

Wisconsin DNR Update for LOPRD September 8, 2020 Annual Meeting

From: Fischer, James R - DNR [mailto:JamesR.Fischer@wisconsin.gov]

Sent: Thursday, August 27, 2020 4:09 PM

To: Marc Schultz

Subject: Potential UMR Funding Increases

Marc,

Thanks for the call. Good talking to you today. Here is a rundown on possible increases in Federal funding for the Miss River. Obviously things can change rapidly, but many items are aligning better than I've ever seen.

- The **Upper Mississippi River Restoration program (UMRR)**, currently authorized and funded at \$32 M annually, could increase by 71% to \$55 M/year. The program has a Continuing Authorization and has received the full \$32 M every year now for the past 5 years. The House recently passed the increase in annual authorized funding in the **2020 Water Resources Development Act**. The Senate EPW Committee also passed their version.
- **Navigation & Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP)** received \$4M in planning funds in FY 20, and the USACE is planning for a \$10 M construction start in FY21. If funded in FY 21, they anticipate program funding on the order of \$80-100 M annually in FY 22 and beyond. What makes this more likely to happen is that more of the Inland Waterway Trust Fund is available for new navigation projects on the UMR. The NESP has support from the States, NGO's and Navigation industry.
- The two-year **Flood, Sediment, and Drought Planning Assistance to States agreement** between the five states and the USACE is coming to a close, and the next step would be to **start a Section 729 Watershed Study** with a 75/25 cost-share (Fed/State). The House version of WRDA identifies this effort for a new start.
- The **Mississippi River Restoration and Resiliency Initiative** -- A House Appropriations subcommittee sent an FY 21 Mississippi River Restoration bill encouraging the Department of Agriculture to participate and coordinate with the Environmental Protection Agency on developing a Mississippi River restoration and resiliency strategy focused on improving water quality, restoring habitat and natural systems, improved navigation, eliminating aquatic invasive species, and building local resilience to natural disasters. The Bill was passed to the Full House.
- **The Mississippi River Water Quality Improvement Act** is a draft legislative framework that the five states are working on (through UMRBA) at the request of Ron Kind. It proposes among other things, roughly \$600 M annually for nutrient and sediment reduction measures in the watershed (at least 70% of the funding to on-the-ground practices), a **Mississippi River National Program Office** with joint leadership by USEPA and NRCS, and a unified States approach to Clean Water Act monitoring.

I also attached a summary of WRDA provisions that may be of interest to you.

If even portions of this come to fruition, we have the potential to make huge investments in Mississippi River habitat work. The five states are evaluating, individually and collectively, what level of state resources will be required to capitalize on these opportunities and maximize benefits to the River. We don't want to miss out on something that we've been working toward for so many years.

Let me know if you have questions.

Take care,

Jim

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