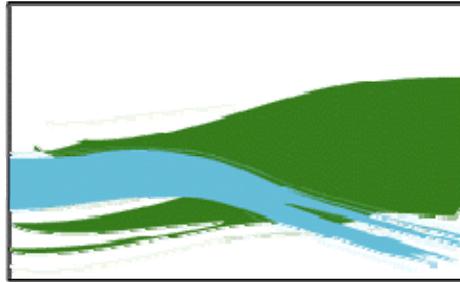


M·N·R·G



MNRG SENIOR MANAGER MEETING

Noon, June 6 to Noon, June 7, 2007

Leopold Legacy Center, Near Baraboo, WI

<http://www.aldoleopold.org/Programs/shack.htm>

Meeting Minutes

Contact: John Perrecone, USEPA, 312/353-1149, perrecone.john@epa.gov

Agenda: The agenda for this meeting is located at the MNRG web site, www.mnrg.gov. All meeting attachments are also located on the web page. Where relevant, these minutes will reference the agenda and any attachments.

Attendees: *See agenda for list of attendees.*

Wednesday, June 6, 2007

Welcome: Bharat was unable to attend and Robyn Thorson (FWS) as co-chair convened the meeting at 12:30 pm and welcomed the group to the meeting.

Terrestrial Invasive Species Committee: Carmen Chapin (NPS) updated the group on the progress the TISC has made since the last meeting (*see agenda for attachment*). She also referenced the web site that has a number of work products that have been produced. <http://mnrg.gov/committees/gltisc/index.htm>. Carmen has served admirably as TISC chair for the last 18 months and she requested that a new chair be chosen to lead the group. She also stated that at certain times, issues have arisen that were not easily resolved at the TISC level and she requested a mechanism be put in place to resolve those issues.

Action Items:

- Robyn agreed that the FWS will lead the TISC and she will provide one of her staff to lead the group.
- Robyn and General Crear (COE) agreed to serve as senior liaisons to the TISC.

Corporate Wetland Restoration Partnership/Private Sector Wetland Activities:

John Perrecone (EPA) presented his findings on opportunities to work with the private sector on wetland and habitat restoration. John suggested that his findings are based solely on EPA's perspective and it would be good to create an ad hoc group to look at this from a wider view. John has been successful in making contacts with the Wildlife Habitat Council and the Corporate Wetland Restoration Partnership and both of these could become ideal partners for the MNRG to achieve our goal. *See agenda for attachment.*

Action Item:

- An ad hoc group of USFS, FWS and Army COE members was formed and a report is expected on progress made at the November 07 Annual Meeting.

National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration: David Vigh (COE) presented a report from the meeting and said it was very successful meeting with over 800 attendees and numerous poster sessions and exhibitors. This is becoming the premiere ecosystem restoration conference in the country and the next one will be in Los Angeles in 2009. the MNRG co-sponsored with USGS the Internet Café which was a location where the attendees could get free Internet access—a banner with MNRG and USGS was placed above the computers providing us with plenty of publicity. *See agenda for the slide show.*

Cooperative Conservation: Robyn invited James H. Hook, CEO of the International Crane Foundation (ICF), located 5 miles away to discuss their various projects related to protecting and restoring the endangered crane population worldwide. Because ICF partners with FWS and others on their projects, they are a good organization that embodies cooperative conservation while doing their work.

Field trip to Aldo Leopold's "Shack" and a tour of the levees near the Wisconsin River: Buddy Huffaker of The Leopold Legacy Center and Brent Hagland from Sand County Foundation provided us with background information for the field trips. *See agenda for background materials related to The Sand county Foundation's work at the levees.* Visit this website for more information on The Aldo Leopold Foundation's restoration work at the shack. <http://www.aldoleopold.org/programs/stewardship.htm>

Thursday, June 7, 2007

No Child Left Inside: Guest presenter Peggy Stewart from the Chicago Park District discussed the Chicago Wilderness's "No Child Left Inside" campaign and how this coalition is aggressively addressing "nature deficit disorder." The group did not make

any decisions on this topic. For the presentation, visit this website:

http://www.chicagowilderness.org/members/documents/LEAVE_NO_CHILD_INSIDE_6.6.pdf.

Green Infrastructure: Peg Kohring of the Conservation Fund discussed how this new smart growth tool is being used to address the challenges of growing communities. It is a strategically planned and managed network of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystem values and functions and provide associated benefits to human populations. The group did not make any decisions on this topic. *See agenda for the slide show.*

FEMA and FAA Presentations: Amanda Ratliff (FEMA) and Lindsay Butler (FAA), as the newest members of MNRG, provided slide shows regarding their environmental programs and the group had a good discussion on how their programs can help the other MNRG members achieve each agency's goals. Everyone was quite pleased that we had these two members and are looking forward to working with these agencies in the future. *See agenda for their slide shows.*

Open Discussion on MNRG: Robyn led a discussion on how the MNRG has been performing over the last 10 years and what changes, if any, are needed to keep the organization fresh and vital into the future. Robyn provided opening comments stating that the MNRG has evolved from the model of working on a set number of "focus areas" to a perspective that allows agencies to work together on projects when those projects are aligned with that agency's mission. In fact, we have recently modified our charter to reflect that approach. We have also gone from meeting three times a year to two times a year with one of those meetings being the larger Annual Meeting held in late fall. Some of the key points raised by the group were:

Meeting Goals:

- These meetings provide a great forum to better understand each agency's needs and perspectives and allow the senior managers to solve problems with a broader view. It offers a chance to see what we have in common and what new approaches can be used in our day to day business. It can also help us avoid situations among the agencies if we better understand each other in advance of problems arising. It was suggested that we maintain the Agency Update portion of the meetings.
- These meetings can let us look at emerging issues for all the agencies and give us the opportunity to spend more time on these issues.
- At the same time, we can look at larger overarching issues that all agencies must deal with such as fluctuating funding levels and issues associated with an aging workforce such as retraining, retention and recruitment.
- These meetings can also be a time for us to discuss important issues in a more relaxed manner and it also provides more opportunities for collaboration—this is especially important as budgets and resources are dwindling.
- The MNRG is very valuable to staff because it renews the collaborative commitment due to senior manager attention, it broadens all of our awareness of

- natural resource issues and new ways to approach them and it re-energizes our involvement and awareness of natural resource issues;
- It is good that the MNRG moved away from the “focus area” approach because it was not successful and the staff resented having to fit their existing work into that model—it was not an easy fit and actually created more work with little to show for it.

Suggested Meeting Approach:

- There was a suggestion that we do a group activity (either a simulation, case study or a real problem that is presented to the group) to resolve an issue. We would leave the meeting with a suggested solution that would help that agency solve that problem as well as build cohesion among the group.
- We briefly discussed what some topics may be for discussion or analysis but we did not settle on any particular topics. Suggested topics for future meetings include: 1) how do agencies actually centralize functions to become more efficient, 2) what is the status of the new Farm Bill and how will it impact us, 3) what do we need to understand about carbon credits, climate change or global warming and 4) what are some of the best practices in the Upper Miss that we can share amongst ourselves?
- If we do pick a topic, then each agency should come prepared to provide substantive comments on what agency is doing to address it. In other words, these discussions should be more than just an information session but a means to address the issue in a comprehensive manner via the MNRG forum. As part of these discussions, we should include any relevant speakers such as congressional staff, the private sector and any other relevant partners as well.

Meeting Logistics:

- While two meetings are good—do we still need to adhere to that model?
- The Annual Meeting should become more expansive by having more key staff attend (it has been reduced in recent years with less attendees) because the staff benefited from the interaction with the senior managers.
- We should consider how to elevate the profile of the Midwestern natural resources. Should we invite congressional staff, our own senior managers or other high ranking officials so we become more visible? We need to better promote ourselves to Congress because we have much to offer yet we are all experiencing resource constraints.

Other Suggestions:

- It was suggested that the MNRG should develop a strategic goal for itself so we have a set of goals and objectives, a means to measure them and a process to modify our goals as we proceed. In short, a method to identify what we want to accomplish, a clear number of actions to achieve the goal, a means to measure progress and a way to evaluate our progress.
- Finally, there was a suggestion that we need to broaden our membership to formally include state agencies in the MNRG. This has been discussed over the years but never acted upon.

We ended this discussion with no actions or decisions taken. Rather, its purpose was to allow the members to express their feelings and to get some ideas on the table.

New Business: Robyn led this final discussion by thanking Bharat (in his absence) for the fine job he did this last year in leading the MNRG and by hosting two exceptional meetings. He was awarded the MNRG Achievement for Conservation Excellence (ACE) award for his good work. Robyn took over the Chair of the MNRG for the coming year and General Crear (Army COE) agreed to be the Vice Chair for the coming year. Norm Granneman (USGS) agreed that the USGS would follow the Corps as Vice Chair in the year after that which means that the MNRG will have solid leadership for the next three years.

The 2007 MNRG Annual Meeting will be held in Minneapolis at the Minnesota Valley Refuge for 1 1/2 days from November 27-29, with lodging slated for a nearby Holiday Inn Select.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

**MNRG Meeting—Roster of Attendees
June 6-7, 2007
Leopold Legacy Center, Baraboo, WI**

Name	Agency	Address	Phone	Fax	E-mail
Bail, Barron	BLM	7450 Boston Boulevard Springfield, VA 22153	703/440-1711	703/440-1701	abarron@blm.gov
Barnes, Phil	FHWA		515/233-7300	515/233-7499	Philip.Barnes@fhwa.dot.gov
Brown, Theodore	US Army COE	550 Main Street, Cincinnati, OH 45201-1159	513/684-2974		Theodore.A.Brown@usace.army.mil
Butler, Lindsay	FAA	2300 East Devon, Des Plaines, IL 60018	847-294-7723	847/294-7046	Lindsay.butler@faa.gov
Chapin, Carmen	NPS	2800 Lakeshore Drive E., Ste. D, Ashland, WI 54806	715/682-0631 x30	715/682-6190	Carmen_chapin@nps.gov
Christensen, Jon, Colonel	US Army COE	190 5 th Street, East St. Paul, MN 55101			Jon.christensen@mvp02.usace.army.mil
Crear, Robert, Brigadier General	US Army COE	1400 Walnut Street, Vicksburg, MS 39181-0080	601/634-5750	601/634-7110	robert.crear@mvd02.usace.army.mil

DesHarnais, Judith	US Army COE	190 5 th Street, East St. Paul, MN 55101			Judith.I.desharnais@mvp02.usace.army.mil
Dunning, Charles P.	USGS	8505 Research Way Middleton, WI 53562	608 821 3827		cdunning@usgs.gov
Granneman, Norm	USGS	6520 Mercantile Way, Ste. 5, Lansing, MI 48911	517/887-8936	517/887-8937	nggranne@usgs.gov
Hepp, Donna	USFS	626 E. Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 800 Milwaukee, WI 53202	414/297-3538	414/944-3974	dhepp@fs.fed.us
Kohring, Peg	The Conservation Fund	P.O. Box 506 Sawyer, MI 49125	(269) 426- 8825	(269) 426- 4067	pkohring@aol.com
Krapf, Tom	NRCS	8030 Excelsior Dr., Ste 200, Madison, WI 53717	608/662-4422 x232	608/662-4430	Tom.krapf@wi.usda.gov
Leavenworth, Pat	NRCS	Same as above	608/662-4422 x222	608/662-4430	Pat.leavenworth@wi.usda.gov
Mathur, Bharat	EPA	77 West Jackson Blvd., Chicago IL 60604	312/886-3000	312/353-1120	Mathur.bharat@epa.gov

O'Brien, Tim	BLM	626 E. Wisconsin, Ste. 200 Milwaukee, WI 53202	414/297-4421	414/297-4405	tobrien@blm.gov
Perrecone, John	EPA	77 W. Jackson Blvd., Chicago, IL 60604	312/353-1149	312/353-5374	Perrecone.john@epa.gov
Pfenning, Michael, Colonel	US Army COE	190 5 th Street, East St. Paul, MN 55101			Michael.f.pfenning@mvp02.usace.army.mil
Quintana, Ernie	NPS	601 Riverfront Dr., Omaha, NE 68102	402/221-3341	402/221-2039	Ernie_quintana@nps.gov
Ratliff, Amanda	DHS	536 S. Clark, 6 th Floor, Chicago, IL 60605	312/408-5440		Amanda.ratliff@dhs.gov
Rogers, Michael	US Army COE	1400 Walnut Street, Vicksburg, MS 39181-0080	601-634-5794		michael.b.rogers@mvd02.usace.army.mil
Sobiech, Jonathan	US Army COE	190 5 th Street, East St. Paul, MN 55101	507/895-6341 ext 7		Jonathan.J.Sobiech@mvp02.usace.army.mil
Sowl, John	NPS	601 Riverfront Dr., Omaha, NE 68102	402/661-1872	402/661-1983	John_sowl@nps.gov

Starkey, Skip	USFS	626 E. Wisconsin Ave., Ste. 800 Milwaukee, WI 53202	414/297-3765		sstarkey@fs.fed.us
Stewart, Peggy	Chicago Park District	Chicago, IL	312/742-4916		Peggy.stewart@chicagoparkdistrict.com
Thorson, Robyn	FWS	1 Federal Plaza, Fort Snelling, MN 55111- 4056	612/713-5301	612/713-5284	Robyn_thorson@fws.gov
Vigh, David	US Army COE	1400 Walnut Street, Vicksburg, MS 39181-0080	601/634-5854	601/634-5849	David.a.vigh@mvd02.usace.army.mil
West, Jane	FWS	1 Federal Plaza, Fort Snelling, MN 55111- 4056	612/713-5314	612/713-5280	Jane_west@fws.gov