

Doc.
Y3.M69/2:3/8/2



mrbc

basin
bulletin

JAN 12 1981

LIBRARY

Vol. 8, No. 2

November-December 1980

Commission forecasts water scuffles

Conflicts over water — state against state, neighbor against neighbor — are the forecast for the future unless residents of the Missouri River Basin change their lifestyles and unless officials in basin states make tough decisions. So Commission members heard at the 34th quarterly meeting Oct. 29-30 in Omaha.

A presentation on the increasing shortage of water in some sections of Kansas prompted several comments from members seeking a shift toward long-term, issue-oriented Commission activities.

"There are serious issues to be dealt with which will take tough decisions," Col. C. A. Selleck, Army Corps of Engineers member, said. He cited existing and implicit demands for water for irrigation, cooling turbines, coal slurry operations and other consumptive uses of large volumes of water.

Studies by the U.S. Water and Power Resources Service and Kansas officials show that some areas of Kansas already are short of water. For example, 14 of 24 man-made lakes in the High Plains area have been abandoned. The situation in western counties of the state is expected to become critical within the next 20 to 30 years. WPRS officials explained the situation with a slide presentation, appearing at the invitation of MRBC members Francine Neubauer, Kansas, and R. J. Bruning, Department of the Interior.

Mrs. Neubauer, executive director of the Kansas Water Resources Board, said state officials are doing all they can to remedy the problem.

MRBC Vice-Chairman Warren R. (Bob) Neufeld, South Dakota, pointed out that Kansas' efforts to solve its problems might not be in the best interest of South Dakota — or potentially not in the best interest of other states either.

Neufeld said the Missouri River Basin Commission is not presently doing much to prevent such conflicts. MRBC Chairman Millard W. Hall agreed with Neufeld and said the

Commission should do more long-range, basinwide planning. He suggested that MRBC could become a better forum for pinpointing and averting such conflicts.

Hall said the Commission role since its establishment in 1972 has been to coordinate water projects and activities under way in Missouri River Basin states. "The time has come for this body to concentrate on the effects of these activities," he said.

Congress to hear region's needs

Preparations are underway to transmit an important message to the new Congress convening in January. That message, the MRBC "Priorities," is a list of federal programs, projects and other activities which Missouri River Basin Commission members feel need immediate attention.

The Commission's fiscal year 1982 Congressional Priorities Report cites 45 items which Congress is urged to authorize and fund. Most of the priority programs are listed in the FY 1982 budgets of federal agencies.

All items cited are considered to be of equally high priority. All originated as recommended solutions to problems explored in the Commission's comprehensive Missouri River Basin Water Resources Management Plan. (See table, page 2.)

"With the changeover in the composition of many of the committees dealing with water legislation and appropriations, it is especially crucial that we provide a clear message to Congress about the region's needs for fiscal year 1982," Chairman Millard W. Hall said.

The chairman along with Vice-Chairman Warren R. Neufeld, South Dakota, is planning to hold a briefing of congressional water committee members, congressional delegates from the Missouri Basin and key congressional staffers in Washington early in 1981. A similar briefing was held for the first time last year.

Corps explains drought impact

Drought conditions persisted throughout the fall in the lower Missouri River Basin, according to a Corps of Engineers news release. In addition, colder weather further reduced tributary inflow, lowering river stages along the Missouri River downstream from Gavins Point Dam in November.

The combination of low flows and falling river stages created problems along the lower river for commercial navigation.

To alleviate these problems, flows from Gavins Point Dam were increased 2,500 cubic feet per second (cfs) during the final two weeks of the scheduled navigation season on the

river. The releases from Gavins Point Dam were 37,000 cfs Nov. 13-23.

The additional water significantly reduced the number of groundings, and all commercial barges successfully left the river by Nov. 29.

Gradual reduction to winter release levels was begun Nov. 23, reaching the target rate of 16,000 cfs at Gavins Point by Dec. 1.

- The 35th quarterly MRBC meeting will be Feb. 4-5 at the Holiday Inn Downtown, Denver. Agenda information will be available two weeks prior to the meeting.

Missouri River Basin Congressional Priorities Fiscal Year 1982

Basinwide

(The following programs are conducted on a regionwide or national basis and are, in most cases, applicable to all 10 Missouri River Basin states.)

Rural Clean Water Program, USDA Rural Water Supply Systems, FmHA
Title III Federal Assistance for State Water Management and Conservation, WRC

Resource Conservation and Development Program, SCS
Instream Flow Requirements Research, F&W
Water-Use Efficiency and Conservation Research, OWRT
Archaeological Inventory and Appraisal, HCRS
Color-Infrared Photographic Coverage, NASA, USGS
Ground-Water Data Collection Program, USGS
Flood Insurance Studies, FEMA
Soil Surveys, SCS
Stream Gaging-Quality, USGS
Stream Gaging-Quantity, USGS
Topographic Mapping, USGS
Water Use Data, USGS

Colorado

Cooperative River Basin Study, South Platte and Republican River Basins, SCS
Westerly Creek Flood Control Project, COE
Narrows Unit, WPRS
Colorado/Big Thompson Hydroelectric Study, WPRS
Cache la Poudre River Basin Feasibility Study, WPRS
Colorado State Water Plan, Phase III, WPRS
South Platte Basin Water Management Model, OWRT
Kansas River Basin Level B Study, MRBC
Snow Surveys, SCS
Wintertime Weather Modification Studies, WPRS

Iowa

Lower Missouri Subbasin Level B Study, MRBC

Kansas

Glen Elder Unit Study, WPRS Central Midwest Aquifer Study, USGS
Kansas River Basin Level B Study, MRBC
Lower Missouri Subbasin Level B Study, MRBC

Minnesota

None

Missouri

Saline Water Problems with Supplemental Irrigation, OWRT
Lower Missouri Subbasin Level B Study, MRBC

Montana

Snow Surveys, SCS

Missouri River Bank Stabilization, COE
Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Investigation, Missouri River Main Stem, COE
Toston Dam Hydroelectric Plant, DOE
Wintertime Weather Modification Studies, WPRS
Irrigation Water Conservation Study, WPRS

Nebraska

Missouri River Bank Stabilization, COE
Missouri River National Recreational River Management Plan Implementation, DOI

North Dakota

Southwest North Dakota Water Supply Study, FmHA
Missouri River Bank Stabilization, COE
Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Facilities Investigation, Missouri River Main Stem, COE
Apple Creek Unit, WPRS
Wintertime Weather Modification Studies, WPRS
Second Stage Ground Water Investigations, USGS
James River Basin Water Management Study, WPRS

South Dakota

Water Supply Pipeline Project Studies, FmHA
Missouri River National Recreational River Management Plan Implementation, DOI
Gregory County Pumped Storage Unit, COE
Missouri River Bank Stabilization, COE
Pumped Storage Hydroelectric Facilities Investigations — Missouri River Main Stem, COE
James River Basin Water Management Study, WPRS
Phase II Ground-Water Supply Studies, USGS

Wyoming

Snow Surveys, SCS
Buffalo Bill Dam and Reservoir Enlargement, WPRS
Westside Irrigation Project, WPRS
Wintertime Weather Modification Studies, WPRS

Lead agency abbreviations:

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) — Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), Soil Conservation Service (SCS); U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE); U.S. Department of Energy (DOE); Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); National Park Service (NPS); Office of Water Research and Technology (OWRT); Missouri River Basin Commission (MRBC); U.S. Water Resources Council (WPRC); National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA); U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) agencies — Water and Power Resources Service (WPRS), Fish and Wildlife Service (F&W), Geological Survey (USGS), Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS).

No spare change in 'basin account'

There is no such thing as a "basin account," but there is a mechanism (or several mechanisms) by which the federal government is being repaid for some of the dollars invested in Western water projects. And that repayment process will continue well past the midpoint of the next century.

That's what 60-plus Missouri River Basin Commission members and other officials learned in Omaha Oct. 28 at a seminar on the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program and Individually Authorized Projects.

The seminar was cosponsored by MRBC and the Western States Water Council to inform members of the two bodies about the accounting procedures used to record repayments of federal water investments throughout the Missouri Basin.

It was one of two seminars initiated by WSWC to discover whether the so-called "basin accounts" in the Pacific Northwest and Missouri River Basins contained funds available to meet President Carter's state cost-sharing requirements for water projects. The conclusion reached in both seminars was "probably not," according to Tony Willardson, WSWC research analyst.

On the way to that conclusion, seminar participants heard the following points from representatives of the Water and Power Resources Service, Western Area Power Administration, and the Missouri River Division of the Corps of Engineers:

- The repayment, or partial repayment (by beneficiaries) of the costs of federal water projects was established as part of the Reclamation Act of 1902. At that time irrigators benefitting from federal irrigation projects were assigned a repayment schedule over time.
Later laws extended this repayment requirement to other project purposes including hydroelectric power generation and municipal and industrial water supplies, with partial repayment required for fish and wildlife and recreation purposes. Hydroelectric power generation revenues were eventually required to repay irrigation development costs "beyond the irrigator's ability to pay," in addition to the costs of hydroelectric power development, according to Robert Madsen, WPRS regional planning officer, Billings, Mont.
- Repayment requirements for multiple-purpose water projects in the Missouri River Basin were noted in the 1944 Flood Control Act, which authorized the Pick-Sloan Plan for Development of the Missouri River Basin, Paul Rchetto, regional finance officer, WPRS, Billings, Mont., told the group. Additional cost and repayment allocation have appeared in later legislation. The accounting systems by which these project repayments are recorded are somewhat erroneously referred to as the "basin account." There is no one, single "basin account" as such, however.
- Supporting documents to the 1944 act referred to "surplus energy revenues" as a source of funds for repaying irrigation costs. The term meant "revenues in excess of



WRRRI's meet in Omaha

Several members of the Missouri River Basin water resources research institutes consortium meet in Omaha prior to the 34th quarterly Commission meeting to examine ways the consortium can relate to MRBC planning efforts. From left, John Wiersma, South Dakota State University; George Smith, University of Missouri; William A. Hunt, Montana University; Millard W. Hall, MRBC Chairman; Al Austin, Iowa State University; Merwin Dougal, Iowa State University; Alan Hersch, MRBC staff; John Crane, MRBC staff; Clynn Philips, University of Wyoming, Consortium Chairman; and William Powers, University of Nebraska — Lincoln.

costs," but is a misnomer, according to Ed Speare, area administrator for power marketing, Western Area Power Administration, Billings, Mont.

The term preferred by power marketers is "revenue available for return of investment." Power revenues will be repaying irrigation development costs through the year 2078, if the present schedule is maintained.

- Water resources issues and concerns in the future are more easily defined than are the solutions, Ron Roberts, chief of the economics branch in the Corps' Missouri River Division, Omaha, said. He offered a personal perspective that future development is likely to see a variety of changes in methods of financing large-scale water projects, including an increased role for states in providing financing and coordination.

A summary proceedings of the seminar is being published and will be available in January from the Missouri River Basin Commission.

Please note . . .

A September/October Basin Bulletin article on the Western Coal Planning Assistance Project workshops, "Coal/energy workshops cope with 'growing pains'," omitted an important contribution. The Old West Regional Commission (with offices in Billings, Mont., and Rapid City, S.D.) provided travel funds in cooperation with the U.S. Geological Survey to enable several local persons from Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska to attend.

Two-year flood plain study begins

Two Missouri River Basin Commission standing committees gave preliminary approval to a plan of study launching the two-year Missouri River Flood Plain Study in October. Both the Flood Plain Committee and the Planning Committee approved "the general concepts" outlined in the plan of study and called for a workshop for study participants to further scope issues and define work activities.

The study involves both data collection and planning phases. Study participants will collect and organize information about existing natural resources and land management practices in the flood plain and determine the extent of current and potential flood hazards for lands along the river. Then, a strategy or recommended plan will be developed to minimize future flood damages.

The study area encompasses the entire 752-mile length of the Missouri River flood plain from Ponca, Neb., to the mouth above St. Louis.

State officials from Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri will be involved. Federal agencies with program or regulatory responsibilities in the flood plain also will participate. The five states will contribute a total of \$100,000 of the total study budget. An additional \$300,000 in federal funds has been granted by the U.S. Water Resources Council.

Study Manager Donald A. Becker, senior environmental specialist with the Commission, is heading the effort. Becker drew study participants together in Omaha in November to identify issues and define work assignments for five study groups: flood hazard management, environmental concerns, public participation, development, and legal and institutional issues.

A comprehensive study of litigation and state and federal legal and institutional regulations affecting the study area has

been compiled. A summary of that study will be available for public distribution in mid-January, and the main report will be published later.

"The legal and institutional report is considered an important data base for the entire flood plain study," Becker said.

Study staff will be located in the MRBC offices in Omaha.

MRBC Basin Bulletin

November-December 1980

Vol. 8, No. 2

The Missouri River Basin Commission is a state-federal body charged with coordination, planning and communication for water and related land resources in the 10-state region drained by the Missouri River, in accordance with Public Law 89-80. Ten states, ten federal agencies, and two interstate water compacts are represented on the commission. They are Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming; the U.S. Departments of Agriculture, Army, Energy, Health and Human Services, HUD, Interior and Transportation, and the Environmental Protection and Federal Emergency Management Agencies; and Big Blue River Compact Administration and Yellowstone River Compact Commission. Canada and the basin's Indian tribes are represented by an observer.

Dr. Millard W. Hall, Chairman; Warren R. "Bob" Neufeld, South Dakota, Vice Chairman

The Basin Bulletin is published bimonthly and circulated to 4,500 subscribers. Address changes may be sent to the Missouri River Basin Commission, Suite 403, 10050 Regency Circle, Omaha, Neb. 68114. Telephone: (402) 397-5714. Elaine Larkin, editor; Lois Thomas, graphic artist; Mike Larkin, cartographer.



Missouri River Basin Commission
Suite 403, 10050 Regency Circle
Omaha, Nebraska 68114

POSTAGE AND FEES PAID
MISSOURI RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
FIRST CLASS



North Dakota State University
Documents Librarian
Fargo, ND 58105

20