

Minutes of State Interagency Missouri River Authority

Missouri River Sites – May 4, 2010; Scott Energy Center Unit 4, River's Edge Park Project and Dodge Riverside Golf Clubhouse, 2 Harrah's Boulevard, Council Bluffs -- May 5, 2010

The SIMRA Missouri River boat tour began at 9:30 AM, May 4, 2010 from the Little Sioux boat ramp. The day was warm, mostly sunny, and windy. There were three boats on the tour. In the afternoon, the group carpooled to an additional site. The following people participated: Jessica Montana, Teresa Hay McMahon (IDED), Harold Hommes (IDALS), Stan Peterson, John Fleig (IDOT), Amy Christensen (IUB), Bernie Hoyer, Chris Larson, Angi Bruce, Doug Chafa, Van Sterner, Royce Bowman (IDNR); Dan Pridal, Matt Krajewski, Bill Williams (USACE, Omaha), Joe Murphy (Iowa Farm Bureau), Michael Johnson (Friends of Wilson Island), Al Sturgeon (MRRIC), and Ethan Sturgeon.

1. 9:30 AM—Meet at Little Sioux boat ramp.
2. 10:00 AM – Travel upstream a short distance to Three Rivers (channel widening project).
3. 10:30 AM – Travel upstream 2 miles to Deer Island (potential channel widening project and existing in-stream channel structures).
4. 11:30 AM – Travel upstream 3 miles to Fawn Island to view chute construction project
5. Noon – Return to Little Sioux boat ramp. Lunch.
6. 1:00 PM – Travel downstream 7 miles to examine Soldier backwater project.
7. 2:00 PM – Return to Little Sioux boat ramp. Carpool and travel north to Louisville wetland near Blencoe.
8. 3:00 PM – Examine Louisville wetland.
9. 4:00 PM – Return to Little Sioux boat ramp.

SIMRA representatives all learned much during the trip, and they all thanked the DNR and Corps leaders for planning a very enjoyable and informative trip about Missouri River Restoration Projects.

The SIMRA tour of Missouri River uses and benefits continued on May 5 with the following stops.

1. 8:00 AM – Tour Walter Scott Jr. Energy Center, Unit 4. (Matt Finnegan, General Manager).
2. 10:00 AM – PowerPoint presentation on River's Edge Park Project at Dodge Riverside Golf Clubhouse, Council Bluffs. (Larry Foster, Director, Council Bluffs Department of Parks, Recreation, and Public Property).
3. 10:45 AM – Visit River's Edge Park Project site via golf cart.

SIMRA thanked both hosts for their gracious and informative tours.

The SIMRA public meeting was opened at 1:00 PM at the Dodge Riverside Gulf Clubhouse. Hoyer explained to those present that there would be a brief business meeting before the public comment period. SIMRA members present: Christensen, Hommes, Peterson, Montana and Hoyer.

Other persons in attendance: Jennifer McIver, Jeff Walters (MidAmerican Energy Co.), Mike George (USACE), Michael Johnson (Friends of Wilson Island), David Sieck (Iowa Corn Growers), Larry Foster (City of Council Bluffs), Dick Sterner, Rick Robinson (IA Farm Bureau), Doug Palmer (Tegra Corp), Kevin Knepper (Big Soo Terminal), and John Fleig (IDOT).

Review Minutes of April 15, 2010 SIMRA meeting: Christensen provided amended minutes and moved acceptance of those minutes. Montana seconded it and the amended minutes were approved unanimously.

Changes to state agency representatives to SIMRA: Hoyer noted that changes were ahead. Peterson is retiring and IDOT's representative would be John Fleig. Hoyer is also retiring, although no replacement has been named by IDNR.

SIMRA Missouri River Corridor Vision Plan of Study: The Plan of Study approved by SIMRA in April was handed out to all. It was reported that IDNR would host a web site for SIMRA within about two weeks and that the Plan of Study would be available there. The site would also include SIMRA meeting minutes, future agendas, SIMRA representative names and contact information, appropriate documents in the future, and links to other appropriate Missouri River sites.

Public Participation:

David Sieck suggested that we may have to improve our outreach to the public as SIMRA develops a Vision for the Missouri River. He suggested that SIMRA may need to hold meetings in the evening to allow better public participation of interested parties in Western Iowa. He also suggested that we may need to hold public meetings in Eastern Iowa along the Mississippi River because the Vision SIMRA is proposing may impact interests there. He asked how we were going to include the results of all the studies USACE was conducting and had conducted on the River. He suggested that SIMRA needs to consider community water supplies in Southwest Iowa that may need water from the Missouri. He suggested that Iowa had not shown much interest in that in the past, but Iowa needs to look at such needs 30-40 years out into the future. He suggested that new USACE levee recertification procedures need to be considered. These have evolved from flooding that has identified levees no longer protecting communities either because of aggradation by the river or because of structural weaknesses from inadequate maintenance or old age. He suggested that Iowa should include acreage figures for the MRRP based on habitat restoration rather than ownership by any one agency. He also suggested that hydropower was important, and asked how SIMRA would include that in our Vision. Sieck also suggested that river corridors are needed. He thanked SIMRA for developing a Vision and thought it was needed.

Doug Palmer suggested that energy developed by coal power plants along the Missouri River is very important and that they required high summer flows to protect their efficient operation. He suggested that another goal for the Vision might be that SIMRA recognize the physical realities of the river including the cutting and filling that occurs. These represent physical constraints on uses.

Mike George noted that the Council Bluffs Chute was constructed to create shallow water habitat for the pallid sturgeon, and that is was near our meeting site and a part of the River's Edge Park Project of Council Bluffs. Mike noted that simply looking at the river is the public's number 1 use. He noted a USACE program designed to recertify levees.

Mike Johnson noted that he wanted navigation to remain a part of the Missouri River uses because it was very energy efficient and reductions in CO2 are necessary to fight global warming. He also said that he wanted public lands to be readily available to the public so they can use these lands and value them for the future.

Kevin Knepper indicated that there were 6,000 recreational boaters in the Woodbury Co. area and that power boating was an important part of the quality of life there. These recreational users need adequate recreational flows in the summer. He also indicated that there was interest in new types of freight for the river.

Jeff Walters noted that 7 of 8 coal fired power plants that MidAmerican Energy manages for electrical energy on the Missouri River are once-through cooling units. He expressed concern about DNR re-permitting these units for thermal plumes in a timely manner. He also said that MidAmerican has concerns about dredging intakes and outlets in a timely fashion when necessary.

Larry Foster said that Council Bluffs has a vision for riparian woodlands and green space in its River's Edge Park project, and that it will allow people to see the river and experience the joys of nature through a floodplain environment. He said it complements Omaha's downtown and river front development, and suggested that the passive floodplain park was described as 'save the best for last.'

Amy Christensen noted that when the website is available, that comments on the uses or on the Vision Plan of Study would be welcomed. She suggested emailing or calling SIMRA members.

Harold Hommes said that he supports the visioning process because Iowa needs to recognize Iowa's unique position on the Missouri River. We don't have the reservoirs of the upstream states; we don't have the more natural flows of Missouri. He suggested that we have a more difficult time coming to positions on the river because we enjoy a wider range of potential benefits.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 PM.