



RIVER CURRENTS

UPPER MISSISSIPPI, ILLINOIS & MISSOURI RIVERS ASSOCIATION - UMIMRA

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IN THIS ISSUE OF RIVER CURRENTS

COVER

Work Continues on Mississippi River
Comprehensive Plan

TWO

Missouri River Stakeholders
Face Many Challenges

THREE

A Look at the Missouri River
Recovery Implementation Committee

FOUR

New Members

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

As UMIMRA members, we welcome your input on the format, content and suggestions for future articles for River Currents. Please direct your comments to Kim Robinson, UMIMRA, 600 S. Second St., Ste. 403, Springfield, IL 62704 or kimrobinson@umimra.org.

Work Continues on Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan

The US Army Corps of Engineers continues to make enhancements to its draft Upper Mississippi Comprehensive Plan. At the urging of UMIMRA and others, a new option was recently developed that would allow additional improvements in some southern Illinois levee and drainage districts.

The new option, called Plan M, allows all of the districts south of St. Louis to improve up to 0.5 feet in height, and provides for wider and stronger levees. The plan also provides for 500-year protection across the river from Chester, Illinois to protect the only bridge between I-255 and Cape Girardeau. A map of the new plan is available on UMIMRA's website at www.umimra.org

The addition of Plan M recently led UMIMRA to revise its official position on the Comprehensive Plan. The policy as communicated to the Corps of Engineers reads as follows:

"The Upper Mississippi, Illinois and Missouri Rivers Association supports Plan G and be-

lieves it offers the greatest level of protection to the greatest number of citizens in the Upper Mississippi River Valley.

With regard to any modifications to Plan G, we would also support Plan M if that variant is preferred by the majority of southern Illinois levee and drainage districts. Further, if acceptable environmental or other projects develop that would provide necessary flood storage areas, UMIMRA would also support additional levee enhancements for southern Illinois where possible."

In related developments, the Corps of Engineers has recently advised the organization that it intends to revisit its past reliance on national economic data when making recommendations for projects like the Comprehensive Plan. In the aftermath of Katrina, the Corps is beginning to evaluate a more comprehensive approach that considers risks, future development, including regional economic development and social impacts. This represents a major shift in the Corps' traditional approach – something that UMIMRA has long sought.

Executive Director's NOTE

In this issue, we asked our friends at the Missouri Levee and Drainage District Association to provide us with an overview of current developments on the Missouri River. Following are their comments.

Missouri River Stakeholders Face Many Challenges

By Tom Waters, Chairman Missouri Levee & Drainage District Association

In his instructions to Captain Meriwether Lewis, President Thomas Jefferson wrote:

"The object of your mission is to explore the Missouri River, & such principal stream of it, as, by it's course and communication with the waters of the Pacific Ocean, may offer the most direct and practicable water communication across this continent, for the purposes of commerce".

Jefferson knew the benefits of the Missouri River would exceed his expectations. The journey of Lewis and Clark opened the doors for river commerce and the development of a river system, which serves our nation. As citizens who depend on the River for reliable electricity and a safe and abundant supply of water, it is important to watch closely the activities surrounding changes to the Missouri River.

The Missouri River has seen many changes in the past 20 years. The Big Muddy is the center of a growing battle between those striving to protect the powerful economic benefits of the River and those wishing to turn the 2,341 mile waterway into an environmental experiment. At stake in the battle is flood protection for farmland and communities along the River, water supply for municipal and industrial uses, reliable

navigation flows and a host of other benefits provided by the Missouri River system.

Mark Twain's famous quote, "Whiskey is for drinking and Water is for fighting", rings true more than ever on the Missouri River. For decades the Missouri River Upper Basin states of Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota and South Dakota have fought with the Lower Basin states of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas and Missouri. Most battles center around water levels in the six mainstem reservoirs on the upper river and flows from the lower most dam near Yankton, South Dakota. Environmental interests jumped into the heated battle in the early 1990's during a review of the Missouri River Master Water Control Manual, a document used by the Corps of Engineers to determine how to operate the reservoir system. The fight between the upper and lower basin quickly became a three way fight as radical environmentalist pushed to control the operation of the River system.

Environmental interests along with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) continues to seek control of the Missouri River. Through biological opinions issued by the USFWS over the years, the service has tied the



Photos provided by Bill Jackson of AGRIServices depict recent flooding in Brunswick, Missouri



Missouri River F & W Recovery Program

FY'05	\$19 Million	
FY'06	\$54.5 Million	
FY'07	\$55 Million	
FY'08	\$85 Million	President's Budget

Repair and Maintenance Program

FY'06	\$1.6 Million	(\$600,000 Administration)
FY'07	\$1.1 Million	
FY'08	\$0.5 Million	President's Budget

2006 Spending

Shallow Water Habitat	\$28.4 Million
Sandbar Development	\$6.3 Million
Hatchery & Fish Propagation	\$1.7 Million
Monitoring and Assessment	\$1.5 Million
MRRIC	\$1.8 Million
Forest and Tree Development	\$1.8 Million

Total F & W 2006 **\$54.5 Million**

Repairs and Maintenance 2006 **\$1.6 Million** (\$600,000 Administration)

continued on page 3

hands of the US Army Corps of Engineers and forced them to alter the way they operate the flood control and navigation system on the Missouri River. Today, instead of operating the system for economic benefits and the protection of lives and property, the Corps is forced to manage the system to protect threatened and endangered species.

Through its efforts know as Missouri River Recovery, the USFWS and Corps of Engineers have managed to strangle navigation on the River, reduce flood protection and hamper the ability of water suppliers to get water from the river for power production and municipal water supply. One only needs to look at the past few budget cycles to see how the priorities are shifting.

While the recovery program budget increases each year, the budget for repairs and maintenance dwindles away. The President's Budget for 2008 does not have enough money in it to pay the administrative expenses for repairs and maintenance of the riverbanks and structures in the river. Meanwhile, the recovery program has \$85 Million to spend on land acquisitions, dumping soil into the river, hatcheries, and an array of science experiments associated with the River.

As this trend continues the stability of the Missouri River will continue to decline. Riverbanks are eroding at an alarming rate. Bed degradation near water intakes is causing problems for water suppliers and unreliable flows have decimated the Missouri River navigation industry. In an effort to appease environmental interests, congress has thrown millions of dollars into an ill-conceived recovery program. Those running the program have no oversight, a seemingly unlimited budget, and a desire to control the River and property within its floodplain.

UMIMRA members should keep a close eye on the activities surrounding the Missouri River. Missouri River flows impact the Mississippi River and environmental precedents set on the Missouri River will soon be transferred to the Illinois, Mississippi, Ohio and other major rivers throughout our country. Sound management of our inland waterway system is important to all Americans and it is up to each of us to do our part to keep Thomas Jefferson's dream of abundant river commerce alive.

Tom Waters is a seventh generation farmer and Chairman of the Missouri Levee and Drainage District Association. As a spokesman on Missouri River issues, he represents farmers, landowners, businesses, associations and others interested in the activities surrounding the Missouri River. He lives near Orrick, Missouri and raises corn, soybeans, wheat, and alfalfa on his family farm in the Missouri River bottoms.

A Look at the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee

By Bill Lay

The Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC) is being formed to implement an adaptive management approach to recovery, which places great importance on stakeholder involvement. The drafting team is formed as a stakeholders' group, not a federal agency group. It is formed so that the stakeholder input may be seen first and the federal government could break away from the old habit of first deciding what actions to take before the stakeholders are involved.

It is hoped that this effort will create a true stakeholder opportunity, differing from the "announce and defend" approach in which the stakeholders felt that all they could do was to "rubber stamp" decisions that had already been made, such as was done in the earlier "spring rise" meetings.

The concept of the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC) comes from the "preferred alternative" set out in the United States Fish and Wildlife Service 2003 Amendment to the 2000 Biological opinion on the Operation of the Missouri River Main Stem Reservoir System.

It would appear from a review of the opinion that the committee is to bring together a broad and diverse range of stakeholders from a variety of disciplines with diverse interests, expertise, talents, and perspectives who will provide a public process for allowing stakeholder input to carefully consider and evaluate the best available scientific information.

It would further appear that the committee is to identify and evaluate applicable actions by considering the interest of the broad and diverse Missouri River stakeholder base and will suggest the administration and establishment of priorities for an adaptive management framework. The framework will allow for changes in the system operations, which are to be considered within the context of the overall strategy for the survival and recovery of the listed specie and their habitat within the statutory limitations.

It would also appear that the committee is to fully and carefully consider the fact that humans are integrated into the ecosystem and that changes to the natural ecosystems do not recognize property lines and administrative boundaries; and the committee is to ensure that public stakeholder values are fully incorporated into any and all recovery implementation.

The Charter would require MRRIC to make recommendations to the federal government on what federal agencies should do towards recovery on the Missouri River. The Drafting Team product will be called the Recommended Charter and will go back to the Federal Working Group. After that the agency (or agencies) with lead responsibility (the lead agency has not yet been determined) will formally adopt a charter.

The members of the drafting team are being assured that the states and tribes will not give up any of their rights of sovereignty by engaging in the MRRIC process.

The Federal Working Group Advisory Team of 7 members provided that the members of the Drafting Committee and the Review Committee would file applications and there were 39 appointed to the Drafting Committee and 18 to the Review Panel.

The Drafting Committee is to suggest a proposed Protocol and to suggest a Proposed Charter for the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC).

There are 2 Drafting Committee co-chairs and the discussions on these issues is lead by a facilitating team of 6 persons, which had 3 individuals there at the last meeting. All these proceeding are being supervised by the U. S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution from Arizona.

The Protocol is being designed to provide full transparency in the Committee, and to insure that the members of the committee act with civility toward each other.

The panel is still unclear as to what legal umbrella MRRIC ultimately will fall under. The panel has discussed the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and possibilities for exceptions to this act under the Endangered Species Act. Under the Endangered Species Act the Department of the Interior could adopt the Charter. MRRIC could also be established under the Water Resources Development Act that might also provide an exemption to FACA. The team has been told that FACA could provide somewhat detailed conflict of interest reporting requirements for the members of the panel.

The meetings of the Drafting committee are being held at diverse locations mostly within

continued on page 4

the Missouri River basin but occasionally out of the basin at airport hubs. The members of the Drafting Committee are being reimbursed for hotel and mileage expenses, but not meal expense.

The Drafting Committee has held monthly meetings in Omaha, Kansas City, and Minneapolis. It currently plans to have a Drafting Committee meeting on July 19-20 in Omaha, on August 27-28 at Billings, and on September 25-26 in Minneapolis. In October, in addition to the Drafting Committee meeting, there is to be one or more public meetings to go over the Drafting Committee's progress to date and to receive public comment. We are currently unsure as to the dates or the locations of these meetings. The best guess for the November meetings are to be on November 28th and 29th, and the December meetings are to be held on December 12th and 13th. No locations have been designated.

If you are interested in the progress of the Drafting Committee you might wish to check in at "mldda.org". It currently has minutes of the June meeting and the most recent draft of the MIRRC Protocol. Hopefully a short time after our July 20th meeting we will be able to provide you with some insight regarding the Protocol and a little new insight in connection with the Charter.

Those of us who depend upon the river such as farmers, navigators, hydropower customers, municipal water customers, and irrigators, would do well to participate in these proceeding in order that they might be fully informed as to the plans

and bring their views to those managing the river at an early stage. This will possibly allow the Committee to convince the Federal Agency to modify or prevent an adoptive management plan that would be highly detrimental to their interests. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Corps of Engineers are currently making modifications for wildlife along the River, such as the Jameson Island project in Central Missouri, without any significant input from the stakeholders. Once the Committee is established, we are told that this lightly regulated situation that occurred in connection with the Jameson Island project could change or at least improve.

Bill Lay is a member of the Missouri Levee and Drainage District Association Board of Directors. He lives in Fayette, Missouri and represents the Howard County Commissioners on the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee.

River Currents
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UMIMRA

Welcomes New Members

The following new members
have joined our ranks:

Cecile Riske
Carrollton, Missouri

Mr. Hal Swaney
Platte City, Missouri

Mr. James Wheeler
Norborne, Missouri

Koeller Farms
New Canton, Illinois

**Missouri Corn
Merchandising Council**
Jefferson City, Missouri

**S & S Farms of
Central Missouri LLC**
Rocheport, Missouri

**Howard County Levee
District #7**
Rocheport, Missouri

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