

**Midwest Glacial Lakes Partnership**  
Steering Committee Meeting Notes, February 10, 2009  
Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge  
3815 American Blvd E, Bloomington, MN - (952) 854-5915

**Present**

Pat Rivers, MN DNR  
Jason Moeckel, MN DNR  
Gary Whelan, MI DNR  
Gwen White, IN DNR  
Maureen Gallagher, USFWS  
Nick Schmal, USFS  
Lyn Berquist, MN DNR  
Don Pereira, MN DNR  
Ron Payer, MN DNR  
Michael Duval, MN DNR  
Mike Weimer, USFWS  
Leslie Jagger, MN DNR  
Neil Kmiecik, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission  
Mike Staggs, WI DNR  
Paul Cunningham, WI DNR  
John Lott, SD GF&P (phone)  
Ray Valley, MN DNR (afternoon)

**Notes**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Overview of the meeting purpose and agenda
  - a. Assign chair, vice chair, accept charter document, process for prioritizing projects with the stimulus package have already had to submit projects
3. **Steering Committee Membership**
  - a) who should be here that isn't, and b) how should we offer a seat?
    - a. As many as 20 on SC, as inclusive as possible, but small enough
    - b. 13 seats spoken for, need to discuss who else should be here
    - c. Suggestions: one academic, statewide lake association group, waterfowl birding (joint venture chair), boat manufacturer, realtor or chamber of commerce, angling group, industry group (In-Fisherman), EPA or FSA
    - d. Any guidance from national board on what types of entities?
      - i. Need to at a minimum include entities that have jurisdiction, authorization, and responsibility with respect to fisheries management in geographic area. After that, a complement of NGO, corporate, academic representatives along with ingenious ideas on getting others involved.
      - ii. Multiple levels where anyone can eventually get involved. For SC, need to have workable number, can get a quorum even with travel restrictions, but not too large to get anything accomplished.
      - iii. Every partnership has to figure out the number. Great Lakes has regional TNC person involved on SC.
    - e. Need to determine which groups would be able to influence threats to habitat

- i. In MN, counties but that is specific to small geographic area.
- ii. Rotating SC each year may be worthwhile.
  - 1. Larger land bases with regional planning commissions that are aggregations of counties in WI.
  - 2. Coalition of counties with an oversight representative that can represent that perspective.
  - 3. Planning focused.
  - 4. WI zoning administrators have an oversight organization.
  - 5. MN Association of Watershed Districts, which has regulatory and taxing authority.
- iii. Need to consider who can be an active player. Is there a group that might be a more active participant? Will be a lot wanting to learn but may not want to be that involved. Will be driven as money shows up.
  - 1. John Heibert (MN DNR) as manager of shoreland habitat program, who would know where some of the sites were. Other states may have comparable programs. One person per state agency as per the charter makes this in conflict.
  - 2. Invite someone from state chapters of the American Planning Association which provides the academic ideas for implementation of land use at the county level.
  - 3. Statewide organizations of lake homeowner associations. They will be more invested. State lake organization includes various perspectives, including county, extension, Sea Grant. View NALMS as the next step up, not sure how they might fit in.
    - a. MI Lakes & Streams Association
    - b. Watershed councils
    - c. MI Drainage Boards have their own organization.
- iv. Consider caucus approach where these people can generate ideas then present them to the SC as a group instead of trying to rotate.
- v. Joint Venture board member or coordinator (Barb Pardo) who is doing this for her work. They have been at it for so long that they can provide input.
  - 1. Upper Mississippi Joint Venture would be important partner as glacial lakes are aligned well with waterfowl and other water birds, not to mention pheasants. DU and PF are on the Upper Miss board as two NGO seats, powerful, well-connected. May want to gauge interest of DU and PF separately. Have access to funds. TNC also generates money.
  - 2. MN just passed sales tax. Will have opportunities for DU and PF to add funding to help address habitat, along with TNC.
  - 3. TNC working with other neighboring chapters (Tom Landwehr standing in for MN and Dakota chapters).
- vi. Tribes
  - 1. Have had some input but locally related. Have sent letters and follow-up phone calls. Have been invited to participate.
  - 2. Could they be a part of SC? Major organized tribal entity (CORA).
  - 3. They may be trying to sort out involvement in each group. Need to find people who are really interested in involvement.

vii. Manufacturers

1. Cabelas may be interested.
2. National Professional Anglers Association out of ND. Nick went to meeting in Milwaukee. Intrigued with connections as industry that falls under umbrella. Focus on walleye. Have a lot of youth programs, some money back into conservation. Tournament in June that the Forest Service will be involved in.
3. Trout Unlimited – Not all of our glacial lakes have trout, but can get key people involved who have larger area.
4. Does ASA have a regional organizational structure? Elect regional representatives. They represent broad base.
5. Isaak Walton League – USForServ just signed MOU with them. They have Clean Boats Initiative.
6. Pure Fishing (Jim Martin)

viii. Need to be focused.

1. RBFF, Youth for Habitat Conservation. Hopefully will be a lot of those that will be involved.
2. Which have been active in other partnerships? TNC. TU but may not be as active in glacial lakes (Laura Hewitt contact). They are heavily into their projects. Bass PRO and B.A.S.S. are aligning themselves with the Reservoir Partnership. May not get them to extend too far. TNC just laid people off, including the person contracted to write strategic plan for Ohio River Basin FHP.
  - a. Has Bass PRO been involved financially? Only at Table Rock Lake. Have funded some of the Reservoir Partnership activities. Focusing on reservoirs.
  - b. B.A.S.S. may be more interested in glacial lakes. Chris Horton involved in Reservoir Partnership. BASS has been involved but not put financial resources.
  - c. Commented on lack of game fish interest for B.A.S.S. in 10 Waters to Watch in previous years.
3. Look at Strategic Plan and major threats (agriculture, urban, forestry) and make sure you have someone who has knowledge and influence in that arena.
  - a. All partnerships are grappling with agriculture. Entities set up as state and local people. No regional people. One way is through NGOs, especially through NRCS. Have to be at the Technical Committee meetings for every state to get emphasis on habitats and to direct funds. Has to be someone there advocating. Can have someone from one of those organizations who is talking to state representatives.
  - b. Through Partners for Fish & Wildlife program have state biologists who all go to Tech Comm meetings. Have some influence but not as much as NGOs do. Working to get fisheries things on their agenda.

- c. Does the Farm Bureau have a regional, organizational structure?  
No.
  - d. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) also does not have a regional rep.
  - e. Livestock producers organizations (MO Cattleman's Association)
- 4. Difficult to get an official representative at regional level but may get someone who can represent those interests, such as forestry (Nick).
  - a. Funds set up for mitigation and habitat restoration. National Forests that have a stewardship contract proposal with projects on glacial lakes can get that worked in.
  - b. Values of pulps are not worth as much as hardwoods right now. As partner could purchase contract and do habitat restoration.
  - c. Loggers associations are usually state based (MI Timberman's Association).
  - d. US Forest Service State and private forestry is a granting agency that can get involved with private timberlands.
- ix. Value in liaison role for other FHPs that geographically overlap
  - 1. Geographically excluded DARE, but Fishers & Farmers, Great Lakes, Great Plains Prairie Fishes to get those perspectives to the table to capture their learning and inform them of our strategic approaches.
  - 2. This partnership is ahead of all of them except for DARE. For them to learn from this partnership and coordinate activities. In the interim, Maureen can act in that capacity with a good knowledge of what is happening.
- x. Stressor question (realtors, chambers of commerce, builder's association)
  - 1. Larger group that represents builders? Industry slowing down, laying off people. Involved in state stormwater group. Need to look at how we are building roads and structures around lakes. Not sure if they want to participate. Reaching out to realtors and showing them the value of shoreland vegetation as an example.
  - 2. Some studies on economic values in academic arena.
  - 3. Realtors will be responsive when there is a client group asking them to respond. Who will they respond to? Local realtors hearing from local lake groups. Find a surrogate who understands realtors, such as land trusts. Trust for Public Lands has regional representatives which have connections, up on zoning, very invaluable part of SC. TNC has done work with easements and land purchases.
  - 4. Programs for education and outreach on development and loss of open space. In SE Wisc, have given presentations to metropolitan builder's association with short 3-day training classes to equip operators to fix culverts. Have done a couple in the UP, will be in Michigan.
  - 5. Few spots in MN with existing partnerships that are already working with realtors, local government planners. For multi-state steering team, talking about technical aspects with stormwater could include Region V EPA with stormwater development impacts. Could have smaller groups grind through the implementation challenges and recommend projects.

xi. Academia

1. Economics or what other value? Whatever limiting factor is, including human dimensions. Need on SC or need to access resources.
2. Academics in watershed management, land use planning, human dimensions and social marketing have time to explore the recent literature and can bring the novel ideas.
3. Need people who come with different backgrounds so the variety of ideas is at the table in discussing what to do. The fact that they work in a different environment typically gives a different view of the world.
4. Altitude that SC is observing the landscape from. Ultimately each state or NGO will want to deliver programs in work groups or individual projects. Need to have those different perspectives at a high altitude to refine and deliver the strategic plan.
5. Lakes related issues perspective. Would need to develop a list and start talking to people to see who would be interested. Less for fact that they are working on specific project of interest, but bringing a perspective.
  - a. Would want some consensus on discipline, such as Human Dimensions that brings a different perspective, not a limnologist.
  - b. Might need to change the overall charter which states specifically that members have some ability to bring staff resources or other support. Key to success would be commanding resources. Important as formal member of board. Intellectual resources and grant funding for research. Highly valuable for policy, but question is to really have them as member of SC to make decisions.
  - c. Depends on individuals; some publish papers and some do work.
  - d. Trying to identify seven additional SC members. Should academia fill one of those slots? Magnuson could bring a lot of things to table just because of name and expertise. May not bring as much on the ground input.
    - i. Bill Jones as an example: professor at Indiana University, has the research contract for the Clean Lakes Program through IDEM, has tremendous influence with lake associations in the state, president of NALMS and editor of Lakeline.
    - ii. Opinion leaders are a good choice.
  - e. Lake associations have money and bring influence to bear. Have to bring them to the table with NALMS or individual states.

xii. How to address larger units

1. Upper Mississippi River Basin Partnership. Lots of partnerships in each piece. Is there a need to link? Includes DARE, Fishers & Farmers. Either SC or staff to the partnerships, so really close link. Difference being that UMRV and UMRCC are focused on the mainstem itself. Others are picking up the rest of the watershed. Have a different primary focus, but they are very connected. Getting right individual such as Scott Yess would be so involved with all three that one individual could bring a lot of knowledge.

2. How will this relate to Midwest Resource Group, which is focused on terrestrial invasives? Where would that fit? Refuge program or ES could be more involved. In Milwaukee as regional biologist, focusing on FHPs along with other layers of federal action within and outside of our boundaries that overlap conceptually. Regional forester was invited to be on SC, on regional working group for Great Lakes, Midwest Natural Resource Group. How to get that layer above to focus on this. Can only do so much from the bottom up. Will want to work on this but need to get to director.
  - a. Pretty aggressive about briefing regional FWS director. Work to elevate the partnership. A lot of credibility with reference to NFHAP. Maze of how these fit together is a more complex answer.
  - b. Outside SC discussion, but something will have to think about when MGLP is recognized in March. All these other partnerships out there. Don't want to reinvent the wheel, duplicate efforts, go to meetings that are not fruitful. Have been all growing together. All partnerships in Midwest within 9 months of being recognized. Maureen can spend time trying to figure out how all of these fit.
  - c. A lot of work groups do not have planning to improve conservation across the landscape. Elevating with RD and Director has traction as they drive projects on the ground. With money there will be an interest.
  
3. What is the role of the NFHAP Federal Caucus in providing us with that kind of link, so we don't need a representative from EPA, NRCS, etc?
  - a. 19 agencies represented. Could ask the Federal Caucus to provide us with that assistance.
    - i. **Action:** Gary will bring it up to Tom Busiahn.
  - b. North American is coming up in March. Opportunity with all US Forest Service Regional supervisors meeting just prior to that. Will give an hour or two to bring partners. Have many opportunities, see the value of what we are doing, but difficult to have the time.
    - i. **Action:** Have Maureen come to brief US Forest Service regional supervisors on the FHPs (contact Nick).

f. Additions to Steering Committee

- i. List of groups
  1. Lake association
  2. Academia
  3. Angling and hunting (BASS, DU, PF)
  4. Joint Ventures
  5. Tribes - CORA (Chippewa Ottawa Resource Authority)
  6. Land Trusts to bring real estate perspective
  7. Local units of government
  8. Agriculture
  9. EPA
  10. Liaison with other FHPs

- ii. Process for identification
  1. Do we want to narrow down to seven or leave it expanded. May winnow itself down if a couple fall through. Send out notifications to everyone and see who has interests. Could be a letter to chair on nominations rather than full offering to see who we get back.
  2. Get a subset of this group to identify names for each subgroup to prioritize and make recommendations. Will take some work to winnow and screen individuals.
  3. Could have some phone conversations with people to get perspectives about others who may be more useful. Lake association representation is not an easy question with different structures in each state.
  4. May also have some individuals who overlap different interests (e.g., NRCS employee who was a president of a state DU chapter). Provide names of people who can bridge a couple of interests if possible.
  5. Do we need to have names for March meeting of NFHAP? Not necessary at this point, but in process.
  6. If CORA is not that interested, would be good to think of 1854 Authority, MN Chippewa tribal group, or another group that really has an interest in participating. Need to think through who those groups may be. Keep the door open so we don't turn people away.
  7. Can think about the caucus concept. Will be broad level of coordination. A number of these issues where a single representative cannot represent all states.
    - a. Gauge their interest in participating in a subcommittee instead of being on the SC.
    - b. A group that is not ready right now, does not preclude them from being involved at a later date. Keep them in mind and becomes part of the work plan.
    - c. Inherent in SC is to want a lot of partners. Some will want immediate involvement and others will want future involvement.
    - d. Need to think about reaching out to the provinces, which can bring a different set of resources. Also true for the Northeast states which have glacial lakes.
    - e. The current president of NALMS is based in Madison.
  8. **Action:** On next call, figure out subcommittees to generate list. Primary focus is to generate names for SC, but also who can contribute on work groups or achieving the Strategic Plan.

#### 4. Executive Committee

- a. Do we need an ExCom, like SARP? SARP has a much bigger committee and needs an ExCom. Still challenging to get this committee together, may want to have an ExCom. Would suggest either 3 or 5 people. An odd number typically can come to consensus. Five people would be 20% of overall SC, not higher than that.
  - i. Need to have individuals who can make decisions if cannot get group together.
    1. Could be the Chair, Vice-Chair and Coordinator (3 people) who will be the most involved over the long haul. May not need to call it an ExCom.

2. The Council of Great Lakes Fishery Agencies determined that ExCom should not have authority apart from council because that takes away consensus. If ExCom needs direction, they send an email out.
- ii. Example is a grant opportunity – Can coordinator apply for funds? If bounce that off chair and vice chair. Shouldn't be any mind-reading, but meant to act on questions where there isn't any reason why the larger SC would put the breaks on.
  1. Have the SC clearly define the decision-making authority for the coordinator and get that permission ahead of time.
  2. Group is voluntary and self-governed.
    - a. Making some basic decisions. Key is what type of decisions can be delegated.
    - b. Meet often enough that we can quickly correct issues with electronic communications, getting feedback within hours. On odd occasion when that wouldn't be the case, can make a decision. Will typically not create consternation with the group.
    - c. Example of needing an answer in 2 hours on what to fund for the stimulus package.
    - d. That can be the responsibility of these 3 people, defining the roles of the chair, vice chair, indicating that we can rely on electronic balloting. Just another layer.
    - e. Does provide a good filter so not everyone gets inundated. Way to filter to a manageable amount.
    - f. May have different levels of decision-making.

## 5. Governance Structure document

- a. Steering Committee Meeting Management: Page 2, number 7 indicates expectations for Chair, Vice Chair and Coordinator
  - i. Some loophole about if they believe consensus. Should get direction ahead of time instead of doing something that can't be undone. Should be careful. Difficult to apologize for something they shouldn't have done. Should be tightened up to get authority before they make decisions. Some things will be routine and can be set up the right way.
  - ii. Each ExCom person could be assigned to be familiar with another 5 people on the SC. Would still be in mind-reader mentality? They could understand explicitly the interests of that subset.
- b. Have had an interim committee or starting fresh?
  - i. Have made decisions in the meantime, primarily asking for input from state fish chiefs.
  - ii. Suggest moving along for a year, giving yourselves time to get up and running, give some room to maneuver before getting into something that is so rigid that you can't function. There is a honeymoon period to figure out the best way to work with the individuals involved. Can't imagine there will be any super-critical decisions to make in the next 12 months. Could get some NFHAP dollars, but not something that would be very divisive amongst the group. Can't think of partnership that locked themselves into a full set of rules immediately. Had a grace period. Not necessary to go back on the MOU. This is not an attachment to the MOU.

- iii. Same conversation in MN's stormwater steering committee. Haven't needed a rigid structure. Have a Steering Committee and Chair but not constrictive language about function. Always based on consensus.
  - iv. Can have an SC but not necessarily a stringent set of rules right off the bat. Have a leader other than the coordinator to show that there is involvement from other partners.
    - 1. Can call it an Interim SC.
    - 2. Some of guiding statements are not necessarily prescriptive but outline meetings. Numbers 6,7,9 more prescriptive. Need some guidelines for the group, such as consensus-based or by vote. Developing structure may be a positive to the process to get people really invested.
    - 3. Suggesting that we don't need the ExCom part? We have the SC to make decisions, based on consensus. Can have chair and vice chair. Wouldn't have to have chair and vice chair.
    - 4. Even in interim, can have chair and co-chair so the coordinator isn't put in a hard place.
    - 5. Important to have the process written down, so that everyone understands how decisions are being made. Could leave out the ExCom.
    - 6. Can leave it flexible, but have something on paper particularly for new members.
  - v. NFHAP appears to be keenly interested in having governance structure. Is that a misread?
    - 1. Not sure that has been communicated that well. The website says one thing, then conversation with board staff may be different. Not too different things, but whether they are reading things literally. When the indicate Governance Structure, it appears more specific, but they just want to know if you have a committee. Take guidance on internet as literally as possible to make sure that there are no holes.
    - 2. Need to have an SC. Tremendous contribution by MN DNR, but need to show that the rest of the states are as interested in the partnership as is viewed by outside world in MN stepping up. For that reason alone, need to have an SC in place.
    - 3. Hope people will not get too wrapped around the axle and come to a halt for the rules.
  - vi. Important to be able to relate the responsibilities when inviting others to participate in the ExCom. Their first question will be about responsibilities, how often to meet, what they are expected to do.
- c. Changes in document
- i. Strike points in 6 and 7 that are related to decisions where consensus cannot be reached?
    - 1. Needs to be a consensus approach for tribes. When it comes to a vote, any one entity will always be out-voted. Has worked on the Great Lakes and should in this situation.
      - a. Suite of decisions that will be made would be project prioritization, recommendations, but also an example where there is independence in each representative being able to act on its own. Which decisions would possibly be contentious?

- b. Thinking of other forums where there are project proposal review committees. Looking at a project that you are part of, you recuse yourself.
    - c. Good projects should stand on their own merit.
    - d. Not a strong sense on this, because we will learn. Overanalyzing to some extent, whether it is consensus. Be comfortable with whatever alleviates concerns.
  - 2. The point of partnerships is to come to consensus. At same time, would hope that if one person is holding out, you agree to disagree. Alright to have a minority opinion if you are stuck.
    - a. Likelihood of stumbling would be on prioritizing money, but will have a process for that decision.
- ii. Nice to have a process written down. Can live with the changes and move on. Will an email consensus check be retained? Is a response required or a no response is considered agreement. If you don't reply by a deadline, you give consent by not responding. Can't allow someone to stop the process.
  - 1. Make sure that the Subject Line indicates "response required by a due date," allowing for time to respond. Put action item and due date on it.
  - 2. Try to limit emails.
  - 3. May want to discuss back ups if someone is not able to respond. Some communication tree so that others are aware that they may need to weigh in, making sure that the information gets to everyone so they may respond.
  - 4. **Action:** Strike language that is not by consensus (pg 2 "normally"; strike # 8; strike most of # 7 but leave in the ability to check for consensus by email).
- iii. Need to have process to consider input from larger group
  - 1. NFHAP board always takes input from board members first and staff, then open it for the rest of the audience to allow other information from the outside.
  - 2. Funding and project approvals may require systematic way for the Partnership-At-Large to have input even if it is understood that the SC makes a decision
  - 3. Most heated discussions are always around money.

## 6. Chair and Vice Chair

- a. Have at least two individuals
  - i. At least one being a fish chief to demonstrate investment and leadership of states.
    - 1. DARE does not have a steering committee. Western Native Trout (WNTI) has a very structured committee with a fish chief as chair. Fishers & Farmers has co-chairs with acting fish chief for Iowa DNR and head of Iowa soybeans association. MATSU has an NGO as their chair, as does the Southwest Salmon Partnership.
  - ii. May make sense to have co-chairs, if there is always a fish chief that fills one seat. Sends an important message that this isn't just an agency-led effort.
    - 1. Have staggered 2-year terms.

2. Advantage for MN to chair committee or expand that since the coordinator is from MN. Need to spread the responsibility around, but you take whoever can put the time in. May be better to have continuity to coordinator.
  3. May be valuable to have one of the chairs from each of the north and south areas, so they represent the issues that are very different across the region. The Dakotas only have a small portion of the whole partnership area. A good balance of co-chairs from north and south.
- iii. One person from the agencies (fish chief) with the other from non-agency partners. We don't really have everyone yet. Lakes people from Wisconsin lakes association may be very good to be involved, but they aren't here yet. Wisconsin is very interested in participating.
1. Hold the other position vacant until the full group is established. Not necessarily north-south, but a tribal person would be very good.
  2. Leaving undecided may make the chair job a longer tenure until filling that vacancy. Would be summer time before the group is established.
  3. Could have an interim vice chair until then. Wisconsin or Michigan could sit in that seat for the time being.
  4. Issues of north-south, state-NGO would be a longer term goal. Need interim stability for now.
  5. Wisconsin is willing to serve. Have good infrastructure to call upon and can bring immediate resources to the table.
- b. **Action:** Identify interim co-chairs until the full group is established.
- i. Ron Payer, Minnesota, to provide continuity with the MN DNR coordinator.
  - ii. Mike Staggs, Wisconsin, to bring state resources to the process.

## 7. Priority Action Items and Funding for 2009-2010

- a. Completing the assessment, highly visible, high success projects that raise the profile of MGLP.
  - i. Preparing projects in the FONS for the stimulus package. Ready for final list to go to Washington. Asked to put together NFHAP and Fish passage projects, regardless of candidate partnership status. If there will be any money. Not sure how much, if or when, due to the process. Tom Busiahn said something to the partnerships about how much money per region (\$2 million nationwide, so \$250K per USFWS region). Moving target until conference is concluded.
- b. Three projects for the MGLP
  - i. Hire another GIS specialist to work with Li Wang, University of Michigan and MI DNR.
  - ii. Invasive species – rotenone a lake near Albert Lea after electric carp barrier has gone up.
  - iii. Woody debris structure – added to shoreline in northwest sands area of Wisconsin.

- c. Combined with 27 other projects in Midwest region were ranked. Scoring criteria for demonstration projects last year with four criteria from USFWS Director on stimulus package projects and top priority from each partnership.
  - i. Ranked GIS first, invasives, and woody debris in order, although the last is most likely to be funded due to sizable cost on other two. Tried to get one project to every partnership.
  - ii. Will update weekly.
  - iii. Must have projects in Fisheries Operational Needs System (FONS) so they are ready to go.
  - iv. NFHAP funds – when recognized, projects will have to be in the FONS. The system exists to show Congress what needs are. Each state congressional member can see the need that exists in the database. Includes hiring needs and on-the-ground projects.
  - v. Do our congressionals know that the database exists? Do they access it? Should we encourage them to view it? Some members have staff who use it regularly.
    - 1. **Action:** Encourage congressional representatives to be aware of needs in FONS (AFS Chapters).
  - vi. Entering projects in FONS
    - 1. Can put in projects continuously, but have a deadline at end of year to make sure that information is updated and recertified. Series of deadlines, depending on the program.
    - 2. Trying to get a standard deadline of first week of November to get projects in system.
      - a. Then coordinators review them.
      - b. List is in regional office for review then to Washington office.
    - 3. Good to have projects input before October 1 (federal fiscal year).
      - a. **Action:** Standard deadline of first week of November to finalize projects in system.
    - 4. Partners have used information to request additional funds for NFHAP. Need to have the projects in the database to support funding request.
    - 5. Projects stay in the system unless there is a reason to pull them out.
    - 6. There is an art in getting the projects properly entered into the system.
      - a. **Action:** Provide a list of hints of how to describe the projects to improve success (Maureen)
  - vii. Who in FWS is responsible for each partnership
    - 1. LaCrosse for Fishers & Farmers and DARE
    - 2. Ashland for Great Lakes
    - 3. Carter for Ohio River Basin
    - 4. No field office for MGLP (Maureen is contact)
    - 5. Fish passage goes to the field office in that geographic region
      - a. **Action:** Provide list of all contacts for NFHAP and Fish Passage projects (Maureen).
  - viii. What is the fish passage project? Reduce physical barriers to migration (culverts). NFHAP projects for fish passage may be able to get funds from both programs.

1. Can also add to money for Great Lakes Restoration Act, but those projects do not go through the FONS database. That is a grant program, whereas fish passage and NFHAP are not grant programs, just cost-sharing. Extremely important.
  - a. Not mandated to do a 1:1 match in a cost-share program.
  - b. No leeway for match in a grant program.
2. Every time funds go out, they have to be on Grants.gov regardless of kind of program.

8. Sources of funds for NFHAP

a. Existing

- i. Some funds from National Fish & Wildlife Foundation. More Fish grant program is now gone. MGLP got one of the seven grants that were provided. Still on the website.
- ii. Will ask for an appropriation of federal money. Will go to USFWS for distribution, as legislation is currently written.
- iii. Other programs are using NFHAP priorities to determine their funding priorities.

b. Possible to maintain a moving list of funding sources?

- i. To keep a list of possible federal funding opportunities.

1. US Forest Service

- a. Silvicultural treatments provide funds from value of timber funds can go back to restoration, mitigation, and improvement.
- b. Legacy Roads & Trails
- c. Federal Highway Transportation Bill – draft language for new bill from 2010-2014, in which the For Serv will submit projects for funding. Separate from the stimulus bill, which has fish passage in the language. In everyday work on National Forests, have regular programs that can work on riparian areas, lakes, streams. Need to specifically identify potential projects other than fish passage (already identified).
- d. Targets for lakes, streams and riparian areas, including invasives, fish cribs, shoreline erosion. Can work in any kind of water body or on land, independent of other funding sources.
- e. Training sessions available. Staffer for Oberstar that is talking about a 2-day field trip to look at road crossings and success stories in MN and WI to demonstrate the importance in the stimulus bill and to link to the candidate partnerships for staff of Oberstar and Obie. Will work with legislative affairs, 2 state agencies and GLFWIC to put something together. Not just for the 2 states but generally to drive home the message.
- f. Fish passage mapping information exists for all National Forests. Some with GPS cameras, attribute files, and datasets that are being standardized. Very small dams that may not be passage barriers, in Hiawatha, Ottawa, and Huron-Manistee all have similar information.

- i. Got \$1.2 Million (\$500K less than in the pass). Usually have more stream miles in bigger forests and get more money.
    - ii. Barriers between lake bodies may be more important than headwater streams.
    - iii. Have streams without dots been assessed? These maps are not everything, just what is known in past few years. Many projects that are shovel-ready with the NEPA done.
  - g. Want to contribute where MGLP priorities are and will work independently.
    - i. Don't have to spend Forest Service funds only in the green area, can fix barriers through Widden Amendment authority on private roads within proclaimed boundaries.

2. Points out importance of the assessment work. Need to increase that effort and have initial high success projects.

ii. **Action:** List of funding opportunities with deadlines (Maureen)

c. Inventory state programs within the MGLP that could fund projects (amount and type of projects that we are currently funding). May be helpful to determine where the current gaps are in state programs.

i. **Action:** Inventory state programs and identify funding gaps.

## 9. Process for Prioritizing Conservation Projects

### a. Priorities

- i. TNC funding for lakes portfolio in MN and Dakotas. Some is acquisition and some restoration on lakeshores.
  - 1. Acquisition? First priority is protection. If you can do protection without acquisition.
  - 2. With woody habitat and other cooperative projects in WI, acquisition comes up all the time but is very expensive. Projects on critical lake habitat. Still do it, but might be better to spread funds.
  - 3. Visibility is important. Could be important in acquisition.
- ii. In priority watersheds, we will all identify key areas, integrative approaches with funding from MGLP or state sources. Doesn't all have to come from this source.
  - 1. Identify areas, process creating problem, how to address problems.
    - a. Example of 5-county Brainard area, apply acquisition funding, which is being pushed in MN.
  - 2. For project types, the landscape achievement of maintaining or restoring habitat, but need to keep our smaller partners engaged restoring shoreline vegetation in small areas.
    - a. Mix smaller on-the-ground and bigger projects. Will vary with number of projects in each geographic area.
    - b. When we go home to group, what do we tell them that we brought.
- iii. US Forest Service has space to grow trees.

1. Don't work with shrubs, but white spruce. Fish forester knowing how important trees are. Need some lead time, but if there are areas that need forest restoration, nurseries can provide them started from seed.
2. Build the carbon sequestration issue into the project description to appeal to that issue.
  - a. **Action:** Describe opportunity for growing in nurseries (Nick).

## 10. Project Selection- how do we decide what projects to fund?

- a. Assessment completion
  - i. Still delineating in MN, not the other partner states. Not close to assessment yet. Would need to work with what other state already has.
  - ii. In same boat as other FHPs.
  - iii. Assembling 18 databases from the Science & Data Committee (land cover, demographics, etc). National Invasive Species database is being used.
- b. Do not currently have a plan for prioritization other than characteristics of the project (criteria).
  - i. Dovetail into other mechanisms for prioritization
    1. TMDL classification
    2. NRCS has various prioritization systems for State Technical Committee projects
  - ii. Limited number of larger scale high profile projects
    1. May build a partnership somewhere else because they are intrigued by the methods (e.g., getting carp out of Pickerel lake, as huge issue for fisheries and waterfowl, or adding habitat structure).
    2. Addressing priorities of another entity.
    3. Many not be a high priority area currently, but could be used as a model for future.
  - iii. Some have funded numerous projects without having focus areas.
    1. SARP randomly picking project areas, but realizing now that they shouldn't be focusing there. Difficult to then take resources away.
    2. Not necessarily tied to strategic areas on the landscapes, but demonstration sites spread around the geographic area.

## 11. Priority project types

- a. Two main project characteristics
  - i. Demonstration projects (e.g., test technology)
  - ii. Technical assistance.
    1. Will ultimately be done by partners.
    2. Would make sense with criteria (partner involvement, innovative techniques)
- b. Focused on type of project for a particular round of funding
  - i. Not there yet in assessment to figure out geographic priorities
  - ii. Projects that could be demonstrations for future projects elsewhere
- c. Set criteria or take a role in organizing demonstration projects?
  - i. Can we use existing activities as ongoing projects? May be already doing a project in a Midwest glacial lakeson forest land or state projects.
  - ii. Could redirect acres and projects to areas that are priorities for MGLP, need to keep doing what we are doing or will lose money to other regions.

## 12. Inventory existing projects

- a. Market existing glacial lakes projects
  - i. Conducted by the state program but also give credit to MGLP.
  - ii. May not necessarily give credit, but just as a way of recognizing the projects that are already happening.
- b. Steering committee could define in the interim what the attributes are of a successful project.
  - i. Some projects take off, generate outreach, have long-term actions, nested in landscape setting
  - ii. Describe high profile projects that fit the profile for good demonstrations.

## 13. NFHAP Board has interim goals

- a. Some projects are already in place and meet those interim goals.
  - i. Could use them to highlight high profile projects and have a mixed portfolio of investments.
  - ii. Show benefit, but many projects cannot show effects in a few years.
- b. Identify highest priorities
  - i. Small local projects and long-term.
    - 1. Some water bodies that on our watch could go in the wrong direction. Years from now will ask if we took the steps to prevent that. How do we inform the selection of those places, winnow it down to a small number.
    - 2. May be a fantasy that there are gems to protect. Lots of activities, but no plans to say where the priorities are. Seems to be an attractive piece but very elusive.
    - 3. Appealing to present a particular lake, not a large piece of the landscape, which is not manageable. Should have a few lakes that meet the criteria (e.g., Leech Lake). Should all have the priority watersheds that we can address.
    - 4. Social value elements that make it challenging. Don't want to write off some parts of the state (e.g., drained ag). With a \$2.6 billion recreational fishery in MN, how to winnow it down to a particular lake.
    - 5. How we would like to do it versus who complains the most and get the most attention.
- c. Create tools rather than geographic priorities
  - i. Have classifications for waters (natural reproduction).
  - ii. Are we at a point where we are trying to manage that or superimpose a priority system or are we trying to find some examples for demonstration projects or technical tools.
    - 1. We can't solve the whole world.
    - 2. Pick a good demonstration project in each state, good partners, tie to fisheries
    - 3. Try to hit the ground running, while we catalogue the other.
  - iii. Having good decision support tools is possible, including a framework on how to prioritize projects to give to local groups so they make better decisions.

1. Will not be able to change some things, but tools can be provided to use the variables for assessment and do predictions on what ifs (population doubles)
- d. Refining strategic plan, will have short, middle, long-term goals. Having some small local projects that build support for the initiative and extension piece for learning. In MN, looking at five geographic boundaries to partition funding for state and MGLP program.
  - i. Should provide the vision for where we should be in 30 or 50 years. Determine the priorities, but the powerful legislator or group may be elsewhere. Have to accept that. If we can get to the decision makers so they recognize the value added of protecting the resources.
  - ii. Will not be a clean, clear path. Need to keep our eye on the prize of long term habitat improvement or maintenance.
- e. Don't rely totally on GIS assessment
  - i. Some things may happen locally that we will not see in the assessment (sediment loads). Social and economic components will drive this. Still need willing landowners.
  - ii. Assessment is a piece to inform, but not all the answers. Not a black box, part of a decision tool but not the answer.
  - iii. WI Critical Habitat Designation Project with criteria to designate habitats in front of permitting. Primary feature is county boards. Need to "go where you are welcome" in spite of the driving factors.
- f. Strategic aspect
  - i. What do we mean by strategic in terms of this partnership. Is this for long or short term returns. Benefit from trying to articulate what we think of in terms of strategic (local, demonstration, process, partners). May not be that this is the most important water body in this particular state.
  - ii. Opportunity to provide comments on draft plan

#### 14. NFHAP process

- a. Identified funding by partnership. Each of several will get \$600K, \$300K or \$100K.
  - i. Regional and local offices work with partnerships to determine what partnerships will be funded. WNTI, SARP, DARE, EBTI will do a request for projects (not proposals), which they rank for funding. Matsu has a few projects that they will focus on for the next few years.
  - ii. Will work with Maureen and Mike to go through process once the allocation is determined. The SC is in the drivers seat on how to spend the money.
  - iii. Not sure how determined to give \$100K to Matsu, as they were only doing acquisition and NFHAP funds cannot be used for that.
- b. In past only for "pushing dirt" not research, monitoring, education but now realize that full use of scientific method requires other aspects.
  - i. DARE project for \$9,000 for website and project tracking system. Was a lot of pressure in the first year to get projects on the ground.
    1. Cannot guarantee that will be the future process.
    2. With three more partnerships, will not know how this will work.
  - ii. Did those areas have a list of needs that was greater than the funding?

1. The money came, then they found the projects.
  2. Getting projects into FONS will give a list that we can select from.
  - iii. Showing need in FONS of projects that MGLP really wants to work on will send a message to USFWS and NFHAP as to what the partnership can handle.
    1. Good projects in FONS with partners identified, match, identification of target species. Do all the homework to explain why the project is important to the MGLP.
    2. Size or price range? Varies.
    3. Having FONS projects may attract other sources of funds. Do not limit the size of the project.
  - iv. Put a project in that is step-wise so can do something if not all funds are available without completely jeopardizing the project.
    1. More opportunity to fund through other sources as well.
- c. Identifying projects for October 2009 for FY2010
- i. Don't revisit what is already in the system (only 2 projects); focus on next year
  - ii. How significant is matching funding? From USFWS, doesn't matter after there is a 1:1 match (minimum across the nation). Could determine importance to partnership of having more match.
    1. What is indirect cost rate? How much will be reimbursed?
      - a. Put project in for exactly what you need. Include all costs in FONS.
      - b. How much indirect or administrative costs can we charge? No limit, but want to pay the lowest amount possible, but up to the partnership.
      - c. USFWS expectation is that the MGLP will give strong guidance on how to rank projects (clear, transparent, meets basic NFHAP tenets, strategic plan).
  - iii. Not sure where the partnership will go
    1. States and SC need to be comfortable.
    2. Larger project with immediate return on investment is more important.
    3. Don't put all eggs in one basket. Good demo project in each state. May work on criteria with partnership funds.
    4. Talk about potential projects, rank for submission as an entity.

## 15. Scoring criteria

- a. May be different than established partnership
- b. Question about recreational fishing (III.B)
  - i. May be a challenge in some areas; may be best to keep people off of some systems (fish nursery wetlands).
    1. If it doesn't have some spill over into fishing, will not be relevant. Can tie it into increase in fishing somewhere.
  - ii. Change language to low environmental impact recreational use. Can remove recreational boating, just fishing. Communities might be concerned about more than just fish. Has been a suspicion of whole fish habitat process.
    1. Maximize to broad users but ultimately targeted to increasing recreational fisheries. Science & Data has a lot of aquatic resource and ecology. Can

fix recreational fishing (stocking) without fixing habitat. Still come discussion on board on that.

2. Grappled with this in EBTJV to address a criterion that was specifically outlined by the NFHAP board (angling opportunities). If you don't have users, money will dry up. Tribes may not want speed boats on wild rice lakes. It's a balancing act.
  - iii. Criteria like recreational fishing may become equalizers for some projects. Will always have top projects without question, but these may be determining factors for projects.
    1. People will write projects to meet scoring criteria.
    2. Criteria that are weighted differently for NFHAP priorities.
    3. Can talk about beneficial uses, which may not necessarily be recreational use.
      - a. If you want to lose fish programs quickly, detach it from use. We are in business to increase fish populations that appeal to some group, not necessarily fishing.
- c. Other criteria
- i. Be more clear on overall outcomes.
    1. To measure outcomes, need to specifically identify them.
  - ii. Determine if there is project opposition (add criterion)
  - iii. Secure Rural School Funds
    1. Rural infrastructure – new legislation for lake states (MN, WI, MI)
    2. Developing resource advisory committees
    3. Will be for fish and wildlife resources
- d. Use of criteria
- i. To procure projects?
    1. Few thousand dollars would only be one demonstration per state.
    2. May not be a product of sorting proposals, but cultivating a project. Use this to work to make a project happen rather than winnowing project proposals.
    3. Each state identifies projects that meet these criteria without scoring. The scoring communicates the type of projects. Eventually we will need a scoring sheet because of the number of projects.
  - ii. Key things we would like to see in our projects, not so focused on the actual scoring. Can get wound up over scoring.
    1. Worthwhile to work with the scoring to learn from future project scoring within the steering committee internally.
    2. Scoring system is the easiest way to communicate the kinds of projects that the MGLP values.
- e. Discussion of other priorities
- i. Trying to develop a national priority database.
    1. Did mention in scoring that others consider it a priority. Could enumerate the other entities that prioritize that area
      - a. Minnesota examples
        - i. MN Conservation & Preservation Plan – new LCCMR plan

- ii. Listed by ecoregion type
- iii. Natural Resources Research Institute (George Host) gave presentation on GIS layers to use for prioritization and decision analysis. Working with Lucinda Johnson to write that for Great Lakes basin. All streams focused, not lakes.
- iv. Ability of places to produce drinking water with threats such as development. Effort into analysis and scoring for priority areas. Final report coming out soon. Would like the GIS layers to dial down for the MGLP.

- ii. Build account for other plans into the system
  - 1. Plans developed with stakeholder input
  - 2. What plans have we looked at
    - a. State Wildlife Conservation Grants
    - b. States initiative of RBFF
    - c. Already looked at the state wildlife action plans, but they did not have a prioritization
  - 3. Opportunistic (willing seller) with some factors

#### 16. Process for approving the Strategic Plan (Input from partners and timelines)

- a. Has been available for comment
  - i. Received comments from representatives but not externally
  - ii. Steering Committee members waiting for comments from others.
  - iii. Near final draft was submitted for the application
- b. Regional systems in plan
  - i. Ecoregions
    - 1. Could include geopolitical regions, such as Chippewa ceded territory region which may bring some priority of the tribes to the fore front.
      - a. Could be a part of the priority target areas (social layer to screen efforts)
- c. Recognize that we catalogued and examined other plans for their priorities (e.g., State Wildlife Conservation Plans)

#### 17. Events

- a. NFHAP Board Meeting in March (Mike Staggs, Pat Rivers, Mike Weimer, Gary Whelan)
- b. Next Steering Committee Meeting
  - i. Next call with additions to Steering Committee
  - ii. Projects input for FONS by October 1 (before the Midwest)
  - iii. Meeting in mid-summer

#### 18. Closing Remarks

- a. Paul – good to be here and see what happens
- b. Mike – a lot of people waiting and watching; Thanks to MN for making this happen.
- c. Leslie – nothing to add
- d. Mike D – ask for comment from Gary and Maureen on observations from perspective of the board. What can we be thinking about to prepare ourselves?

- i. Gary – Give same presentation that Gwen gave at the Indiana meeting (created by Pat) which will be effective. Cannot predict what the board will do, as there are 22 entities and they often send proxies.
  - ii. Mike – Change in how they perceive partnerships under Kelly Hepler’s leadership.
  - iii. Gary – Just be well prepared. They will ask more questions than in the past. SARP would have been approved through de minimum list of requirements. All the pieces of this partnership are in place.
  - iv. Maureen – Expect they will approve the MGLP. Difficult to advise the partnerships on response from NFHAP. Will get a series of questions. This is a process.
  - v. Gary – Will ask how this partnership will interact with other overlapping partnerships.
  - vi. Maureen – Prepare for that questions by making a telephone call to all other coordinators to have a serious conversation with them on how they work together. MGLP overlays geographically, but does not overlap, because you are looking at different things. Switch conversation to how we complement with others who are focusing on streams. Not in opposite watersheds. Will want to know if we will be bumping into others. How to keep things coordinated.
  - vii. Gary – Fixing one of the six processes in Science & Data Report.
  - viii. Mike S – Grant was submitted on behalf of all coordinators in the region.
  - ix. Maureen – Each partnership independently identified needs, put most common priority need in the grant (GIS support). Want to know whether the group wants to resubmit that proposal.
  - x. Mike S – That is an example of on-the-ground coordination.
  - xi. Maureen – As well as the More Fish grant for same need for travel and meeting support. Driftless is so small they aren’t in a position to take a leadership. MGLP could be in a position to step up the amount of coordination between the partnerships. No one overlaps the Driftless, including the Upper Mississippi. Fishers & Farmers left it out.
  - xii. Mike D – Appreciate all coming and council offered.
- e. Ron – Already have proposed the coordination. If we have agreed we will resubmit the proposal, that would be a strong indication of leveraging the process. Good group with healthy interaction. Pretty unique in having Maureen and Gary serving the role. Points out the shared interest in this being one of the few mechanisms to address habitat issues on a broader scale.
  - f. Don – Travel tough for everyone. Good to see everyone face to face. Glad to see it taking off. Continue to have positive conversations with Doug Beard on possibility of funding aquatic gap work focused in the MGLP states.
  - g. Lyn – Coordinator has done good job. Any project that crosses state lines would emphasize regional aspect of partnerships. With any GIS questions, feel free to contact Leslie first, then Lyn.
  - h. Nick – Enjoyed MN this week. Six national forests in partnership will be involved. Represent regional forester. Hope to be able to tweak purse strings in the region and filter funds through forest boundaries and outside in same watersheds. Will get Regional Forester to sign the MOU. Have notes on nursery and rural schools funding, along with information on Forest Service budget process.
  - i. Ray – Understand better what is being done and how SLICE program can complement with technical information on primary stressors impacting habitats and which systems are

- the most vulnerable. Looking at past data in new way to give some indication of whether the system is getting near and which stressors are driving system dynamics.
- j. Gwen – Delighted “not being here” (travel restriction joke). Appreciate opportunity to learn from other states and coordinate resources and tools. Excited about NFWF grant on workshop for MGLP and Lakescaping workshop. Will emphasize designing those as a pilot focus group to learn as much as possible about how to present information in a way that will be well-received in Indiana and other states.
  - k. Maureen – Thanks to Gwen for taking notes. Want to know whether to resubmit multistate grant. Was not funded due to merits but because they only funded existing partnerships. There will be an NCN for this again. Sure there will be some funding to SARP, but this Midwest proposal may have a better chance for passing if the 3 partnerships have been approved by October. Willing to do the work. Process was much more political than any other grant process. Must be talked up prior to the vote in order to stand a chance. Encourage fish chiefs to participate in the process.
    - i. Mike S – Must go back to directors, but will not work if the money just goes to the existing partnerships. Need to support new ones.
    - ii. Maureen – Have not had that much involvement with AFWA. Wouldn't know who to talk to, but conversations need to be had ahead of time. Need to be clear whether they will entertain funding requests from new partnerships.
    - iii. Gary – Having a board member bring the questions forward would be important.
    - iv. Mike S – Set NCNs in spring. Finalized at September meeting. Have summer to work on it. Need to be clear in NCN that it is for candidate partnerships.
    - v. Gary – Manipulate that at the Fisheries & Water Resources Committee to clarify the NCN.
    - vi. Mike S – The directors may not necessarily match up to the detail in the NCN.
    - vii. Ron – Directors cannot lobby. Need to figure out how to inform people.
    - viii. Gary – Have Gary Taylor or Ron Ragan to bring it up to AFWA as a question generated through staff.
    - ix. Mike S – Find out who staffs the committee. Short answer is that it is worth doing again. Need to figure out how to best position it.
    - x. Ron – Have to follow through if one of the key questions to be asked is how we are interfacing, will need to proceed with the proposal to develop the plan.
    - xi. Maureen – Bulk of work is done. Will just need some updating.
    - xii. Mike D – Have scoring results, so it will satisfy the reviewers.
    - xiii. Maureen – There is a little bit of information in there.
    - xiv. Mike S – Can at least make sure all the Midwesterners voted.
    - xv. Maureen – Partnership is making good process. Have put really good effort and focusing on important things with good, steady constant coordination. Having Pat on board will propel you into the future. Most partnerships do not have dedicated coordinators with full time job. Few other partnerships that have dedicated GIS staff (SARP has grant). The fact that that much effort is going into it will pay dividends down the road. My job is constantly evolving but here to serve the partnerships. If there is something that will help or idea about coordination or resources, want to hear about it.
  - l. Gary – Kelly Smith from MI DNR wanted to thank MN DNR and commend Pat on doing a fabulous job putting up with all of us. Thanks for opportunity to travel.

- m. John – Hard not being there. A lot more enjoyable and beneficial to be present and interact. Mega dittos to MN for doing an excellent job in starting the partnership. Extraordinary group that is enjoyable to work with. Ahead of the curve, more advanced, other partnerships have taken some cues from MGLP. On the right track with Steering Committee and project proposal sheets. Hope to be there next time in person.
  - i. Pat – Thanks for staying in tune all day on the phone.
- n. Jason – Almost two years from the April meeting in Madison. In terms of relationship, there is a comfort level in ideas and give-and-take with different perspectives and coming to consensus. Looking forward to the “honey moon period” as we solidify in March. Travel is hard but it is nice to be present with conversations. Relationships are important part of what we do.
- o. Pat – Want to highlight a couple of things. Originally thought the NFHAP was going to be about the money. The benefits of talking to each other (e.g., MI’s assessment led by Li Wang, sharing MN’s shoreland restoration program,) show the real value of the partnership. A special thanks to Maureen for her responsive phone calls and advice, and Gwen for notes.

19. Adjourned at 4:37pm