

Mississippi River Conservation Initiative Kentucky Meeting, October 29, 2002

The third in a series of meetings held jointly by the Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee (LMRCC) and participating state members of the LMRCC was held in Paducah, Kentucky at the River Heritage Museum on October 29, 2002. The Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) served as the meeting's local host. Approximately 40 participants representing state, federal and private sources were present to participate in discussions to: 1.) identify potential habitat restoration sites along Kentucky's portion of the Lower Mississippi River (LMR) and 2.) to review federal, state, and private programs that might be relevant to habitat and environmental restoration along the LMR.

Participants were welcomed to the meeting by Ted Crowell, Assistant Director of Fisheries for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Crowell then asked for meeting participants to briefly introduce themselves and the agency or organization they were representing.

Brad Miller (LMRCC) gave an explanation of housekeeping matters and the meeting's agenda. Miller said the morning's agenda would be devoted to presentations by Corps of Engineers staff from the Mississippi Valley Division and the Memphis District. Following these discussions, the rest of the morning would be devoted to discussions pertaining to potential habitat improvement projects along Kentucky's portion of the LMR. After lunch, discussion on habitat projects would be concluded, and the meeting would then be devoted to a review of state, federal and private programs pertaining to potential habitat improvement along the floodplain.

Meeting participants were welcomed to the River Heritage Museum by museum director Julie Harris. Ms. Harris gave a brief overview of the museum's history and events planned for the future. The museum will open to the public next year (approximately June 1, 2003) with exhibits about the heritage, history, and importance of the Ohio River. Examples include music of the river, civil war exhibits, murals of the inland water system, boat models, rain tables, river bottoms, mud microscopes, interactive dredging, recreation, hydro-electric power plants, large river habitats, lock and dam model. A second phase in the museum's development will occur in about three to five years when larger scale models of existing exhibits will be featured.

Following Ms. Harris, Ted Crowell gave a brief account of the LMRCC's history and events leading up to today's meeting. Crowell said the LMRCC was founded in 1994 to provide a coordinated means for managing the vast resources of the Lower Mississippi River. The LMRCC's goal is to get a handle on what goes on (i.e., water quality, fisheries, habitat problems and opportunities, etc.) from the mouth of the Ohio River to the Gulf of Mexico. The LMRCC is a recognized non-profit organization, which

allows for approaching large private entities along the LMR to lobby for contributions for projects to improve habitat conditions along the river benefitting a wide variety of fish and wildlife species. An eleven-member Executive Committee comprised of delegates from the six states bordering the LMR (i.e., Mississippi, Louisiana, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Missouri) provide guidance and direction to the LMRCC. In addition, the Corps of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are also represented on the committee. To address the river's many opportunities and problems the LMRCC developed the *Aquatic Resource Management Plan* (ARMP) providing a comprehensive means for approaching resource management along the LMR. The implementation phase of the ARMP is the *Mississippi River Conservation Initiative* involving a comprehensive GIS analysis of the LMR to identify critical habitat and sites providing opportunities for habitat restoration, followed by a series of meetings with appropriate state/federal agencies and non-governmental organizations to further discuss each potential restoration site. To date meetings have been held in Tennessee, Missouri and Kentucky with meetings in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi scheduled for 2003

Brad Miller gave a brief discussion of an ongoing study termed the *Economic Profile of the Lower Mississippi River*. Miller said about six months ago the FWS, Corps, and USGS decided to commission an economic profile of the LMR encompassing all counties bordering the LMR. The study is looking at the economic value of recreation, tourism and other uses to determine their economic value to the region. The contract is under way and the contractor and his staff are currently looking at existing data. The project should be finished in one year.

John Rumancik representing the Memphis Corps of Engineers District gave a presentation on the *Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment (LMRRA)* authorized in Section 402 of the 2000 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). The LMRRA is intended to replace the piecemeal approach by federal, state, and local agencies to resource management along the LMR. Primary federal collaborators involved in the LMRRA are the USGS, FWS, and COE. The governors of Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Mississippi have appointed staff to participate in the LMRRA. Other stakeholders in this effort include EPA's Regions 4 and 6, the Mississippi River Commission, congressional representatives and senators, LMRCC, Ducks Unlimited, Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, state and regional resource management agencies, fish and game commissions, levee boards, river recreational users, farmers and special interest groups. Funding for the LMRRA has not been appropriated, but hopefully funding will occur in 2004's federal budget. The language in LMRRA calls for a total funding of \$1,750,000. A preliminary assessment lasting from six to twelve months will require \$500,000, leaving the remaining \$1,250,000 for a final two-year assessment. The Corps will conduct the following six step planning process:

- Specify Problems and Opportunities,
- Inventory and Forecast Conditions,
- Formulate Alternative Plans,
- Evaluate Effects of Alternative Plans,
- Compare Alternative, and
- Select Recommended Plan.

Products from the LMRRA include a list of ranked potential projects and prospective non-federal sponsors. This information will be forwarded to the Corps' headquarters (i.e., HQUSACE) for further assessment. Data needs will determine "what's out there" e.g., LMR Aquatic Resource Management Plan, the Corps' REEGIS, etc. The reconnaissance phase involves completing a number of separate assessments. The first (#1) assessment will look at ecological stressors in the system e.g., climate, weather, water quality, hydrologic regime, etc. This assessment will determine data gaps (e.g., what we don't know). A following assessment (#2) will focus on determining natural resource habitat needs. Assessment #3 is a river related recreation access looking at historical river landings, existing harbors, ports, fishing, hunting, and recreation areas, etc. Overall project goals include:

- Identify resource needs, etc.
- Determine national significance of the LMRS,
- Determine existing environmental operating principles such as sustainability, balance and synergy, recognition of interdependence of life,
- Accept responsibility, seek to assess and mitigate impacts,
- Build and share integrated scientific, economic, and social knowledge, and respect other views and interests.

Dennis Abernathy (Memphis COE District) discussed the Corps' Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) providing funding for ecosystem restoration. The CAP contains eleven authorities, which receive annual Congressional funding. Of the eleven CAP authorities, only three are applicable to the LMR i.e., Sections 204, 206, and 1135. Section 204, requiring a 35% non-federal cost-share, provides funding to use dredge material from federal projects for environmental benefits. Section 206 and Section 1135 are similar programs providing funds for habitat restoration. If a non-federal project contributes to environmental degradation then Section 206, requiring a 35% cost-share, is the appropriate authority to use for habitat restoration. If a federal project causes environmental harm then Section 1135, requiring 25% non-federal cost share; is appropriate. There is nationwide competition within Corps districts for CAP funding, thus there is no guarantee a particular project will receive funds from the annual dollar amount allocated to the CAP.

At this point in the meeting Paul Rister (Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources) lead discussions on potential habitat restoration projects located along Kentucky's portion of the LMR. The following sites were discussed:

1. Deepen Mouth of Mayfield Creek - (R.M. 950, #1 on map): The problem at this site is caused by a sediment plug at the creek's mouth blocking both fish and boater access from the Mississippi River into Mayfield Creek. One solution addressing this problem would be to use a dragline to mechanically remove the accumulated sediments. Corps staff mentioned that back-line revetment at the creek's mouth would increase the project's cost. Steve Ellis (COE Mississippi Valley Division) said he felt this problem would not be solved by dredging as, depending on the river's stage, material would be deposited in the creek's mouth on an annual basis. Another suggestion to provide access to Mayfield Creek would be to acquire an access site on the creek. The KDFWR owns property close to Mayfield Creek, however their holdings are not located on Mayfield Creek and would not provide suitable access. Hoyt Choate (AgForest Partners, Inc.) commented that the USDA's riparian buffer program providing farmers funding for planting riparian buffers might help reduce the amount of silt entering Mayfield Creek. Corps staff mentioned their concern that dredging in the mouth of Mayfield Creek at depths greater than two feet might lead to increased erosion (i.e., head-cutting) up stream. Ted Crowell finished discussion on this point by saying that the KDFWR would look at acquiring access to the creek plus investigate appropriate federal programs..

2. Notch Upper Island 1 dikes to increase side channel flow (R.M. 946-948, #2 on map). The problem here is that the side channel separating the mainland and sandbar is beginning to lose water depth due to accumulated sediments. It's anticipated that with the side channel's filling, predators from the mainland will access the sandbar and prey on least terns. The project's goal is to increase flow in the side channel behind the sand bar. The Corps has identified this location as a possible restoration site and are considering dike notching and hard point structure placement to move deeper water off of the back-line. They mentioned that hard points provide additional fish habitat and are cheaper to construct than building a new dike. If hard points were built they would be placed on the Kentucky side at the top of the bank between River Miles 946 and 947 and would be spaced 200 feet apart. The Corps' goal at this site is to prevent the channel's cross-section from widening by stabilizing the banks. This goal provides an opportunity to establish a riparian buffer on the Kentucky side to function with the existing buffer on the Missouri side. The point was brought up that extra economic incentives are needed in order to get landowners on the Kentucky side to agree to enroll in the USDA-CRP program which provides incentives for riparian buffer construction. The floodplain in this area is fertile and floodwater is usually off the land in time to plant soybeans. An opinion was voiced that a 180-foot buffer, the maximum width allowed on the Kentucky side of the river, is not wide enough to attract landowner participation. Missouri however allows landowners to construct riparian buffers wider than a 180 feet. Buffer widths are defined in each state by NRCS Technical Committees. One of the meeting participants suggested leaving the dike at River Mile 946 unnotched

to allow for channel sinuosity and for protection of the island's tip. Another participant's concern was that the dikes in this area are long and may require multiple notches to establish increased flow in the secondary channel.

3. Notch dikes to prevent sandbar from forming in front of Laketon boat ramp (R.M. 945, #3 on map): The problem at this site is that upstream dikes are causing sediments to deposit on the local boat ramp thus hindering boat access. Darian Chasteen (COE -Memphis District) said that Carlyle County representatives had been in touch with the Memphis District to discuss a possible cost-share program to move the boat ramp down river a short distance. The exact location of the proposed site was unknown but a representative from MeadWestvaco thought that the site might be on the Westvaco WMA. The status of these discussions between the county and COE is unclear as the original contact person in the county may have left office. The KDFWR may also be involved in this discussion. As mentioned before, an environmental benefit from notching dikes in this area would be the resulting plunge pool below the dikes providing depth diversity at the local site. Additionally, if new flow was established between the sandbar and main bank the least tern colony nesting on the sandbar would experience reduced predation from the mainland. Derrick Smith (COE - Memphis District) said the Corps doesn't have a problem with notching, but there are limited dollars, so it would be advisable for the Corps to receive a prioritized list of sites where notches are proposed. Also the location of the dike at this site is a problem, as Corps contractors need 10 to 12-ft. of water to maneuver their equipment in. This depth requirement results in a very limited window of time for construction.

4. Restore flow through channel behind islands 2, 3 and 4 (R.M. 943-933, #4 on map): This area was also discussed during the Missouri meeting (9/24/02). The project's goal is to restore flow back through an old channel to provide backwater habitat. One identified benefit from deepening the side channel is to provide a thermal refuge for fish during winter and summer months. As dredging is an expensive operation, it would be costly to reestablish flow and areas of deep water in the channel. A question was raised as to whether there was any record of an endangered species being collected at this site, and if in fact this had occurred, it would be further justification for the project. None of the meeting's participants were aware of an endangered species being collected, but it would be worthwhile to conduct a mussel survey at this location. MeadWestvaco, which owns much of the area, allows some public access on their property but, MeadWestvaco representatives felt that other private landowners would not allow overland access to the channel. Mark Boone, representing the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) pointed out that landowner rights are important and no project to improve environmental conditions at a particular site should be started if it would have negative effects

on the landowner's property. One of MeadWestvaco's staff mentioned that the lower entrance to the area is shallow, making boat access difficult during lower river stages. MeadWestvaco maintains a 330-foot wide tree-buffer around the entire island. In essence, this area used to be three islands, but now is one large island thus showing how silt is being captured by the tree plantings.

5. Notch dike at head of sandbar (R.M. 942-941, #5 on map): This project calls for notching two local dikes to maintain depth diversity, and water velocity below each dike. Derrick Smith noted that the dikes were on an inside bend, and he wasn't certain notching would provide environmental benefits.

6. Floodplain lakes in and around Westvaco Wildlife Management Area (WMA) (R.M. 945-938, #6 on map): This particular slide in Paul Rister's presentation showed a number of floodplain lakes that through succession were filling with sediment. Some of the lakes that were discussed include Crooked Lake, Black Lake, Fish Lake, Twin Ponds, and No. 4 Lake. The lakes occur both on private lands, some of which are leased for hunting and fishing, and on the Westvaco WMA. Boating access presently is possible to a limited number of the lakes, but with further sediment accretion, access will be lost. One suggestion for lengthening the life of the lakes might be to reconnect them in some manner back to the river's main channel. Like many off-channel areas along the Mississippi River, Asian carp (silver and bighead) are present in very large numbers throughout most of the lakes. Further management is needed to remove the carp and other rough fish present in the lakes. The general public's opinion is that fishing here has declined since the late 1980s. The reason for this decline may be linked to a number of factors (i.e., rough fish, hydrology, climate, etc). Another comment was that the tops of most of the cypress trees at this site were dead, and in general these trees seemed to be dying. Paul Rister said there may be a need to dredge the lakes to restore deep-water habitat diversity. The lakes maintain their fisheries through annual flooding allowing fish from the river's channel to enter and an opportunity for fish in the lakes to leave. It was suggested that increased floodwater could be captured in the lakes by constructing a funnel shaped barrier draining floodwater into the lakes. Habitat restoration of the lakes is limited by the fact that not all of the lakes are located on MeadWestvaco property. Baseline data is needed on bottom substrate, bathymetry and fish populations before any management decisions can be made as to what can or should be done to preserve these lakes. MeadWestvaco indicated that they might have some older information on the property.

7. Restore access to channel which was lost when notches were filled (R.M. 935, #7 on map): This area generated considerable discussion as there was some initial feeling that the Corps' rebuilding to grade of a notch in the closing structure was having a negative environmental effect (i.e., increased

siltation in the area's backwater chute). Additionally, the rebuilt notch prevents boater access from the areas' upper entrance. Derrick Smith pointed out that high water in 1996 took the existing notch elevation from zero to a minus 40 LWRP. Micro modeling of the site by the St. Louis Corps District indicated that the damaged notch should be rebuilt back to its original zero LWRP elevation. Steve Ellis said that in the early 1990s the Corps' survey of this area found the side channel's cross-section was increasing. A Corps contractor looking into the history of this particular site discovered that the side channel's cross section width was narrower in the 1950s and was capturing less of the main channel's current. The present project (i.e., restoration of the notch to a zero LWRP) was designed to configure flow conditions similar to those found in the 1950s survey. David Herzog (Missouri Department of Conservation) mentioned documenting pallid sturgeon reproduction in this side channel, and he believes a federally endangered mussel, the fat pocketbook, had previously been collected there. The presence of these species indicates the importance of maintaining a diverse habitat at this site. Representatives from COE - Memphis district offered to survey the dike to verify that the notch was restored to 0 LWRP and to identify other low places in the dike that might be used by fisherman. The COE has also discussed collecting bathymetry in the side channel to compare existing conditions with those predicted by the micro-model.

8. Restore flow through channel behind Wolf Island No. 5 (R.M. 934-931, #8 on map): The need to restore flow in this side channel had previously been discussed at the Missouri meeting. Factors that would determine whether the project was feasible include how difficult the engineering (i.e., how to direct flow back into the channel) would be and whether there was local landowner opposition to the project.

9. Increase flow in side channel behind Wolf Island Bar (R.M. 934.3, #9 on map): Discussion pertaining to a potential project at this site focused on the sandbar located at the lower end of Wolf Island side channel. There was some feeling by meeting participants that if the notch in the upstream closing structure was increased in size, allowing more flow into the area, the sandbar at the lower end of the island would decrease in size. Derrick Smith mentioned the Corps, at one time, had discussed building another dike on the up-stream side of Moore Island. The Memphis District is aware of the importance of the least tern nesting colony located on the sandbar, and may consider hard points or chevrons to keep the sandbar separated from the mainland. Rister mentioned that at present the sandbar is free of vegetation. Herzog mentioned discovering a large gravel bar along the Kentucky side on the lower end of Wolf Island and that he would like to know what water velocity it would take to keep sand from depositing on the gravel bar. Steve Ellis cautioned it was important to know the limits of an increased current velocity as too high a velocity could dislodge gravel.

10. Unnamed floodplain Lakes north of Hickman (R.M. 925, #10 on map):

Paul Rister posed the question, “should we be trying to do something to save these lakes?” Dredging, reconnecting them, funneling more water to them, better land practices are all ideas that should be considered. These lakes are adjacent to the KDFWR's Obion Creek Wildlife Management Area. In addition to the Obion Creek site, the KDFWR. owns additional floodplain property adjacent to the bluff-line. Data on the lakes is lacking and before management decisions can be made information on depth, substrate type, fisheries, etc. should be collected.

11. Notch closing structure and maintain notches along Three State Towhead (R.M. 915-916, #11 on map):

Habitat restoration at this site was previously discussed at the Missouri meeting. Additional discussion on this project emphasized the importance of maintaining flow in the side channel separating the local sandbar from the mainland. The addition of multiple notches to dikes located at River Mile 915 and 916 might be needed to maintain adequate side channel flow.

12. Increase flow through side channel (R.M. 907-909, #12 on map):

Paul Rister said that there appears to be a side channel near mile marker 907-909 and asked whether it would be feasible to restore flow into this site.

MeadWestvaco owns the site and they have visited the area and verified that some shallow water is present in the channel. Due to the shallowness of the water at this location, the site does not provide over wintering habitat for fish. The Corps expressed concern about restoring flow to an area so close to a mainline levee. There is also a dredging problem in this area and therefore the Corps would like to keep as much flow as possible in the main channel instead of diverting any amount of the main channel flow to the side channel. Rister indicated that he will visit the site the next time he is in the area.

13. Maintain flow and increase habitat diversity throughout Bend of Island 8 (R.M. 916-908, #13 on map):

This project was also discussed at the Missouri meeting. The problem associated with this site is the concern that the area will eventually become an abandoned oxbow lake and then fill with sediment, reverting to dry land. The Corps pointed out that as the back-line behind Island 8 was rock revetment and the current within the side channel was adequate to keep suspended material and bedload moving through the area, the likelihood the site would eventually become an oxbow lake was minimal. Steve Ellis mentioned the Corps' desire to remove some of the revetment on the lower point of Island 8. It proposes to remove the revetment and let the bank erode back to its original location. This will be done to improve the channel's alignment for navigation. MeadWestvaco owns property on Island 8 and at present would not like to see the Corps follow through with this

recommendation. David Herzog mentioned the importance of the lower tip of the island as similar areas have been found to be important for larval fish, including larval sturgeon. He recommended conducting a survey at this site to determine whether pallid sturgeon are present. Steve Ellis mentioned the Corps would support this action.

14. Notch dikes to restore minimum flow along revetment on Kentucky Point (R.M. 888-885, #14 on map): This project as initially recommended, would include notching dikes on the Kentucky side of the river to restore flow back to existing secondary channels located adjacent to and within Kentucky Point. The Corps said this is a sensitive area because the New Madrid boat harbor is located across the channel from the proposed restoration site and the harbor is already experiencing conditions (i.e., low main channel flow) resulting in extensive sediment accumulation. Notching the dikes located across from the boat ramp may further reduce flow at the boat harbor, which would only increase the harbor's sediment problem. Further, this reach of the river frequently requires dredging and additional reduction in the main channel current would only increase this problem. A sandbar located on the Kentucky side of the channel is a documented least tern nesting site. Paul Rister asked the Corps if a chevron constructed at the head of the sandbar would produce any environmental benefits. Steve Ellis said he felt a chevron at this site would produce little environmental benefit. Derrick Smith mentioned constructing high water notches in the dike field at the site as a way to achieve additional diversity through increased scour below each dike.

15. Floodplain Lakes on Kentucky Point(#15 on map): Lakes located at this site include: Watson Lake, Stonewall Lake, and Washpan Lake. At the present, there is some public use of the lakes. MeadWestvaco owns some land on the point and there are three WRP easements here as well. The upper portion of Kentucky Point is more suitable for crop production. Though this area is sometimes flooded as it was late this spring, the soils are very good especially on the northern portion of the point. It was concluded that little was known about the lakes on this point and that more information needs to be collected.

After the review of potential habitat enhancement projects identified by KDFWR was completed, discussion on the status of other conservation programs was initiated. The objective of this discussion was to survey the status of existing conservation programs in the floodplain, exploring what factors contribute to their success or failure in an attempt to develop strategies to expand these programs. The session began by continuing discussion of CRP and the issue of riparian buffer widths that was started in the morning session. Miller stated that increasing the allowable width of riparian buffers would certainly be consistent with LMRCC water quality goals and asked NRCS representatives whether it would be worthwhile for the LMRCC Executive Committee to write a letter in support of this to the State Technical Committee. NRCS personnel

thought that might be a positive step. Another CRP issue discussed involved the perception of financial risk associated with losing seedlings to drought and flooding. Hoyt Choate thought that there was some misunderstanding among farmers as the CRP program provides 50% cost share for reestablishment costs in the event of a natural disaster. Farmers are entirely responsible for reestablishment costs after the first losses. One option the landowner has to establish a certain number of trees per acre is to allow natural seedling regeneration to occur. In most cases natural regeneration will keep the landowner qualified for the CRP program. This past planting season was extremely bad for farmers as in mid-May the river's flooding killed many of the first year tree plantings. MeadWestvaco lost some plantings due to the severity and lateness of this year's floods. Dave Garrett of MeadWestvaco said that most tree seedlings can survive flooding if they can make past their first year.

Discussion moved to the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP). Miller noted that there were very few WRP tracts within the Kentucky floodplain and asked the group why that was. One of the NRCS representatives felt that there was very little demand for WRP because the program cap of \$ 900 per acre was far less than the market value of farm land in the floodplain, which ranges from \$1800 to \$2500 per acre.

The Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQUIP) is popular across Kentucky, but project funding at the local level is limited. This problem is frustrating to local NRCS staff as well to the landowners who have signed up for EQUIP. One comment from a meeting participant was that there is a need to document the economic impact from various federally funded projects.

Gary Young, representing the U.S. Forest Service, spoke about his agency's collaborative program with Ducks Unlimited addressing watershed restoration in 15 identified watersheds in Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The intent of this program is to involve private landowners in a tree-planting program on their land. The program provides free seedlings to landowners and reimburses their cost for planting the seedlings. To enroll in the program, the landowner must sign a 15-year management agreement to leave their land planted in trees and to not clear it during that time. As there are more lucrative federal programs available to floodplain land owners, the Forest Service is having a problem finding landowners willing to participate. The program applies to anywhere in alluvial floodplain. The Forest Service cost-shares 70% of the program's expense, while the remaining 30% is paid for by Ducks Unlimited. Another reason the program is having difficulty is that bottomland black gumbo soil sells for approximately \$3,500 per acre, thus increasing the need for landowners to secure a high cash value crop. Waterfowl hunting on these areas have also increased the cost of the land. Nevertheless several meeting participants felt that this program has a role to play with landowners interesting in reforestation but not willing to endure the red-tape and restrictions associated with other government programs.

Staff from MeadWestvaco were questioned about what their company's policy was regarding the sale of land. They answered that the company is selling select tracts to the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and The Nature Conservancy. MeadWestvaco is generally holding on to their bottomland tracts while upland tracts deemed not essential are being sold. One floodplain tract however, New Madrid Bar, is up for sale. MeadWestvaco's goal is to grow cottonwood rather than pine. Following their February 2002 merger the resulting company manages over 3 million acres.

Wayne Davis (KDFWR) questioned what are the next steps following today's meeting. Brad Miller said the result will be a long term operational plan addressing the LMR's environmental needs comprised of prioritized projects. There are also short term tasks that can be done i.e., gather bathymetry data from side channels, surveys for endangered species, collect water quality information from side channels and identify areas that can be addressed immediately during the course of current river navigation and flood control projects.

Ted Crowell gave his opinion on what can be done following the meetings by explaining that this is the first opportunity for the LMRCC to go out on a broader scale. By this comment he meant that to date the LMRCC had primarily worked with the Corps of Engineers, and had not involved other federal agencies such as the NRCS, Forest Service, and NGOs (non-government-organizations). The LMRCC now will be working with all of these entities to achieve environmental benefits along the Lower Mississippi River. He said the results of these meetings (i.e., with the six LMRCC member states) may dictate what the next step might be. He noted there is no plan that says we go from point A to point B. Following this brief summary the meeting was adjourned.