

**Minutes of the
QUAD CITIES RIVERFRONT COUNCIL (QCRFC)**

Tuesday, September 27, 2022, 12:00 p.m.

Council Members in Attendance

Ms. Heather Bishop
Mr. Larry Burns
Mr. Ralph Heninger
Mr. Tim Kammler
Mr. Tim Knanishu
Mr. Doug Littrel

Mr. Chris Mathias*

Ms. Brittany Wells

** Current QCRFC Officers*

*** QCRFC Representative to BSRC*

Others in Attendance:

Ms. Jennifer Bizarri
Ms. Lynn Gibson

Mr. Kelly Thomas

1. **Call Meeting to Order** The meeting was called to order by Mr. Mathias at 12:06 p.m.
2. **Approval of the July 26, 2022 QCRFC Meeting Minutes** Mr. Burns made a motion to approve the July 26, 2022 minutes. Mr. Kammler seconded, and the meeting minutes were approved.
3. **Presentation on Mississippi River Project Master Plan** Mr. Thomas, Natural Resources Chief at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, discussed the Mississippi River Project Master Plan. He said the Corps of Engineers is known for managing locks and dams, but Mr. Thomas's department manages approximately 60,000 acres for environmental, recreational, and natural resources. The Mississippi River Project Master Plan is the plan for that land. The master plan provides guidance and directs development of the natural and recreational resources. There are 26 recreation areas on the Mississippi River in the Rock Island District, which is located from lock 10 in Guttenburg, Iowa to a mile south of lock 22 in Saverton, Missouri. The Rock Island District includes approximately 315 river miles and borders four states. The Rock Island District is the largest in the Corps of Engineers and includes 6 projects: Centerville Lake north of Des Moines, Red Rock Lake in Pella, Coralville Lake in Iowa City, the Mississippi River Project, the Illinois Waterway Project that includes 6 locks on the lower Illinois River and Farm Creek, which is 2 dry reservoirs in East Peoria. Almost 80 percent of the 60,000 acres is forested, and a majority of the land is on islands.

The recreation part of the plan deals in concepts and discusses items such as extending camp sites to accommodate larger RVs and updating electric service to handle increased demand. The Land Use Allocation part of the plan determines how to designate and use the land. Before this update, the plan was most recently written in the 1960s, so this plan had 60 years of changes. The plan is pretty extensive and includes four states' Department of Natural Resource (DNR) areas and one Fish and Wildlife Service. The Land Use Classification and the mapping were well-liked during the public meetings. The first step to creating the plan in 2015 was data collection and updating regulations, which was followed by five public scoping process meetings. Next, the four state DNR agencies, Fish & Wildlife services, and conservation agencies who manage the lands discussed the plan

update. After this, four concept plans were drafted, then public meetings were conducted again, and finally one plan was developed. The plan was completed in 2022.

In the recreational part of the plan, there are 11 campgrounds, six of which are class A campgrounds with community water, individual sites for motorhomes, and shower houses. The other five are class B and typically have gravel lots and may or may not have electric. There are 22 boat accesses and 65 recreational out grants, where the land is leased to either government or private companies. In the environment part of the plan they deal with forest management and how to improve the health of the forest. During the flood of 2019, a lot of trees were lost and some areas were thinned to allow more sunlight and encourage the natural regeneration of trees while other areas were seeded or planted with trees. A lot of work is done with endangered species including the muscles near the I-74 bridge, as well as bats and bumblebees. Also, work is done with vegetative invasive species such as emerald ash bore, but this plan does not include fisheries. The corps only manages about 14,000 acres of the 60,000 acres, and the remaining land is leased to state DNR or fish and wildlife services. Of the 60,000 acres, 14,000 acres are managed by the U.S. Army Corps, 12,000 acres are managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife services, 13,000 acres are managed by Iowa DNR, 14,000 acres are managed by Illinois DNR, and 2,000 acres are managed by Missouri DNR. The 26 recreational areas and 65 out grants make up about only three percent of the land. In the future, the plan will be updated every five years, and they can amend the plan as needed.

4. **Individual Riverfront Reports.**

- *Scott County* – Mr. Mathias said the solar farm ordinance was approved, and it only allows solar panels to be developed on ag land that is 50 CSR (Corn Suitability Rating) or less. During the process, some citizens wanted to allow more solar farm area, but the board and commission wanted to keep it more limited to what was finally approved. The ordinance would allow solar farms on about 16% of the county land.
- *Rock Island County* – Mr. Burns said the zoo is currently closed on Mondays for the remainder of the season, and the zoo season will end on October 30 for the year. The staff will be working on the African Painted Dog project that will be financed by the Illinois Tourism Grant. At Illiniwek, there will be a Halloween party on October 22, and they will have trick-or-treating, costume contests, and hayrack rides.
- *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers* – Ms. Bishop said they are getting ready to start the new fiscal year, and they are finishing the last year. They are getting some contracts awarded with the 2022 dollars. They received infrastructure money and will be expanding Lock and Dam 25 and the Lock and Dam 22 fish passage. The project is designed to keep invasive species or aquatic nuisance species out of the great lakes.
- *East Moline* – Mr. Kammler said East Moline is almost finished resurfacing the Great River Trail. They also received a \$24 million federal RAISE grant will be used to provide street scaping in the downtown area and will provide connectivity to the library, 15th Avenue, the Rust Belt, The Bend, and the Hyatt Hotel. They are planning on connecting to existing trails including the Grand Illinois Trail and the Great River Trail. Also, Metrolink just received a \$2 million ferry boat grant, and they will add a dock facility near the Hyatt Hotel. The street scaping and the RAISE Grant work will tie into the elements.

- *Visit Quad Cities* – Ms. Wells said Visit Quad Cities has complimentary bike rentals. To rent a bike, a person must submit their drivers license and a credit card, which is only needed for incidentals. Bikes are available Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., weather permitting. Union Station will be opening soon.
 - *REDEEM* – Mr. Knanishu said it will connect the Bend Expo Centers to the Channel Cat dock. There are some condos being built.
 - *Riverdale* – Mr. Littrel said they are still building new houses in the new developments. There is a council meeting tonight. The fire department received first place at the water barrel shooting contest.
 - *Bi-State Commission* – Mr. Heninger appreciates the information he receives at the Quad Cities Riverfront Council meetings, and he said he reports the information to the Bi-State Commission. He thought the railroad merger in Iowa will make the railroad an economic driver, but would be a conflict with the goal of Corps' Master Plan. He said this meeting was one of several very good QCRFC meetings, and he also mentioned the QCRFC meeting about the I-74 bridge mussels. Mr. Heninger had an idea to create a visitor center near the I-74 Iowa bridge bicycle trail where they could showcase the muscles story and the I-74 bridge winning the national award. Ms. Wells mentioned that Visit Quad Cities has an office near that area. Mr. Mathias mentioned the empty parking lot where people park to use the I-74 walking bridge trail in Illinois. Mr. Heninger and Ms. Bishop both mentioned seeing the cruise ships. Mr. Heninger also said the East Moline library is an excellent place to meet.
5. **Next Meeting.** The next meeting of the Quad Cities Riverfront Council would normally be on November 22, 2022; however, those present at the meeting all agreed that it would be better to have the meeting a week sooner on November 15, 2022 to avoid Thanksgiving week.
6. **Other Business.** Mr. Heninger said that a follow up about the I-74 bridge demolition would be a good topic for a future meeting. Mr. Mathias said it would be interesting if Mr. Kammler could report on the East Moline trails connecting to the Great American Trail with a map showing the trail connections, and Mr. Kammler agreed that he would share that information in 2023.
7. **Adjournment.** The meeting adjourned at 1:22 p.m.