

ISETR Evaluation of HC Components of AMP v5

LaVista, NE

August 11, 2016

MRRIC charge to ISETR

Evaluate HC components of AMP v5 chapters 2, 5, & 6 and strive to answer 11 questions to extent possible given current AMP document development

ISETR response

- Overview remarks
- Answer questions
- Update with our current understanding based on scientist to scientist conversations with the AMP authors

Notes

- For detailed comments see ISETR report
- AMP authors continue to work to complete full draft
- ISETR has learned much at this meeting
- Many of our thoughts have changed in response to what we have learned

Selected overview remarks on Chapter 2

Governance of AM program

- Discussion to define MRRIC roles is ongoing
 - For example, the process for considering AM Governance Straw Proposal is a good model for how further changes may come about
- Ch. 2 has confusing elements
 - For example, the extent to which MRRIC deliberations get fed into decision process, now largely superseded by straw proposal
- Still to come – how will HC team work, what are mechanisms for making trade offs between conflicting recommendations from 3 teams by the management team, and how MRRIC participates in those mechanisms

Selected overview remarks on Chapter 5

Human Considerations

- In the absence of detailed economic modelling this chapter is necessarily vague
- In particular, it lacks the methods and metrics needed to reconcile tradeoffs among interests
- It also lacks a method to minimize impacts to human considerations while benefitting the species
- The distribution of costs and benefits among interests associated with some of the management actions may matter
- Members are understandably concerned about risk; risks associated with different management actions should be communicated

Overview remarks on Chapter 6 Data Acquisition, Management, Reporting and Communications

- Needs to give more attention to HC measures and metrics and how the information infrastructure will support HC modeling, monitoring, assessment, and communications needs for use by management team and members
- Users and their needs not yet identified
- Does not give adequate attention to non-agency interests:
 - Their desire to receive data as it is being recorded
 - Opportunities for members to provide verified HC monitoring data
- User testing of “beta” versions of software needed
- Needs better recognition of budgetary and time constraints in setting reasonably achievable data quality and reporting standards

1a. Mechanisms to Minimize HC Impacts while Meeting the Species Objectives?

- No mechanisms presented yet
- Possible approaches:
 - cost-effectiveness analysis
 - habitat response function (e.g., acres of habitat per acre foot of water)
- Examples of possible metrics come from the Human Considerations (HC) Objectives, Metrics, Methods and Models report from 2014

1b. ...Address Uncertainty when Assessing Species Response and HC Impacts?

- HC indicators and impacts not yet identified or quantified, so no uncertainty yet
- Understanding uncertainty for both species effects and HC impacts is important
- It should be included with quantification of effects and impacts
- Uncertainty in species response and HC impacts may be large or itself highly uncertain – may need to be qualitatively assessed

2. Does AMP v5 adequately describe how MRRIC will participate in the analysis and interpretation of the results of HC metrics monitoring?

- As yet, little indication of formal engagement of MRRIC in the analysis and interpretation of results of any HC metrics monitoring
- We anticipate this will be better specified as plans for HC-related metrics are developed

3. ...How governance and HC monitoring & assessment will provide and use information in timeframes to implement AMP effectively?

- Chapter 2 well describes how the governance structure is currently envisioned and explains the annual cycle of activities; including what are the external timelines, such as budgeting requirements, that dictate what happens when

4. ...How program attributes and technical expertise will be amended?

- Adaptive management approach is well considered, including the incorporation of technical expertise and needed program adjustments

5. ...HC effects monitoring, decision thresholds, actions triggered when thresholds are crossed?

- Chapter 5 mentions that critical thresholds for decision making may necessitate factoring in multiple HC and species factors
- Examples of HC triggers or thresholds are presented
- The examples along with the concept of an HC Indicators dashboard suggests there is active consideration of HC effects monitoring
- ISETR suggests that more specificity is needed, and will hopefully be forthcoming with the next version of the AMP

6. ...HC monitoring and assessment sufficiently rigorous to detect impacts to HCs and guide AM?

- Chapter 5 provides the case for HC monitoring and criteria for selecting key HC monitoring indicators
- These sections provide general principles since the details of the DEIS analyses of potential impacts are not yet known
- Examples for recreation, thermal power and water supply intakes are instructive in illustrating that HC monitoring could be a significant undertaking that will need to be planned/budgeted for
- Chapter 6 gives little emphasis to HC. The information management system should include HC from the start

Questions 7 – 10, Too Soon to Answer Fully

- Q7 on details of HC information management
- Q8 on MRRIC understanding of HC monitoring metrics and use in decision process
- Q9 more on HC information management
- Q10 on the proposed HC indicator dashboard
- All are very important to engagement and understanding by all participants – each needs development, beginning with a full assessment of user needs

11. ...How and with what other programs the AMP will integrate to synergize and avoid conflicts?

- Chapter 2 describes generally mechanisms for coordination with tribes, states, and other Federal agencies and procedures for dispute resolution
- Less well described is how the AMP becomes fully integrated with and a part of the daily decision making of all Corps programs that may be impacting the species' survival. Important because adjustments to those programs' actions, and integrated planning for future actions, may be needed to avoid or preclude jeopardy for the listed species

AMP is first step in an evolving process (1 of 2)

- AMP is an initial step in adaptive management, which involves ongoing modeling, monitoring, assessment, and adjustment
- An explanation is needed of how current Corps procedures mesh with AM activities
- MRRIC to engage through new work groups with technical teams and plenary sessions with management and oversight teams

AMP is first step in an evolving process (2 of 2)

- Mechanisms for incorporating HCs into process either quantitatively or qualitatively are under discussion
- Now is the time to provide input into how to frame and situate the HC team, building on the straw proposal and HC AHG engagement
- Consider incorporating structured decision making process for making upcoming trade offs

Common expectations re HC impacts?

- Intent of AMP is to avoid jeopardy while minimizing HC impacts of the actions undertaken
- How much effort to put into economic monitoring and analysis?
 - Not a primary function of the Corps, yet what level needed to meet objective of meeting species needs while maintaining other authorized purposes?

Common information expectations

- Balance between information that is
 - Timely
 - Available
 - Relevant
 - Quality assured
 - Affordable

Summary

- On the right track
- Governance taking shape
- Much work needed on mechanisms for predicting, monitoring, assessing, and minimizing HC impacts – opportunity for MRRIC
- Work progressing on information management and communication, and much more is needed