Notes from Lower Missouri River meeting

July 12, 2017 - Washington, MO

Presentation by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Kansas City District

- The Silver Jackets program mainly has a flood hazard focus but also takes a watershed perspective. The main goal is flood risk reduction
- The program tries to coordinate all government agencies
- There is currently an application through this program for funding to do a Lower Meramec floodplain management plan
- The Silver Jackets program can only work on non-structural projects (no levees) – examples include watershed plans, education and outreach
- The focus of a project has to be a state priority or supported by the State
- Past project examples include a heat map to identify road closures from flooding
- Can work on drought planning

Small group discussion notes

Summary of issues from 5 Lower Missouri River Watershed meetings January – May 2017

1. Effects of the Urban/Rural Divide on water quality – Urban cities, small towns and rural communities in the watershed have differing ideas about the sources of pollution and responsibilities for mitigating the pollution in the streams and River.

2. Effects of MO River channelization – There are differing ideas about the positive or negative impacts from channelizing the MO River and how the river should be managed to balance those impacts.

3. Effects of recreation and tourism – Recreation and tourism can have positive and negative effects on people and places in the watershed and the ability to manage them could affect economic development opportunities.

4. Competing and uncoordinated management of the River – There is a lack of understanding of agencies' roles and responsibilities for River management and uncoordinated management of River values.

Group 1 facilitated by Aaron Young

Prioritized issues: Issue 1 received 2 dots; Issue 2 received 3 dots; Issue 3 received zero dots; Issue 4 received 5 dots

Top priority issue: Competing and uncoordinated management of the River – There is a lack of understanding of agencies' roles and responsibilities for River management and uncoordinated management of River values

Issues discussion:

Issue 1:

- Need more education on agricultural practices of pesticide and herbicide use
- Relevant to local government operations

Issue 2:

- Habitat loss is being addressed in Missouri River Recovery Program
- 500,000 acres of floodplain was lost along the Missouri River
    - 166,750 acres has been authorized for mitigation / 60,000 acres has been purchased/ 5,000 acres in Big Muddy Reserve
- There is a misperception that levees are being impacted by habitat mitigation work, damage is not widespread and is being fixed

Issue 4:

- USACE in charge of monitoring levees
- Flood Control Act (flooding and navigation) are priorities 1 &1a
    - There are 8 other purposes
    - 2011 event caused Flood Control to be #1
- Many federal laws make it difficult for local officials to manage

Group 2 facilitated by Frank Johnson

Prioritized issues: Issue 1 received 1 dot; Issue 2 received 3 dots; Issue 3 received 2 dots; Issue 4 received 2 dots

Top priority issue: Effects of MO River channelization – There are differing ideas about the positive or negative impacts from channelizing the MO River and how the river should be managed to balance those impacts.

Issues discussion

Issue 1:

- Mayor Lange of Marthasville is trying to get their treatment outflow to the Missouri River. They are trying to do their part, but it doesn't seem like everyone is subject to the same rules and regulations
- Challenges in particular with unnamed creeks - such creeks don't receive any sort of official support or inclusion in various efforts related to the watershed.

Issue 2:

- When you talk of levees/floods, was the big picture looked at when these were created? Points to Chesterfield Valley – it's worked but it's pushed the water somewhere else
- Need a strong plan for Issues 1 and 2 to be managed 'fairly and equitably'

Issue 3:

- Issues 1 and 2 have to be taken care of for Issue 3 to work well

Issue 4:

- USACE operates at a high level, how can we get more 'on the ground' folks
- The cross-over with other issues - look for opportunities to pursue activities or initiatives that hit on more than one

Write-in issue – General education around river issues

Solutions discussion

- More fair regulations, advocacy/lobbying, more powerful combined voice
- Two issues: River management (levees) and regulation of outflows to river
- Need for general education around river issues.

Group 3 facilitated by Chad Eggen

Prioritized issues: Issue 1 received zero dots; Issue 2 received one dot; Issue 3 received one dot; Issue 4 received zero dots: Issue 5 Write-in received eight dots

Top priority issue: Flood protection should be highest priority overall

Issues discussion

Issue 1:

- Small town wastewater systems – water quality standards difficult to meet – costly improvements
- Septic tank aging, improperly installed, repairs expensive
- Wildlife in watershed, pets

Issue 2:

- Levees built to protect are expensive to maintain. Negatively impacted by habitat mitigation work
- Larger flood events leading to flooding of agricultural lands protected by levees

Issue 3:

- Opportunities connect people to river/nature lead to economic development from new business opportunities
- Perception MO River is not conducive to recreation – room for improvement

Issue 4:

- Unclear on management, all varying plans
- Uncertainty how to reconcile competing interests and values in watershed (flood protection)

Group 4 facilitated by Bonnie Harper

Prioritized issues: Issue 1 received 4 dots; Issue 2 received 2 dots; Issue 3 received 1 dot; Issue 4 received 5 dots

Top priority issue: Competing and uncoordinated management of the River – There is a lack of understanding of agencies' roles and responsibilities for River management and uncoordinated management of River values

Issues discussion

Issue 4:

- A lot of misconceptions

- MRC could tell the story better because it might be more trusted
- MRC can lead a discussion on natural management solutions to flooding problems
- Education and outreach is key – even internally @ agencies it's hard to know what is going on
- MRC should use RPCs/MPOs to continue watershed opportunities
- Find the 'Ken Wades" to send people to help with education, not a generic website of another agency
- UMRBA – Upper Mississippi summit might help with what we want to achieve – aiming for more coordinated management of upper Mississippi – could help MRC
- Agencies trying to compete in federal budget for their own mission, how can we lessen the competition?
- Have something similar to Mississippi River Commission?

Issue 1:

- Same priority out of the Lower MO River Crooked meetings – talk to Cruze Schuster
- Outreach so people understand what damage they are doing and how damage can be fixed – need funding for that
- Funding is key to fix the problems, people will want to do something if help is available
- Point out what we have in common – we have same problems and same goals
- Urban not subject to same rules about fertilizer so not as educated about that
- Need agriculture in floodplains – common ground for urbanites
- MRC could do legislative action – i.e. help with MSD rate proposal for stormwater rate

Proposed Missouri River Country functions

1. Liaison between parties with an interest in the watershed
2. Resource hub and education provider
3. Economic development / regional promotion
4. Watershed planning

Group 1 discussion

- Added another function of common/unified voice

Function 1:

- USACE can give overviews and programs and river history
- Be specific with requests to USACE
- Suggests attending a Missouri MRRP Mr. Rick meeting – next meeting is August in Omaha
- Navigation control and agriculture interests

Function 3:

- One USACE mission area is protecting National Economic Development
- USACE can include recreational amenities in projects
    - Habitat restoration areas are big tourist draws
- Feds when they take land gives county payment in lieu of taxes lost

Function 4:

- USACE Watershed planning center of expertise
    - SW division (Dallas)
- There is a proposal for a feasibility study for lower Missouri from Gavens Point to confluence
    - Jennifer Switzer is point of contact
    - Flood Risk Management

Group 2 discussion

1. Do these seem like reasonable functions?

- The group was largely in favor of expanding Missouri River Country as a way to address the priority issues.

- Started out as a marketing initiative to get people together. It sounds like a good idea to connect it to something like this that will give it more meat.

- Like the idea of it being a resource hub that connects all the different programs that government agencies are doing.

- The general theme of the next steps for MRC is "Now get busy, protect it."

- We have a structure now with a board and being under Boonslick RPC

2. What organizations should MRC engage with or help promote connections with?

- Boonslick RPC board of directors

- Agricultural community – MFA, Farm Bureau

- Chambers of Commerce, Munis, counties

- East-West Gateway

- Civic organizations

- Need to start with a core group, develop a story/messaging and then get out there

- Need a rifle approach and hit the pavement, go out and make face-to-face connections

Group 3 discussion

1. Do these seem like reasonable functions?

- Not another agency

- liaison between parties

- economic development / regional promotion (take control of your destiny)

- watershed issues – values not technical

2. What organizations should MRC engage with?

- Kansas City USACE District and St. Louis district

- EWG and Boonslick RPC – e.g. STARS goes to advisory committee

- any government institution in coast guard – navigation

Group 4 discussion

1. Do these seem like reasonable functions?

- If you do education right you will get economic development

- Economic development / river restoration and conservation

- need good watershed planning for economic development

2. What organizations should MRC engage with?

- USACE
- FWS
- DNR
-MDC
- Chambers of Commerce
- Tourism organizations
- RPCs
- Farm Bureau
- MU Extension
- SWCDs
- Great Rivers Habitat Alliance
- Greenway Network
- Dig to find what at cities
- MO Municipal League
- MO Assocation of Counties

4. What type of plan would be most beneficial for MRC to focus on?

- Economic Development Plan could bring in other plans to make sure nature is resilient

- Economy is resilient needs to manage flood risk

- Start with who all the players are, their interests and how to balance them for economic development

- MRC could form committees on each topic and have representatives come together

- tie pollution to effect on economic development when talking to people

- how can we get economic development and get conservation with it? Find a goal for this