



Mid-West Electric Consumers Association

4350 Wadsworth Blvd., Suite 330, Wheat Ridge, CO 80033

Tel: (303) 463-4979 Fax: (303) 463-8876

TO: Mid-West Member
FROM: Thomas P. Graves, Executive Director
DATE: August 6, 2009
RE: Missouri River Meetings

A lot of moisture this winter and spring appears to have broken the back of the drought that has been gripping the Missouri River Basin for almost ten years.

However, with the main stem reservoirs refilling now is not the time to relax. There are significant challenges ahead. This summer and fall, there are going to be a series of meetings that will be starting a process that will reshape the Missouri River for years to come. I am writing to ask for your involvement in these meetings.

There are three separate major activities in process this summer and fall. One set of meetings will be addressing environmental issues on the river: the **Missouri River Ecosystem Recovery Plan**. Another set of meetings will be addressing operations of the Missouri River for the upcoming year: The **Corps' Annual Operating Plan** (AOP). Finally, a third set of meetings will be investigating how well current law and judicial decisions are serving the needs of the people in the river basin: **the section 108 study** by the Corps of engineers.

Missouri River Ecosystem Recovery Plan

The Corps of Engineers will be convening a series of “scoping” meetings throughout the basin to further develop the Missouri River Ecosystem Recovery Plan (MRERP).

Under the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007, Congress authorized the Corps of Engineers to conduct a study of the river to develop the Missouri River Ecosystem Recovery Plan. WRDA charged the Corps of Engineers to determine actions required:

“(A) to mitigate losses of aquatic and terrestrial habitat:

(B) to recover federally listed species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973;
and

(C) to restore the ecosystem to prevent further declines among other native species.”

A tall order, to say the least. We need to ensure that the voices of the federal power customer are heard. The schedule for these meetings is listed below. There are two sessions, one from 3-5 p.m., the other from 6-8 p.m. The Corps will use an “open house” format, with information displays set

up and staff to answer questions you might have. There will be a brief opening presentation at each session and several opportunities to comment as well.

Location	Date	Facility	Times
Cheyenne, WY	8/10/09 - Mon	Laramie County Public Library, Cottonwood Room 2220 Pioneer Avenue, Cheyenne, WY	3-5 pm and 6-8 pm
Ft. Peck, MT	8/12/09 - Wed	Fort Peck Interpretive Center Lower Yellowstone Road, Fort Peck, MT	3-5 pm and 6-8 pm
Helena, MT	8/13/09 - Thurs	Helena College of Technology 1115 North Roberts, Helena, MT	3-5 pm and 6-8 pm
New Town, ND	8/17/09 - Mon	Northern Lights Building 710 East Avenue, New Town, ND	3-5pm and 6-8 pm
Bismarck, ND	8/18.09 - Tues	United Tribes Technical College, Wellness Center Multipurpose Room 3315 University Drive, Bismarck, ND	3-5 pm and 6-8 pm
Lower Brule, SD	8/19/09 - Wed	Golden Buffalo Casino Convention Center 321 Sitting Bull Street, Lower Brule, SD	3-5 pm and 6-8 pm
Vermillion, SD	8/20/09 - Thurs	W.H. Over State Museum 1110 Ratingen Street, Vermillion, SD	3-5 pm and 6-8 pm
Omaha, NE	8/31/09 - Mon	Thompson Center at UNO (Alumni Center) – Bootstrapper Hall 6705 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE	3-5 pm and 6-8 pm
Kansas City, KS/MO	9/1/09 - Tues	Irene B. French Community Center 5701 Merriam Drive, Merriam, KS	3-5 pm and 6-8 pm
St. Charles, MO	9/2/09 - Wed	St. Charles County Administration Building – Rooms 115 and 116 201 North 2 nd Street, St. Charles, MO	3-5 pm and 6-8 pm

A copy of the Corps' press release announcing the meetings is attached. You can also get more information at [Missouri River Recovery Program](#) about Missouri River restoration and recovery activities. MRERP's announcement of the meetings is also attached. You can also find these documents on our website, meconsumers.com under Missouri River Recovery.

Annual Operating Plan

Every year, the Corps prepares an Annual Operating Plan (AOP), forecasting how they will be operating the river for the upcoming year. The draft will be out sometime in early September. Public comment meetings are scheduled to get stakeholder input before finalizing river operations for 2009-10. Of course, the Missouri being the fickle river that it is, the "best laid plans of mice and men go often askew are soon gone astray," so it's important to find out what the Corps' alternatives and options are.

The schedule for this year's meetings on the draft AOP are:

- Oct 5 Nebraska City, Neb. 7 p.m.**
Lewis & Clark Center, 100 Valmont Drive
- Oct 6 Kansas City, Mo. 1 p.m.**
Embassy Suites, 7460 NW Tiffany Springs Pkwy
- Oct 6 Jefferson City, Mo. 7 p.m.**
Capitol Plaza, 415 McCarty St.
- Oct 7 Fort Peck, Mont. 1 p.m.**
Fort Peck Interpretative Center
- Oct 7 Bismarck, N.D. 7 p.m.**
Kelly Inn, 1800 N. 12th
- Oct 8 Fort Pierre, S.D. 11 a.m.**
AmericInn Hotel, 312 Island Drive

Section 108 Study

As part of the FY2009 federal appropriations, Congress authorized a study to take a comprehensive study of the uses of the Missouri River. The continuing upper/lower basin disputes, increasing demands on uses of the river, and environmental concerns have prompted basin senators to call for a re-examination of original project purposes under the Flood Control Act of 1944 to determine if changes to authorized project purposes are necessary. The statute language is:

“SEC. 108. The Secretary is authorized to conduct a study of the Missouri River Projects located within the Missouri River basin at a total cost of \$25,000,000 with the express purpose to review the original project purposes based on the Flood Control Act of 1944, as amended, and other subsequent relevant legislation and judicial rulings to determine if changes to the authorized project purposes and existing Federal water resource infrastructure may be warranted: *Provided*, That this study shall be undertaken at full Federal expense.”

This has serious implications for everyone in the basin. The Corps will be convening a series of meetings to get input on study design, issues, etc. in October to begin receiving comments on stakeholders' concerns. Further meetings will involve the public in scoping the breadth and reach of the study. Our participation is critical to ensure proper economic analysis of Pick-Sloan hydropower and assessment of impacts in the event of further changes in operations.

Thanks for your support and assistance. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to give us a call.