

2003-2004 Summary Accomplishment Report for Upper Mississippi Forestry Partnership

Date: September/27/2004

Grant Number: 03-DG-11244225-106

Modification No.: A1

Report Period: October/2002-October/2004

Grant project period: October/2002 to September 2005

Grant Recipient: Wisconsin DNR

Recipient Contact person: Jack Hoisington

Project Director: Samuel Osinde

Core Team

Darrell Zastrow, darrell.zastrow@dnr.state.wi.us

Denny Michel, denny.michel@dnr.state.ia.us

Duane McCoy, dmccoy@dnr.IN.gov

Jim Brooks, jimbrooks@dnr.state.mn.us,

Larry Himanga larry.himanga@dnr.state.mn.us

Matt Siemert, msiemert@dnrmail.state.il.us

Michael R. Huffman, Mike.Huffman@mdc.mo.gov

Samuel Osinde, Samuel.Osinde@dnr.state.wi.us

Theresa Heyer, theyer@fs.fed.us

Introduction

The Upper Mississippi River Basin is a major sub-basin of the entire Mississippi River Basin, the largest floodplain river ecosystem in North America and the third largest of 79 such river systems in the world. Few river systems have played such an integral role in shaping our nation's history, culture, and economic heritage. The Upper Mississippi River travels 800 miles from Lake Itasca in northern Minnesota to the confluence with the Ohio River at the southern tip of Illinois. The basin (or watershed) encompasses nearly 189,000 square miles of land area that drains to Mississippi River confluence with the Ohio River

The Forest Service's Northeastern Area and the State Foresters from Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, and Indiana have joined in partnership to build a watershed-wide approach to forestry efforts in the Upper Mississippi Basin. The Upper Mississippi River Forestry Partnership will focus activities, demonstration projects, and cooperative programs on key watershed forestry issues.

Summary of Accomplishments

Expected Outcomes:

The Upper Mississippi Forestry Partnership is expected to increase the use of trees and forests to meet the overall objective of watershed protection in the

Upper Mississippi River basin. In addition, the project is to achieve a heightened awareness of the role and importance of trees and forests by agencies and organizations working in the basin.

The expected outcome of this project can only be achieved in a long term. The Upper Mississippi Forestry Partnership is working in a systematic approach through agreed activities in each quarter. This is the first year for the Upper Mississippi Forestry Partnership and the Partnership has made great progress in a number of issues as reported below and continues to build on these achievements through planned activities in the attached workplan table.

Accomplishments:

- The partnership has contacted a variety of Federal, State, and county agencies and has identified areas of collaboration for promoting forestry as a significant solution to water quality problems in the Upper Mississippi River. Those institutions contacted are documented in the accomplishment report.
- The Partnership has been working towards finalizing the Upper Mississippi Forestry Partnership organizational chart. Once finalized, the chart will enable a streamlined business approach through established channels of operation and accountability to the public and other agencies. It will also provide more clarity for the Partnership with their decision making process, with individual roles and responsibilities, and in the implementation of planned programs.
- The Partnership has held three steering committee meetings to discuss the short and long-term vision of the Partnership; the steering committee is growing in size and unity of purpose.
- The Partnership secured a three hundred thousand-dollar grant from of the USDA Forest Service- State and Private Forestry. This grant is to be utilized for the improvement of migratory bird habitats in the Upper Mississippi. A request for proposals solicited grant applications from state, county, and non-governmental organizations. A committee (composed of federal and state foresters and ornithologists) reviewed and ranked applications. A total of eight grants were awarded totaling \$229,415. Letters awarding these successful applicants are sent and the selected projects will provide excellent benefits to bird habitat, provide educational value for the Upper Mississippi effort, and provide a number of applied demonstration sites.
- The Partnership steering committee has developed a final action plan for the Upper Mississippi for the next five years. This action plan is being shared with stakeholders. The action plan clearly states the mission, objectives and actions that will expand forestry opportunities to benefit the Upper Mississippi (see attached Action Plan).
- Hotspots for water quality concerns are being mapped dependent on available funding. The Upper Midwest Environmental Science Center has submitted a scope of work for GIS hotspot mapping. This scope of work is being reviewed by the steering committee. The utility of the hotspot map will enable the Partnership to focus priority activities and future investments on the greatest need.

- The Upper Mississippi Forestry Partnership hosted the round table on sustainable forestry criteria and indicators (C&I) featuring the Montreal Process C&I. Through the roundtable a variety of issues were generated. These issues influenced the Upper Mississippi Forestry action plan. The round table attracted a wide variety of participants ranging from private forest landowners to national government officials. The core team that organized the round table included many members of the Partnership steering committee.
- The coordinator made a presentation to the 39th annual Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters (NAASF) that was held in Wilmington, Delaware. This opportunity allowed for an introduction of the Upper Mississippi Partnership to the NAASF
- A memorandum of understanding has been developed for the Partnership that targets Upper Mississippi commitment from signatories including USDA Forest Service NA S&PF and the state forestry programs of Indiana, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Minnesota and Wisconsin.
- The Partnership is developing a project portfolio, sharing the success stories fostered through the Partnership.
- An excellent working relationship has developed during the project with the St. Paul Field Office, NA S&PF has provided outstanding support for the Upper Mississippi and most recently has provided additional support by identifying an additional .5 FTE of expertise in Teri Heyer. The time provided by Teri will contribute to achieving the Upper Mississippi Partnerships goals and objectives.

Challenges

Limited state budget - States are going through a difficult financial time. As a result, out of state travel is available for the Coordinator, yet very challenging for participation of all states in partner oriented meetings. This has made it extremely difficult to organize an exchange visit for state personnel with successful projects like the Chesapeake Bay project and the New York watershed. Such exchange visits would shape the vision of the planning team and provide learning opportunities to the forestry partnership.

Information sharing with the Advisory Committee

The partnership still has a challenge with sharing information with the advisory committee. The advisory committee has not yet been substantively constituted with an elected chairperson that receives information from the steering committee for and shares it with the advisory committee. To-date the partnership has made great progress towards establishing structure and mode of communication. However, there are still challenges with sharing information of decisions and consultations with the advisory committee. We hope this will be resolved by the eventual signing of the memorandum of understanding and the adoption and implementation of the organizational chart.

Long Term Funding

The current grant expires on September 30, 2005. Continued coordination could still be achieved through the approval of the dollars applied for by the joint partners through the Forestry Innovation Grants for the period 2005-2007. The partnership will eventually need longer-term financial commitment to enable longer term planning of activities and programs.

Office Location

The transfer of the coordinator's office from the Upper Midwest Environmental Science Center (UMESC) provided some resources in terms of the availability of state personnel and equipment. However, it also created the need to change computer systems and to move away from focused resources in the form of UMESC employees who handle Upper Mississippi level responsibilities.

Upper Mississippi Watershed Forestry Partnership 2004-2005 work plan:

Quarter	Agreed Activity	Responsible person
October 2004 to December	Formalize Memorandum of understanding	Samuel/Steering Committee
October 2004 to December	Formalize organizational chart	Teri/Steering Committee
October 2004 to December	Submit FIG for coordinator support through 9/07	Darrell/Steering Committee
October 2004 to December	Finalize selection of bird habitat proposals	Samuel/team/Steering Committee
October 2004 to October	Finalize power point presentations (2)	Samuel
October 2004 to March 2005	Continue identification of priority watersheds "hot spots"	Samuel/Teri/Steering Committee
October 2004-October 2005	Steering committee meets in person 3x/year	Samuel/Steering Committee
January 2005 to June 2005	Portfolio development	Samuel/Steering Committee
January to June 2005	Plan Stakeholders	Samuel/Teri/Steering

	meeting-ID common interests, resources, ways to work together.	Committee
January to June 2005	Develop key messages and connect to agricultural community	Mike P./Steering Committee
January to June 2005	Meet with Chesapeake Bay and NYC watershed steering committees for advice on implementation	Samuel/Teri/Steering Committee
January to June 2005	Design and develop UMW website (Kathy Anderson)	Teri/Steering Committee
January to June 2005	Develop overall communication strategy (Gina Childs)	Samuel/Teri/Steering Committee
January to June 2005	Banner/slogan development-ID with the river	
July 2005 to September 2005	Stakeholder meeting	Samuel/Teri/Steering