



basin bulletin

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Exon to chair Missouri Basin governor's conference

Nebraska Gov. J. James Exon will chair the second Missouri Basin governors' conference May 3-4 in Omaha.

The conference will be held in conjunction with the 20th regular quarterly meeting of the Missouri River Basin Commission.

Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus has been invited to address the conference luncheon.

John W. Neuberger, MRBC chairman, has been asked to address the governors on the subject of water for energy development.

Additional topics to be discussed by the 10 Missouri Basin governors are being selected by a state steering committee.

States participating in the conference as members of the Missouri River Basin Commission are Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming.



MRBC chairman meets with Montana governor

John W. Neuberger, MRBC chairman, met with Montana Gov. Thomas Judge recently to discuss progress of MRBC's Yellowstone Basin and Adjacent Coal Field Area Level B Study. Pictured left to right are Bob Madsen, MRBC study manager; Neuberger; Governor Judge; and Jack Acord, Montana's MRBC member.

MRBC chairman says Missouri River depletion estimates vary

Estimates vary considerably regarding how much water is currently depleted and how much will be depleted in the Missouri River Basin by municipal, agricultural and other users between now and the year 2000.

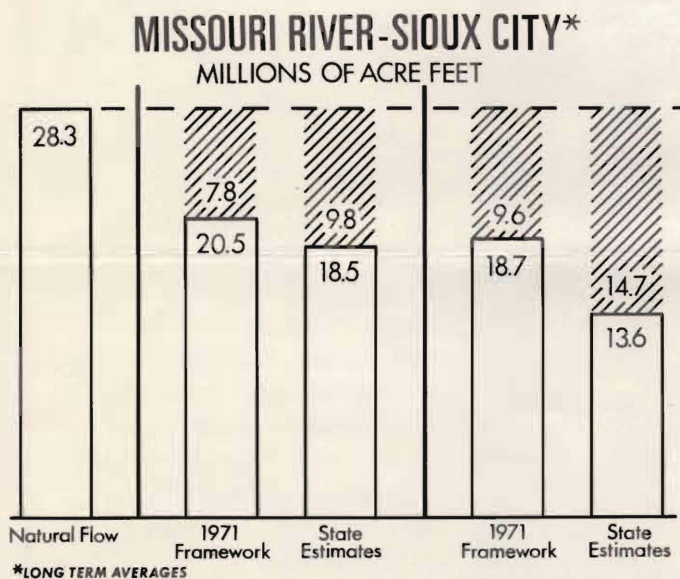
John W. Neuberger, MRBC chairman, pointed out the differences and his concerns in a report to the 19th quarterly meeting of the commission Feb. 3 in Denver.

The differences are between estimates projected by the 1971 Missouri River Basin Comprehensive Framework Study conducted by MRBC's predecessor, the Missouri Basin Interagency Committee, and estimates MRBC received recently from its member states in the basin.

The state estimates were provided for the 1975 National Water Assessment, for which MRBC is regional sponsor.

Neuberger said the long term average flow of the Missouri River at Sioux City without depletions would be 28.3 million acre-feet.

The 1971 framework study predicted that by 1975 depletions of 7.8 million acre-feet would have reduced the Missouri's average flow at Sioux City to 20.5 million acre-feet. State estimates showed depletions of 9.8 million acre-feet and an average flow of 18.5 million acre-feet.



"That's a difference among the experts of two million acre-feet," Neuberger said, "or enough water to raise the level of the huge Oahe Reservoir by six feet.

"Projecting to the year 2000, the 1971 framework study estimates depletions above Sioux City of 9.6 million acre-feet. State estimates are for depletions of 14.7 million acre-feet, a difference of 5.1 million acre-feet.

"The state estimate of a streamflow of 13.6 million acre-feet by the year 2000 is at or below the minimum that the Corps of Engineers says is required to maintain an eight-month navigation season," Neuberger said.

"The wide range in estimated depletions supports the need for planning programs that would narrow the difference. This would mean increased coordination between federal and state water resources planning programs."

Priorities, budget adopted at 19th meeting

The Missouri River Basin Commission adopted a schedule of priorities and a fiscal 1979 budget at its 19th quarterly meeting in Denver Feb. 2-3.

The priorities are for water and related land resources programs and projects to be carried out in the Missouri River Basin over the next several years.

Priorities are established annually by the commission in six categories — basic data collection, planning-related research, special studies, regional or river basin planning, implementation studies, and projects and programs to be implemented.

The 1977 priorities report will be published in March.

The commission also agreed to request a budget for fiscal 1979 of \$956,000, an increase of 44 percent over 1978. The increase is a request for federal money to fund state and federal agency participation in basinwide planning.

Of the budget total, states will be asked to provide \$206,000 and the federal government \$750,000.

In related action, the 10 states of the Missouri River Basin approved a resolution in caucus calling for reinstatement of the U.S. Water Resources Council and federal planning grants to states in President Ford's recommended budget for fiscal 1978.

Another state resolution calls for an amendment to the Water Resources Planning Act of 1965 that would strengthen the joint state-federal partnership in water resources planning and development.

The next meeting of the Missouri River Basin Commission will be held May 4-5 in Omaha in conjunction with the second Missouri River Basin governors' conference.

Corps study recommends more hydro-power on the Missouri River

The Army Corps of Engineers has completed a draft report on its umbrella study of the Missouri River main stem recommending that hydro-electric generation be increased by 50 percent (1.6 million kilowatts) on the Missouri River.



General Read

Brig. Gen. William Read, chief of the Corps of Engineers' Missouri River Division, told the Missouri River Basin Commission at its 19th meeting in Denver Feb. 2-3 that recommendations of the study — some of which are recreation and wildlife oriented — will require a federal investment of \$435 million. Non-federal investment is estimated at just under \$2 million.

Read said the draft report would be sent out to state, federal, and interstate compact members of the commission and others for review before preparing the final report.

Read said he will propose at the MRBC May meeting that final study recommendations be included in the comprehensive, coordinated joint plan (CCJP) for the Missouri River Basin.

Read said the draft report contains the following recommendations:

- Construction of two additional hydro-electric units at Fort Peck, totaling 185,000 kilowatts of installed capacity and an appurtenant reregulation dam eight miles downstream.
- Construction of three additional hydro-electric units at Garrison, totaling 272,000 kilowatts of installed capacity.

- Construction of a pumped storage hydro-electric facility located in Gregory County, S.D., adjacent to and integral with the Fort Randall reservoir, having an installed capacity of 1.18 million kilowatts.
- Construction of bank stabilization works authorized by provisions of the 1974 and 1976 Water Resources Development Acts, with additional areas where active erosion has been identified in the reaches below Fort Peck, Oahe, Fort Randall, and Gavins Point Dams.
- Construction by the Corps of Engineers and operation and maintenance by the State of South Dakota of fish-rearing ponds adjacent to Lake Oahe and Francis Case. These ponds, together with a companion program to improve lakeshore habitat, are designed to restore trophy fishing for northern pike at the two lakes.
- Designation of the 59.5-mile reach from Gavins Point Dam to Ponca State Park, Neb., as a recreational river under provisions of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. This proposal entails initial development — including protection of certain islands and other outstanding aesthetic values — at federal expense, with operation and maintenance shared between federal and non-federal participants.
- In view of identified adverse environmental impacts of the recommended hydro-power facilities at Fort Peck and Garrison, mitigation measures are estimated to cost \$1.2 million.

MRBC publications available

Two new MRBC publications are available to the public at no charge while copies last — the 1976 Annual Report and the 1976 combined federal and state program review.

The 1976 Annual Report explains in general terms the programs of the commission.

It also contains an audit of FY 1976 and the transitional period July through September necessitated by the change in the start of the fiscal year from July 1 to October 1.

The title of the program review is "Missouri River Basin State and Federal Water and Related Land Resources Programs — Fiscal Years 1977-1981."

It presents a description of the various state and federal water and related land resources planning, development and management activities both present and planned within the Missouri River Basin.

More than 1,000 planning, research and construction programs are identified by MRBC state and federal member agencies as well as by several local and special purpose organizations.

The funding for these programs totals nearly \$678 million this fiscal year.

MRBC, consortium sponsor ground water workshop

A workshop sponsored jointly by the Missouri River Basin Commission and the Missouri River Basin Water Institute Consortium was scheduled March 1-2 in Lincoln, Neb.

MRBC coordinator Carroll Hamon said the workshop was to be Phase I of a two-phase research effort to develop guidelines, standards or criteria leading to a decision-making logic for ground water management.

Objectives of the workshop were to:

- Assemble a list of scientists and governmental agencies in the Missouri River Basin interested in the problem of ground water management;
- Identify the variables and issues which must be considered for logical decision-making procedures;
- Prepare proposals for research to develop decision-making logic for ground water management.

Some 40 persons from Missouri Basin states, federal agencies and other selected groups were invited to attend.

The workshop was funded through the U.S. Water Resources Council. A report of the workshop's findings will be made available to the public.

Cloud seeding to be Colorado's newest water program

Colorado water programs were the subject of a luncheon address by Felix L. Sparks, director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, at the 19th meeting of the Missouri River Basin Commission Feb. 2 in Denver.

The latest program to be undertaken by Colorado is one of cloud seeding to increase snowfall in the Colorado mountains for the remainder of this season.

Sparks said that unless snow amounts can be increased, spring and summer runoff is expected to be only 25 to 50 percent normal. That could make it "the worst year in recorded history," he said.

Other states may feel the impact of Colorado's drought, Sparks said. "In this state are found the headwaters of four major river systems — the Platte (a tributary of the Missouri) the Arkansas, the Rio Grande and the Colorado."

In all, some 18 states benefit from Colorado's melting snow.

Sparks said Colorado is bound to deliver 50 percent of its available surface water to other states. In normal years that would be about eight million acre-feet, he said.



Felix Sparks

With increasing competition for water, Sparks offered this prediction:

"Water resources management, which in the past has been characterized by the development and storage of new water supplies, will focus more in the future on reuse, on conservation of existing supplies, and on changes in use from one purpose or plan to another."

New members named

Two new members have joined the Missouri River Basin Commission. They are Benny Martin, Department of Agriculture, and Harry Sharrott, Housing and Urban Development (HUD).



Benny Martin

Harry Sharrott

Martin, who is state conservationist in Nebraska, replaced Wilson Parker, who received a Washington transfer.

Sharrott, HUD's acting regional administrator in Region VII, replaced Elmer Smith, who resigned.

The change in administrations both at the federal and state levels have left several positions open on the commission including Missouri, Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, Environmental Protection Agency and Federal Power Commission. Alternates are serving where vacancies exist.

Interior asks governors for views on proposed study of Platte waterfowl area

The Department of the Interior has asked the governors of Colorado, Nebraska and Wyoming for their views on a proposed federal-state study of the impact of future water depletions on the habitat of cranes and waterfowl along a stretch of the Platte River in central Nebraska.

The habitat is of primary importance to whooping cranes, three subspecies of sandhill cranes, and large numbers of waterfowl as a staging ground during migration.

In a letter to the governors, Under Secretary Kent Frizzell invited the views of the states on the proposed study and on the extent to which they might participate. The Missouri River Basin Commission has been recommended to coordinate the investigations.

"In no way does the Department of the Interior suggest a blanket moratorium on state water use and develop-

ment on the Platte River," said Frizzell. He added that current water uses or approved projects will not be affected by the proposed investigations. He stressed the department's desire to examine alternative water management procedures that will result in habitat maintenance.

At a meeting in Denver Dec. 3 chaired by Assistant Secretary Jack Horton, the potential problems were defined by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Geological Survey and the Bureau of Reclamation. At this meeting studies to identify the water management options that could result in habitat preservation were proposed.

Horton said that the Interior Department would expect to fund the study through the Missouri River Basin Commission.

Basin briefs . . .

In the 70 years since crop statistics were first compiled, western farms irrigated by reclamation projects have produced food, fiber and forage worth nearly \$50 billion. The Bureau of Reclamation says that's more than 8 times the total \$6 billion invested in the federal reclamation program.

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A new service, the National Water Data Exchange (NAWDEX), has been established to provide assistance in identifying, locating and acquiring available water data. For additional information, contact: NAWDEX, U.S. Geological Survey, 421 National Center, Reston, VA 22092.

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There is enough water in storage in the Missouri River main stem system to serve all project functions in 1977 even if dry conditions continue. Brig. Gen. William Read, chief of the Corps of Engineers' Missouri River Division, said the system contained 59 million acre-feet at the beginning of the year.

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"Land Use: Tough choices in Today's World" will be the theme of a national Soil Conservation Society of America conference in Omaha March 21-24.

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"We ALL Need Clean Water" will be the theme of the 40th annual National Wildlife Week March 20-26. National Wildlife Week was first proclaimed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1938. It has been sponsored since by the National Wildlife Federation.

U.S. Water Resources Council funds restored

U.S. Sen. Carl Curtis, R-Neb., said Feb. 15 that the Office of Management and Budget has abandoned efforts to scrap the U.S. Water Resources Council and has restored the council's \$13.8 million fiscal 1978 budget.

The Associated Press quoted Curtis as saying the council's fiscal 1978 budget was "slightly less" than it received for 1977.

Curtis solicited the support of senators from other Midwestern and Western states on behalf of the council and appealed without success to the outgoing Ford administration to stop legislation that would eliminate the agency.

On Feb. 10, Curtis and a group of 15 senators wrote President Carter to ask that funds be restored in the fiscal 1978 budget, AP reported.

The senators told the President: "It is imperative that a separate and independent agency for water resources planning be continued."

They cited the drought of the past three years and declining water tables as causing severe concern about future water supplies for agricultural, domestic and other purposes.

MRBC programs funded in President Ford's 1978 budget

The water and related land resources planning programs of the Missouri River Basin Commission (MRBC) were recommended for funding in President Ford's budget for fiscal 1978.

That same budget had recommended that the U.S. Water Resources Council (WRC) be abolished and that funds for water resources planning grants to states be terminated.

President Carter has since reinstated funds for WRC (see story elsewhere).

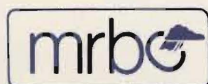
States have appealed to President Carter and the Congress to have the planning grant funds reinstated as well.

John W. Neuberger, MRBC chairman, said the President's budget shows that the Office of Management and Budget is committed to a regional or river basin concept of joint state-federal planning for water resources.

"In the case of the Missouri River Basin Commission budget, President Ford recommended what the commission asked for, including a specially funded study of the Upper Missouri River Basin in Montana."

Based on the President's budget, MRBC, which was established as the principal agency for the coordination of water and related land resources planning in the basin, will have a budget in fiscal 1978 of just more than \$1 million. That includes \$350,000 for the Upper Missouri River Basin study.

MRBC Basin Bulletin is published bimonthly by the Missouri River Basin Commission, charged with coordination, planning and communication in the area of water and related land resources in accordance with P.L. 89-80. Address changes may be sent to the Missouri River Basin Commission, Suite 403, 10050 Regency Circle, Omaha, Nebraska 68114.



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