

Minutes of the OREIT Section Meeting

March 26, 2024

Rock Island, Illinois

1. Greetings and Introductions (Danelle Haake)

2. UMRCC Overview (Neal Jackson)

- a. UMRCC history
- b. Objectives:
- c. Focal Areas: What can we do better?
 - i. Pick one or two things that can get done vs trying to do 15
 - ii. Encourage systemic thinking: Think outside the scope of your job
- d. Connect actions with goals

3. Website

- a. What is our goal/Who is our audience/who are we serving?
 - i. How to get more traffic on page? (Most people visit website before UMRCC event)
 - ii. Add Calendar of events with a google form?
 - iii. Add Job Repository to website to bring in more traffic from students looking for work?
 - iv. Capture important links (redirect the traffic to our website back to those professionals?)
 - v. Are we supporting UMRCC or are we outreaching with the public? (maybe a little of each)
 - vi. Adding links to resources on website –
- b. Create a subcommittee to look at how we put online resources together
 - i. ***Formation of a website subcommittee has been approved***

4. Grant Program

- a. The funds provided have been highly underutilized for years
 - i. Currently 2 per state, \$350 each
 - ii. Have not spread the word effectively
 - 1. Target ROEs in school districts along the river and advertise that we have money for teachers
 - iii. Should we target smaller groups of kids (e.g., classrooms) or larger groups of kids (e.g., community-based organizations).
 - iv. Due to rising costs, we should request 1000 dollars per state.
- b. Grant Options
 - i. Continue with grant funds being provided only to field trips
 - ii. Change recipients from classrooms to non-profit organizations and local government units that actively connect people to the river
 - iii. Hybrid Model
 - 1. Now to September: Stronger marketing effort to schools; create flyer rather than using the tri-fold brochure since we aren't printing it.

2. Funds remaining at Fall meeting can be distributed to non-profits with a focus on connecting people with the Mississippi River

c. Two Motions Passed

- i. Motion to increase the UMRCC OREIT grant program authorization to \$1,000 per state with the goal to maximize participation/applications with committee acknowledgement that financial assistant such as transportation costs vary by geographical location.
 1. WI Motion (Brenda Kelly), MO second (Matt Vitello)
 2. Passed Unanimously
- ii. Motion to move forward with a 2024 hybrid approach to the UMRCC OREIT grant program authorization that first evaluates program success via a campaigned outreach effort that includes but is not limited to an email notification of the grant program via updated created factsheet distribution and whereas if deemed unsuccessful measured by application response, establish a mechanism to broaden the scope of funding to reach additional stakeholders within the UMR at the TBD fall technical section meeting of OREIT.
 1. WI motion (Brenda Kelly), IA second (Karen Osterkamp)
 2. Passed Unanimously

5. Who are our target audiences? - activity

- a. Papers set up around the room with categories of potential stakeholders. Each participant could put unlimited small stickers on each category that they work with as part of their job. Each also received three large stickers to identify which they considered priorities for OREIT's efforts.
- b. Results, showing the category, # of priority stickers, and # of connections to our jobs
 - i. Legislators 5, 6
 - ii. Agency Staff 8, 9
 - iii. UMRCC & Partners 10, 5
 - iv. Industry 0, 7
 - v. Formal Educators 2, 8
 - vi. Informal Educators 5, 7
 - vii. Wildlife Enthusiasts 1, 8
 - viii. Boating Enthusiasts 2, 7
- c. Time for discussion was limited, so these will be addressed at future Zoom meetings

6. Organizing OREIT – Workplan

- a. Monthly working meetings held 2nd Wednesday
 - i. Meetings in April, June, August, October and December will be open to the whole group. Zoom invitations will be sent to those who sign up.
- b. Review of existing (2011) Workplan
- c. Beginning of Workplan Development Process with brainstorm of potential priorities and focus areas for the next 10 years
 - i. Generate New or Revised Workplan
 - ii. Develop online resources (tourism, recreation)
 - iii. Promotion of Great River Road

- iv. Community Science
- v. Collaboration (avoid crisis messaging) tools and training.
 - 1. UMRR kiosks being updated – possibly collaborate
 - 2. Interpretive center network
 - 3. Water trails
- vi. Training/information modules for new staff
- vii. Summarize chloride programming in all UMRCC States
- viii. Provide Grant funding
- ix. Build OREIT's Base
- d. Conversation about communication
 - i. Compilation of resources for all communicators.
 - ii. How to talk to those in different parts of the political spectrum
 - 1. flood mitigation policy is often used to address property damage, but nutrient reduction is on the same platform
 - iii. How to strategically frame a message – still relatively
 - iv. New staff need more training – institutional knowledge is often not shared.
 - v. “And, but, therefore” framework

7. Final Remarks

- a. Summary of budget request
- b. Adjourned at 11:58