Recovery program Update and FY2011 Work Plan
- Work Group Updates

WORK GROUP REPORTS

During the reporting period of October 2010 through September 2011, the MRRIC had four Standing Work Groups and four Ad Hoc Work Groups. Given the substantial amount of work performed by these work groups, it is appropriate to highlight the progress made in each of these work groups.

Science / Adaptive Management (SAM) Work Group

Significant Activities and Summary of Work Performed

At the May 2011 MRRIC meeting, the Science Adaptive Management (SAM) Work Group was formed as a replacement to the Integrated Science Program (ISP) Work Group and the Missouri River Recovery Program (MRRP) Work Group. The rationale for the shift related to the ongoing Corps efforts to implement adaptive management and recognition of the more prominent link between science and recovery program implementation (Biological Opinion and BSNP Mitigation Program).

When established it was anticipated that the group would:

- continue the work of the MRRP Work Group on implementation of the Biological Opinion/BSNP Mitigation Program and related issues (e.g., land acquisition) and providing input on the Corps' annual work plan;
- continue the science related role of the ISP Work Group including engaging with the Independent Science Advisory Panel (ISAP);
- work on adaptive management (AM strategy development and implementation); and
- be involved in the development of the Annual Missouri River Recovery Forum to help tie the science and adaptive management components together.

During FY 2011, the SAM, and previously the ISP and MRRP, Work Group accomplished the following

- A. Developed MRRIC interaction approach/timeline for 2012 Recovery Program Work Plan (approved at October 2010 MRRIC meeting).
- B. Developed a recommendation on the Corps' 2012 MRRP work plan which was tentatively approved by MRRIC at the May 2011 meeting; final consensus is being sought at the October MRRIC meeting.
- C. Worked with Robb Turner of Oak Ridge Associated Universities, the Third Party Science Neutral (TPSN), Corps (and MRRIC) to finalize the Charge Description for the Independent Science Advisory Panel (ISAP) on Topic #1 – Spring Pulse and Adaptive Management.
- D. Continued to engage with the TPSN, Corps (and MRRIC) to track the ISAP process which included: development of a process recommendation regarding MRRIC's involvement in ISAP information/presentation requests, which was approved at the February 2011 MRRIC meeting; and ongoing engagement with the ISAP in preparation and follow-up to the July MRRIC webinar and in preparation for the October 2011 MRRIC meeting.
- E. Developed an engagement approach for MRRIC's involvement in the development and implementation of adaptive management strategies which was approved by MRRIC on February 15, 2011.

- F. Formed a number of Task Groups to assist the SAM Work Group, and ultimately MRRIC, in implementing approved tasks including the SWH AM Task Group (engaging with the lead agencies in development of the shallow water habitat AM strategy development in accordance with the approved engagement strategy) and the Off-channel Habitat Small Group (engaging with agencies on laying a foundation for recommendations on other tern and plover recruitment projects not considered in the October 2010 consensus).
- G. The SAM Work Group conducted 7 conference calls during FY2011 to work on assigned tasks and held a face to face meeting in Omaha September 20-21, 2011. Relatedly, prior to SAM Work Group formation, the MRRP Work Group had 4 conference calls and the ISP Work Group had 7 conference calls and a joint ISP/MRRP Work Group meeting was held in Omaha April 7-8, 2011.

Future Topics (Potential and Actual) for the Work Group

The SAM Work Group has organized itself using a number of Task Groups to help move the myriad topics forward in an efficient and effective manner between MRRIC meetings. At



present the following Task Groups and/or Small Groups are in place: SWH AM Task Group; ISAP Task Group; ISAP Task Group; Off-channel Bird Habitat Small Group; and the Programmatic Strategic Assessment (PSA) Task Group. The latest of these, the PSA Task Group was recently formed to assist the Work Group in its efforts to understand the implications of the ISAP Report #1 on Spring Pulse and Adaptive Management and its results. After being vetted with the full

SAM Work Group and the full MRRIC, this effort may have some impact on how the tasks in front of the Work Group are approached (and possibly whether there are new ones to be explored). In the meantime, the following are topics the Work Group anticipates working on:

1. Continue to apply the engagement approach to development of the Shallow Water Habitat Adaptive Management Strategy, which will include development of an agreed upon timeline for development of the strategy (pending assessment of implications from ISAP Report #1)
2. Discuss the Adaptive Management Framework and determine whether and, if necessary, what to recommend on the Framework
3. Implement the approved Adaptive Management Engagement Approach for the 2011 Adaptive Management Emergent Sandbar Habitat Adaptive Management efforts

4. Explore strategic directions around Adaptive Management approach as foundation for the program level Adaptive Management strategy
 - o Presentation from National Research Council participants
 - o Discussion of objectives and get agreement
 - Species recovery and operate river for all authorized purposes
5. Implement the approved approach to engage with the TPSN on ISAP Spring Pulse and Adaptive Management topic
6. Identify and engage with the TPSN on a second topic for the ISAP
7. Continue developing recommendations related to long-term planning for the Recovery Program Work Plan
8. Develop recommendations on other tern and plover recruitment pilot projects not considered in the October 19, 2010 final consensus
9. Possibly develop analysis of land acquisition issues and propose a process for moving forward
10. Implement the approved plan for engagement around the Corps' 2013 Missouri River Recovery work plan (if approved)

Work Group Membership

MRRIC Points of Contact	Brian Barels, John Drew
USACE Points of Contact	Steve Fischer (cc Mary Roth)
USFWS Points of Contact	Casey Kruse (cc Carol Hale)
Facilitation Team	Paul De Morgan, Sarah Palmer (cc John Thorson/ Mike Mac, David Sieck)
MRRIC	David Barfield, Bill Beacom, Jim Becic, Jim Berkley, Chance Bitner, Terry Fleck, Tim Fleegeer, David Galat, Art Gehmert, Joe Gibbs, Don Jorgensen, Bill Lay, Paul Lepisto, Sue Lowry, Marian Maas, Henry Maddux, Carla Markt, Skip Meisner, Steve Mietz, Frank Pogge, John Pozzo, Jim Riis, Laurie Riley, David Sieck, Jason Skold, Brad Thompson, Robin Wankum

Work Group Products /Deliverables

- A. Recommended a Project Work Request to be developed on nesting habitat for least terns and piping plovers; tentative agreement was reached on July 22, 2010. Final consensus was reached by MRRIC on October 19, 2010.
- B. Recommended an Interaction Approach/Timeline for MRRIC's engagement regarding the 2012 Recovery Program Work Plan which was approved by MRRIC on October 19, 2010



- C. Recommended an Engagement Approach for MRRIC's involvement in the Development and Implementation of Adaptive Management Strategies which was approved by MRRIC on February 15, 2011
- D. Recommended an addendum to the USACE MRRIC ISAP Approach Structure Ground Rules defining ISP WG Involvement in ISAP Information/Presentation Requests which was approved by MRRIC on February 17, 2011.
- E. Developed a recommendation regarding the Corps' FY 2012 MRRP Work Plan which was tentatively approved by MRRIC on May 3, 2011.

MRERP Work Group

Significant Activities and Summary of Work Performed

- A. Updated MRRIC Engagement Strategy for MRERP (process recommendation)
 - Reached consensus among the Work Group.
 - MRRIC decision at October 2011 meeting
- B. Sought out and approved 18 MRRIC liaisons to the MRERP Technical Teams (process recommendation)
 - Liaisons reported back to full committee following Tech Team meetings and conference calls
- C. Began discussion of the list of Focal Natural Resources (FNRs) and the Social, Economic, and Cultural (SECs) Resources.
 - Engaged in half-day workshop for members to share their perspectives about ways in which the Missouri River is linked to social, cultural, and economic interests in the Missouri River basin and, thus, how changes to improve the condition of the natural resources might affect people, either negatively or positively
 - Coordinating with the MRRIC Tribal Subcommittee regarding the application of traditional ecological knowledge into the FNR Baseline assessment.
- D. Identified the range of perspectives related to geographic scope and prepared a proposed transmittal summarizing those perspectives for MRRIC consideration.
 - MRRIC decision at the October 2011 meeting
- E. The Work Group conducted 10 conference calls during FY2011 to work on assigned tasks and held a face to face meeting in Omaha, 22-23 September 2011.

Future Topics for the MRERP Work Group in 2012

- A. Possible substantive recommendations on:
 - FNR and SCE Baseline
 - Methodology for Goals and Objectives
 - Goals, Objectives, Management Measures
- B. Continue updates from MRERP PDT and CAT at each MRRIC meeting.
- C. Work on tasks associated with the MRERP timeline and the Engagement Strategy as approved by MRRIC.

MRRERP Work Group Membership

MRRIC Points of Contact	David Johnson, Paul Lepisto
USACE Points of Contact	Randy Sellers (cc Jennifer Switzer, Mary Roth)
USFWS Points of Contact	Wayne Nelson-Stastny (cc Carol Hale)
Facilitation Team	Gail Bingham, Sarah Palmer (cc John Thorson/ Mike Mac, David Sieck)
MRRIC	Mike Armstrong, Verlon Barnes, Don Borgman, Tim Bryggman, Joe Cothern, Susan France, Art Gehmert, Joe Gibbs, Tom Graves, Marian Maas, Buzz Mattelin, Lynn Muench, John Pozzo, Jodee Pring, Jim Redmond, John Shadle, Kate Vandemoer, Elizabeth Wakeman, Mike Wells

Work Group Products/Deliverables

- A. Engagement Strategy for MRRIC on MRRERP
- B. Updates from MRRIC Technical Team liaisons
- C. Transmittal letter for geographic scope issues summary (Oct. meeting)

Communications / IT Work Group

Significant Activities and Summary of Work Performed

- A. Coordinated Webinars on the following topics (please refer to the Webinars section of this report)
- B. Development and implementation of a Communications Plan
 - Established nine key goals and objectives for an effective communications plan
 - Coordinated resources with USACE communications staff
 - Worked on enhancements to the public website (mrric.org) and appointed two Work Group members as liaisons to coordinate with the USACE to ensure continuing progress on the public website
 - Worked on improving outreach to the Tribes
 - Began developing a MRRIC brochure and fact sheet
 - Worked on improving local media coverage of committee meetings
- C. Annual Report and Self Evaluation
 - Finalized 2009-2010 Annual Report and coordinated distribution to Secretary of the Army, MRRIC members and other interested parties
 - Coordinated prioritization and follow-up on areas of improvement identified in the 2010 Self-Assessment
 - Coordinated the administration and analysis of the MRRIC 2011 Assessment and Self-Evaluation survey and assisted the facilitation and leadership team with prioritizing the operational issues that were raised by Committee members in the survey
 - Prepared the 2010-2011 Annual Report

Future Topics (Potential and Actual) for the Work Group

- A. Continue to identify appropriate subject matter, prioritize and coordinate webinars

- B. Continue to improve the public website and develop components of the MRRIC Communications Plan
- C. Coordinate the administration of the annual Assessment and Self-Evaluation survey and the survey report and summary
- D. Prepare and distribute the MRRIC Annual Report

Work Group Membership

MRRIC Points of Contact	Deb Madison, Terry Fleck
USACE Points of Contact	Mary Roth, Steve Fischer, Chuck McWilliams
USFWS Point of Contact	Carol Hale
Facilitation Team	Pat Lewis, Bridget Radcliff (cc John Thorson/ Mike Mac)
MRRIC	Bill Lay, Paul Lepisto, Larry Mires, Kenneth Reeder, David Sieck, Liz Wakeman

Work Group Products /Deliverables

- A. Webinars
- B. Improvements to the public website
- C. MRRIC 2011 Assessment and Self-Evaluation Report
- D. 2011 Annual Report
- E. Additions and edits to the MRRIC Communications Tool Kit



Membership, Process, and Procedures Ad Hoc Group

Significant Activities and Summary of Work Performed

- A. Recommended work group name change to more accurately reflect responsibilities
 - Name change from “Nominating work group” to “Membership, Process, and Procedures (MP2) work group”.

- B. Initiated process for selection of MRRIC Chair
 - Reviewed and revised qualifications for MRRIC Chair
 - Updated list of individuals to receive the MRRIC Chair solicitation
 - Reviewed proposals for MRRIC Chair and recommended candidates for in person interview at May meeting
 - Developed Chair interview questions
- C. Reviewed and revised the consent agenda procedures so that the procedures could be formally adopted as an amendment to the MRRIC Operating Procedures
- D. Reviewed how issues are included in meeting agendas, recommended changes to operating procedures
- E. Reviewed work plan implementation no changes recommended
- F. Reviewed work plan development and developed recommended changes

Future Topics (Potential and Actual) for the Work Group

- A. Review procedures for changes to MRRIC Charter
- B. Review 2012 MRRIC stakeholder application for possible changes

Work Group Membership

MRRIC Point of Contact	Buzz Mattelin
USACE Point of Contact	Mary Roth
USFWS Point of Contact	Carol Hale
Facilitation Team	Sarah Palmer (cc John Thorson/ Mike Mac)
MRRIC	Bill Beacom, David Barfield, David Johnson, Lynn Muench, Kenneth Reeder, David Sieck

Work Group Products/Deliverables

- Work with US Institute on MRRIC Chair Selection Process as outlined in the MRRIC Chair Selection Process dated January 26, 2011
- Review how members, work groups, and agencies get issues included in meeting agendas; and whether agenda time should be regularly scheduled for members to speak to any issue on their minds
- As the MRRIC work plan is implemented:
 - a. Review and assess MRRIC's organizational structure for sufficiency in implementing the work plan
 - b. Review work plan development process for possible improvements
 - c. Review the process to update the MRRIC Charter, to add Osage Tribe and a table of contents.
- Review and recommend updates to the 2012 MRRIC stakeholder application. Discuss how the updates might also apply to state, tribe and federal agency appointees to MRRIC
- Review suggestions to improve MRRIC & lead agency engagement suggested during the May MRERP work group breakout session and provide a report to MRRIC about possible strategies/process improvements

Missouri River Basin Studies Ad Hoc Group

Significant Activities and Summary of Work Performed

Recognizing the extensive number and range of studies and programs being undertaken by federal agencies and others in the Missouri River Basin, MRRIC tasked the Ad Hoc Group to establish an efficient means to stay informed about the results of the various studies and programs underway in the Basin, so that MRRIC can identify occasions when these activities are relevant to its work and can make recommendations and provide guidance in an informed manner.



Work Group Membership

MRRIC Point of Contact	Don Borgman
USACE Point of Contact	Mary Roth
USFWS Point of Contact	Carol Hale
Facilitation Team	Sarah Palmer (cc John Thorson/ Mike Mac, David Sieck)
MRRIC	Verlon Barnes, Tim Bryggman, David Johnson, Paul Lepisto, David Shorr, Skip Meisner, Elizabeth Wakeman

Work Group Products/Deliverables

The committee held several calls to discuss potential solutions during spring and early summer of 2011. The committee presented its recommendations to the full MRRIC and the recommendations were approved on 3 May 2011.

Subcommittee on Tribal Participation Ad Hoc Group

Significant Activities and Summary of Work Performed

In October 2010, MRRIC approved the continuation of the Subcommittee on Tribal Participation (Subcommittee) for a second year, until the end of 2011. The purpose of the Subcommittee is to focus on outreach and education activities with Missouri River basin tribes. It also shares information with MRRIC about topics of interest to tribes. As the Subcommittee's previous point of contact (POC), Kate Vandemoer, stepped down from MRRIC at the beginning of the year, the group selected Lana Gravatt of the Yankton Sioux Tribe as the new POC at the February MRRIC meeting.

Discussions within the Tribal subcommittee in late FY2010 resulted in the invitation to and subsequent appearance by Sarah Rinkevich, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Biologist and doctoral student, to present her Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) research about the Mexican Grey Wolf to the full MRRIC committee in October 2010 (FY2011). Her presentation generated questions and interest in TEK to the point that the Chairman's work plan included a statement requesting MRERP to consider TEK in its outreach to Tribes. MRERP had already been working with the Tribes to determine

resources of importance to them. Discussions ensued with MRERP about the potential inclusion of a TEK project into its data collection process. MRERP presented its data collection process and results to the Tribal subcommittee and to MRRIC, all of whom seemed pleased with the effort expended and the data received. No further pursuit of TEK has occurred by any of the parties (MRRIC, MRRIC Tribal subcommittee, MRERP).

After the February 2011 MRRIC meeting, the Subcommittee developed and submitted an article on MRRIC and the role of the Tribal Subcommittee to the weekly news magazine *Indian Country Today*. In May, the Subcommittee invited and hosted a reporter from *Indian Country Today* at the MRRIC meeting. The reporter's attendance resulted in an article about MRRIC and tribal participation in the Committee in the online news magazine. The Subcommittee is currently developing a comprehensive plan for outreach to tribes and plans to coordinate its efforts with those of the Communications Work Group.



At the May 2011 meeting, MRRIC asked the Tribal Subcommittee to add to its tasks the discussion and possible development of a recommendation on the agency use of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in resource assessment. The Subcommittee therefore heard presentations on the MRERP team's current outreach activities to tribes, which are not characterized as TEK. While acknowledging that those efforts do not constitute TEK, Subcommittee members expressed the opinion that the MRERP team is doing a good job of tribal outreach.

Aware that other tribes not represented on MRRIC might have a different opinion, however, the Subcommittee suggested that the MRERP team include an evaluation component in its tribal outreach sessions.

In response to its task of "documenting the reasons, advantages, and opportunities for the Tribes to participate in MRRIC," the Subcommittee developed a list of the benefits of tribal participation in MRRIC for the agencies and others to share with tribes in the basin. As part of the task, the Subcommittee also aimed to identify for each tribe: a) cultural resource losses, b) natural resource losses, c) opportunities for resource recovery, and d) resources that could be impacted by recovery efforts. Recognizing that the MRERP team is already engaged in similar information-gathering efforts, the Subcommittee reviewed the list of questions that the MRERP team poses to tribes at the outreach meetings and offered some suggested refinements. The Subcommittee plans to continue coordinating with the MRERP team to learn from the results of its information gathering and incorporate the lessons into its own outreach efforts.

The Subcommittee organized briefings to MRRIC on the following topics: water quality on Missouri River tributaries (February meeting); an overview of the MRERP team's tribal outreach activities (May meeting); and the impacts of flooding on tribal lands and other areas of the basin (July webinar).

Finally, the Subcommittee explored various options for identifying alternative facilitation support. With the goal of supporting the continued work of the Subcommittee, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has decided to allocate resources specifically for the facilitation of the Subcommittee in the coming year.

Future Topics (Potential and Actual) for the Subcommittee

If approved by MRRIC, the Subcommittee hopes to continue reaching out to Missouri River basin tribes to educate them on the purpose and activities of MRRIC and encourage their participation in the Committee. The Subcommittee is developing a comprehensive outreach plan to be implemented in 2012, in coordination with the Communications Work Group and the MRRIC chair. The Subcommittee would also like to continue serving as a resource to MRRIC on tribal issues by providing advice as needed and educating the Committee on topics of importance to tribes. Finally, the Subcommittee would like to focus on identifying obstacles to tribal participation in MRRIC and assessing whether the Subcommittee or MRRIC can address any of them. If so, the Subcommittee will propose suggested activities to overcome those obstacles.

Subcommittee Membership

MRRIC Point of Contact	Lana Gravatt
USACE Points of Contact	Catherine Warren (cc Mary Roth)
USFWS Points of Contact	Kim Greenwood (cc Carol Hale)
Facilitation Team	Dana Goodson (cc John Thorson/ Mike Mac, David Sieck)
MRRIC	Steve Fischer, Terry Fleck, Russ Kaldenberg, Rhonda Knudsen, Deb Madison, Karla Sparks, Jeanne Spaur, Wayne Stone, Kate Vandemoer, Elizabeth Wakeman, Bob Walters, Jo'Etta Buckhouse

Subcommittee Products/Deliverables

The Subcommittee's anticipated work products are:

- Regular *Indian Country Today* articles (one submitted, another published)
- Increasing the use of WebEx and developing an information repository (incorporated into draft outreach plan)
- A set of questions that could be used to assist Tribal subcommittee to identify, for each Tribe a) cultural resource losses, b) natural resource losses, c) opportunities for resource recovery, and d) resources that could be impacted by recovery efforts (task completed through coordination with MRERP team)
- Institutionalizing follow-up with Tribal representatives who attend MRRIC meetings (incorporated into draft outreach plan)
- Providing briefings to MRRIC (accomplished through regular updates at MRRIC meetings)
- Contributions to the MRRIC agenda (accomplished through presentations at the February and May meetings and on the July webinar)
- The transition plan for new facilitation support (completed)
- Possible recommendation on TEK (Subcommittee decided not to make a recommendation)

Water Quality Ad Hoc Group

Significant Activities and Summary of Work Performed

In 2010 - 2011, the MRRIC Water Quality Ad Hoc Group (AHG) was formed to identify and organize a series of water quality information-sharing topics. The group selected Jim Redmond as its point of contact (POC) and composed a list of potential water quality topics to address. Members volunteered to participate on teams to organize webinars around selected topics. The first webinar, held May 24, 2011, focused on the role of federal agencies in monitoring and improving water quality along the mainstem of the Missouri River. The webinar included



presentations from representatives of the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Due to the disruption caused by flooding in the basin, a second webinar planned for the summer of 2011 was postponed. The next webinar on nonpoint source pollution will take place in November 2011. The Water Quality AHG also asked John Thorson to prepare a memo describing the early years of water quality under the 1944 Flood Control Act. Mr. Thorson has drafted the memo and it is currently under review; the group anticipates circulating the memo to MRRIC before the October 2011 MRRIC meeting.

Future Topics (Potential and Actual) for the Subcommittee

The Water Quality AHG is currently reviewing and prioritizing its list of remaining water quality topics. It will determine whether to organize webinars around those issues or to include them on a list of significant issues that it will share with MRRIC. The draft list (which could change) includes the following topics: monitoring; point sources; water contaminants and forage for the pallid sturgeon; the influence of the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act on the management of the Missouri River System; and states, tribes, and the contribution of tributaries to the main stem of the Missouri.

Work Group Membership

MRRIC Point of Contact	Jim Redmond
USACE Point of Contact	Steve Fischer (cc Mary Roth)
USFWS Point of Contact	Carol Hale
Facilitation Team	Dana Goodson (cc John Thorson/ Mike Mac, David Sieck)
MRRIC	Mike Armstrong, Verlon Barnes, Jim Berkley, Tim Bryggman, Joe Cothorn, Casey Kruse, Paul Lepisto, Marian Maas, Deb Madison, Skip Meisner, Frank Pogge, John Pozzo, Jodee Pring, Jim Redmond, Kenneth Reeder, David Shorr, Mike Slifer, Elizabeth Wakeman, Bob Walters

Work Group Products/Deliverables

The Ad Hoc Work Group's anticipated work products are a list of water quality issues (complete), a series of webinars on water quality (in progress), and a list of the significant issues MRRIC might wish to address moving forward (in progress).

Assessment and Self-Evaluation Summary

The MRRIC Charter requires that the Committee will conduct an annual Assessment and Self-Evaluation of operations. The MRRIC tasked the Committee’s Communications/ Information Technology (IT) Work Group with implementing the Assessment and Self-Evaluation. This report is the third annual Assessment and Self-Evaluation of MRRIC. The 2011 survey tool was altered slightly to remove references from 2010. At the request of the Communications/IT Work Group, a U.S. Institute evaluation team, who is not affiliated with the MRRIC process, administered and compiled the results of the survey.

Thirty of the 67 primary members (45 percent) responded to the survey, and nine of the 51 alternate members (18 percent) responded. The overall response rate is 33 percent. Feedback was solicited from primary and alternate members and all categories of membership, including those less active in the Committee and work groups. When the survey was issued, fourteen meetings of the MRRIC had been convened since its inception in October 2008. This year respondents were asked to indicate how many of the three MRRIC meetings held in 2010-2011 they had attended. The majority of the survey respondents (56 percent) attended three meetings.

The matrix below lists several take-away points from the survey. In drafting this summary, the Communications/IT Work Group chose to report components of Committee operations that have improved over time and others that trended downward from 2010. The summary does not reflect the opinions of the U.S. Institute evaluation team, the MRRIC facilitation and leadership team or Committee members who did not respond to the survey, and it does not report the opinions of each individual who answered the survey. It is intended to highlight, in a general way, respondents’ perceptions of Committee operations. Caveat: It should be noted there were similar numbers of respondents to the survey in 2010 (40). A goal is to attain a higher response rate in 2012 to ensure all members input is captured in this critical self-assessment.

The Committee will work with the facilitation and leadership team to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the Evaluation results and to address any operational issues raised by Committee members through the survey comments and responses.

Table 1 below highlights some of the survey responses:

Table 1 – Select Responses from 2011 Assessment and Self-Evaluation Survey

Committee Make-up and Resources	
Overview	Survey respondents engage in and expect to remain active on the Committee.
Improving	50% of respondents “strongly agree” or “totally agree” to the statement: “I have the resources needed to participate effectively in the process.” This is an increase from 37% in 2010.
Areas for Improvement	The time required to engage fully in MRRIC activities can be difficult to manage. Travel funding remains a major concern of members. Respondents indicated: <i>“I’m able to make time to attend the meetings. I just don’t</i>

	<i>have time to read all the documents and pre-work.” “I will continue to participate despite the limitations of travel funding for myself.”</i>
Facilitation Team (open-ended question: “How has the Facilitation Team contributed to the functioning and operation of the Committee?”)	
Overview	The majority of respondents indicate that the facilitation team has been effective in managing information and assisting the Work Groups and Committee in staying on task and moving forward on deliverables. <i>“The current facilitation team has contributed greatly to the success of MRRIC. Their knowledge of the issues and expertise in their positions help move us forward.”</i>
Improving	Responses to the open-ended question were generally positive: <i>“Provides materials in a timely manner and attempts to keep all on track. Follows established processes and uses innovative and “new” technologies for the entire group.”” [The facilitation team] creates the tone of inclusiveness needed in a consensus model.”</i>
Areas for Improvement	Some respondents indicated that the “process” of MRRIC can, at times, overshadow the overarching goals of the Committee and that more focus should be on substantive issues and recommendations
Lead Agency Support	
Overview	Respondents are aware of agency resource limitations. The responses indicated they would like to see more transparency in the process and clearer direction from the lead agencies. <i>“I think when agencies ask for and clearly articulate where and why they want MRRIC input, it really helps MRRIC focus.”</i>
Improving	Most respondents recognize the time limitations of agency staff and appreciate the work that agency staffs contribute to MRRIC. In response to the question: “Resources provided by the agencies to support the Committee and its work groups are sufficient.” 66% of respondents “strongly agree” or “totally agree”. This is an increase from 46% in 2010.
Areas for Improvement	Respondents indicated that agencies did not always provide materials in a timely manner. 47% of respondents “strongly agree” or “totally” agree to the statement, “Agency responses to work group information requests are timely.” This is a decrease from 63% in 2010.
Committee Process	
Overview	Responses indicate that the processes of the Committee are decreasing the effectiveness of members to work on substantive issues.
Improving	Responses indicate that the increased use of webinars and other technologies have contributed positively to the communication and work of the Committee.
Areas for Improvement	The number of responses that “strongly agree” or “totally agree” to the question “The process has helped me gain a better understanding of the other members’ views and perspectives” decreased from 82% in 2010 to 65% in 2011. <i>“[Consider] modifying</i>

	<i>the charter to allow recommendations and decisions to be made that do not require consensus.”</i>
Working Together Cooperatively	
Overview	The responses offered indicate that MRRIC members worked together less cooperatively in 2011. In response to the statement “Missouri River Basin stakeholders have made progress in working together cooperatively in this past year, 36% of respondents “strongly agree” or “totally agree”; this is a decrease from 45% in 2010.
Improving	Respondents offered that relationships have been improved and that <i>“The diversity of MRRIC is challenging and requires respect for all, the working groups are effective in providing direction and guidance to the entire group.”</i>
Areas for Improvement	There is room to improve the collaboration between stakeholder members. <i>“We will never reach perfection, but we can make progress if we put the river’s best interest first.”</i>
Committee Operations	
Overview	Overall respondents indicated operations improved in 2011 and that <i>“These events provide opportunity to interact in a meaningful manner.”</i>
Improving	The responses indicate that the meeting space and accommodations have improved contributing to the effectiveness of the meetings.
Areas for Improvement	The group size can be challenging at times as 29% of respondents “strongly agree” or “totally agree” with the statement “The size of the group is manageable.”
Work Group Structure and Process	
Overview	Respondents felt the reorganization of some work groups was a positive change. There is still work to be done on the progress of primary tasks.
Improving	In response to the statement, “Work group membership adequately reflects the Committee membership,” 38% of respondents “strongly agree” or “totally agree”, an increase of 17% from 2010.
Areas for Improvement	Overall, respondents indicated that work group progress on primary tasks decreased in 2011. <i>“For MRRIC to provide effective guidance and recommendations to the agencies, the Work Groups and the Committee will need to be thoughtful and timely in its consideration of proposals.”</i>

FINANCIALS

October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011

The United States Congress allocates funding for the USACE's Missouri River Recovery Program. The MRRIC is a line-item in the MRRP budget. In addition to the operating funds, which are discussed in more detail below, the USACE funds one full-time, dedicated Project Manager, Mary Roth, who supports the Committee through her participation in the Committee's work groups, on the Federal Working Group and at all the MRRIC meetings. Ms. Roth is responsible for coordinating across USACE programs to support MRRIC, ensuring timely communications to Committee members, and related operational aspects of the Committee including managing requests for information, maintaining the member roster, and member recruitment. Ms. Roth also organizes and maintains the MRRIC WebEx site. The USACE's Northwestern Division Program Director, the MRRP Program Manager and its Implementation Managers, the MRERP Program Managers, and numerous other program staff members dedicate generous amounts of time and effort in supporting the Committee.

The USFWS, in partnership with the USACE, contributes travel funding for subject matter experts who deliver presentations and provide information to the Committee, as requested. The USFWS has also assigned Carol Hale as its point of contact for the meetings and on the work groups. The USFWS Regional Director-Mountain Prairie Region, its Geographic Supervisor and its Missouri River Coordinator attend the MRRIC meetings and play a significant role in providing information on species recovery to the Committee.

Other federal agencies in the basin including: the Bureau of Reclamation, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Park Service, the U.S. Geological Survey, the Western Area Power Administration, the Natural Resources Conservation District, the U.S. Forest Service, the National Weather Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and others, support the Committee by serving as resources to its members and its work groups and by funding their agency's representation at the MRRIC meetings and on the MRRIC Federal Working Group. Several of the agencies above provided funding to support the Charter development process of the MRRIC.

The USACE contracts with the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution, an independent, impartial agency of the federal government to:

- Provide impartial consensus building, collaborative problem solving and facilitation services with its contracted partner RESOLVE
- Provide impartial Committee leadership through its contracted Committee Chair, Mr. John E. Thorson (through May 2011) and Dr. Michael J. Mac (beginning June 2011)
- Convene MRRIC meetings and manage meeting logistics
- Convene and facilitate coordination efforts of the Federal Working Group (the federal agencies represented on the Committee) in support of MRRIC consensus building efforts

The total estimated operating costs for the Committee from October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011 is \$959,252.02. Expenses can be categorized as follows:

- Approximately 67% of the Committee operating funds are for labor and expenses associated with contracted expenses
- Approximately 29% of the operating funds go toward the direct services provided by the U.S. Institute, as well as travel expenses and contract management
- Meeting room expenses make up approximately 4% of the total cost of the Committee

Expenditures, in terms of dollars spent, are further delineated in Table 2, below.

Table 2: *Estimated* MRRIC Expenses, October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011*

U.S. Institute and Contractor Fees	Actuals
U.S. Institute Services (labor) – 1478 hours**	\$180,190.00
Direct Costs (e.g. phone charges and travel expenses)	\$32,449.77
10% Administrative Fee	\$63,762.99
Total Contractor Fees (Labor and Direct Costs)	\$637,629.86
<i>Contracted Facilitation Team (Oct 10 – Sept 11)</i>	<i>\$578,879.26</i>
<i>Chair (October 10 – September 11)***</i>	<i>\$58,650.60</i>
Total U.S. Institute and Contractor Fees	\$914,032.62
Meeting Expenses (3 Committee meetings; 1 VTC; 2 in-person work group meetings: fees for room rental, AV/audio. etc.)	\$42,928.59
Invitee Travel for Meeting Presenters	\$2,290.81
TOTAL ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011	\$959,252.02

* Estimated expenses are projected costs from Sept 1-30 2011.

**In addition to the billed hours above, the U.S. Institute has contributed 707 hours of in-kind labor to the Committee from October 1, 2010 – September 30, 2011

***Mr. John E. Thorson and Dr. Michael J. Mac chaired MRRIC during the 2010-2011 fiscal year.