

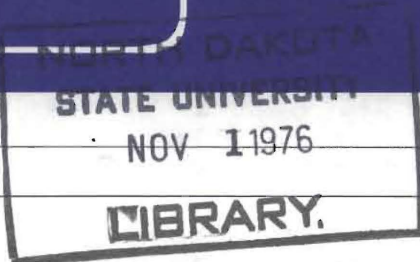
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MRBC to hold 13th quarterly meeting in Cheyenne, Wyo., Aug. 6-7

The Missouri River Basin Commission (MRBC) will hold its 13th regular quarterly meeting Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 6-7, at the Hitching Post Inn in Cheyenne, Wyo.

Wednesday's activities include a noon luncheon followed by the regular business session at 1 p.m.

Highlighting afternoon business will be a summary of the 1975 National Water Assessment's problem identification for the Missouri River Basin (see story inside).

The final session of business will begin at 8:30 a.m. Thursday. It will include a report on energy resources development in Wyoming from the viewpoint of Interior's Bureau of Land Management and a discussion of coordination of recreation and river degradation planning along the lower Missouri River.

MRBC chairman, vice-chairman testify on amendments to P.L. 89-80

John W. Neuberger and Keith S. Krause, chairman and vice-chairman, respectively, of the Missouri River Basin Commission, testified July 10 before a hearing of the Subcommittee on Energy Research and Water Resources of the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs.

The subcommittee is chaired by Sen. Frank Church of Idaho, who has introduced two amendments to the Water Resources Planning Act of 1965 (P.L. 89-80). The first (S. 506) calls for the extension of authorities under Title III, providing for state water resources planning grants. The original grant authorization will expire June 30, 1976. The second bill (S. 1299) calls for adding the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and the Administrator of Environmental Protection Agency as full members of the Water Resources Council and would delete as a member the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare.



Neuberger

Chairman Neuberger voiced support of the proposal to revise the WRC membership under Title I of the act. He also requested an amendment to clarify Title II of the act with regard to responsibilities assigned river basin commissions and their chairmen for coordination and comprehensive planning.

Neuberger recommended that the committee consider replacing the words "comprehensive coordinated joint plan" with "comprehensive regional or river basin plan." He suggested retaining the intent of the words "coordinated" and "joint" by reinserting them later. Section 201(b)(2) would then read..."prepare and keep up to date, to the extent practicable, a comprehensive regional or river basin plan for federal, state, interstate, local and nongovernmental development of water and related resources: Provided, that the plan is prepared in a comprehensive, coordinated joint planning process...."

"In simple words," Neuberger said, "what this change would clarify is that the commissions are to work toward producing regional and river basin plans and that the process by which they are prepared will be comprehensive, coordinated joint planning."



Krause

Krause of Kansas, who began serving July 1 as the elected vice-chairman of MRBC, told the subcommittee that the 10 Missouri Basin states in caucus have agreed concerning the Title III grant program that it should be continued for an indefinite period at a level of at least \$10 million to provide a steady reliable base for ongoing state comprehensive water and related land use planning.

Krause also testified in support of the Title II river basin commissions. "We have, in my opinion, made tremendous progress in the Missouri River Basin in creating a willingness among basin states to work together to solve common problems and resolve issues through joint participation. Federal agencies on the commission have shown similar desire to work with basin states in resolving basinwide problems."

Krause said river basin commissions, however, "need the continued and increased support at the Washington level. We feel a roadblock lies in the present organizational structure of the Water Resources Council and its relationship with the Office of Management and Budget."

"It is the shared view of the 10 member states of the Missouri River Basin Commission that several changes are required in the organizational structure of the Water Resources Council (under Title I) if we are to improve response to national water resources management needs."

The Krause recommendations are as follows:

- That the chairman of the Water Resources Council be independent of any member department agency and that he be appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.
- That WRC become an operating part of the President's Domestic Council to insure that the goals and policies are compatible with other major goals of the incumbent administration.
- That WRC be organized to facilitate state representation or non-federal representation at the national level just as states presently are represented through river basin commissions at the regional level.

--That the name of the U.S. Water Resources Council be changed to National Water Resources Council to reflect the true nature of the organization.

--That WRC be charged with the responsibility for coordinating all budget requests for water and related land use planning of a sectoral nature prior to submission of such requests to the Office of Management and Budget.

--That field offices such as interagency committees be established and funded in each major river basin of the nation where river basin commissions do not exist.

Platte study concludes final meetings, begins final report

The Platte River Basin Level B Study is in the final report stage after completing a final series of six public meetings in Nebraska July 8-16.

Study Director Carroll Hamon said the meetings outlined recommendations in the study's 375-page draft report to get public reaction before submitting the final draft field report to the Missouri River Basin Commission, the study sponsor, in September. At that time, the MRBC chairman, with concurrence from the MRBC vice-chairman and the MRBC member from Nebraska, will initiate the required 90-day review.

The study, which involved some 200 water resource experts and citizen advisers, was begun in 1972 at the request of the State of Nebraska. It cost nearly \$3 million, covered 53 percent of Nebraska's land and included 43 percent of its population.

The most controversial element of the study involves the Mid-State Irrigation Project in south central Nebraska. Mid-State is a Bureau of Reclamation plan authorized by Congress in 1967 to divert and store water from the Platte River to increase farmland irrigation.

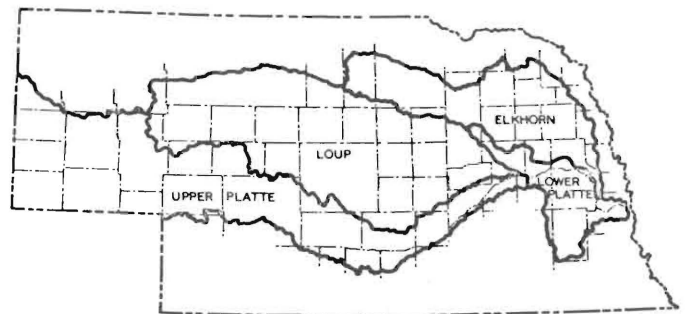
Environmentalists oppose the project, claiming it would damage the river's ecosystem, make it dry part of the year, and destroy habitat that migrating cranes and other wildlife depend on.

Hamon said the Platte study offers compromise recommendations that will permit increased irrigation and still preserve the river's fish and wildlife values.

The Platte Study is the first of its kind to display both an economic and an environmental plan for using water in the Platte Basin.

Hamon said he sees two other significant "firsts" in the study recommendations:

--Their suggestion that "recreation nodes" be developed at many points along the Platte and tributaries "to begin to open up the river to public use." The nodes would provide areas where the public could get to the river easing the shortage of water recreation sites, especially in populated eastern communities.



The above map shows the area of the Platte River Basin Level B Study and subbasins in Nebraska. The study is nearing completion.

--The identification of the interrelationships between ground and surface water. The study details how continued pumping from irrigation wells will affect not only ground water but also surface water.

Other recommendations include constructing sandpit lakes in several areas, building new recreation areas along Platte tributaries, building many small dams to prevent erosion and financing new irrigation projects.

Planners propose additional studies be done in three key topics:

--The possibility of creating a national recreation area along the Platte from its mouth to its confluence with the Loup River and along the Elkhorn River from its mouth to the Dodge-Cuming County line. This would ease the shortage of recreational water near heavily populated areas.

--Water needs in the Elkhorn subbasin, specifically in Pierce and Madison Counties and parts of Antelope, Stanton and Wayne Counties, where water shortages are anticipated.

--Monitoring and managing ground water in the central Platte area of Buffalo, Hall and Merrick Counties, where water quality is deteriorating.

National Assessment identifies water problems in MRB

Early results from an inventory of water and related land problems in the Missouri River Basin indicate that water planning efforts to date may have fallen short of the basin's needs.

The inventory conducted by the Missouri River Basin Commission (MRBC) is both a part of MRBC's effort to update its comprehensive river basin plan and a part of the commission's participation in the 1975 National Water Assessment being conducted by the U.S. Water Resources Council.

The information was gathered through questionnaires sent to the 10 states and 10 federal agencies which are members of MRBC.

Responses to date have provided information on more than 600 severe water and related land problems in the Missouri Basin, according to A.C. (Connie) Griesel, study director.

"Initial analysis of this information reveals that many of the problems cited are inter-related and some, particularly those associated with ground water, extend into other regions of the country," Griesel said. "Similarly, many of the problems affect more than one state.

"Where problems have been found to be interrelated geographically, they tentatively have been grouped into areas which may lead to future broad-scoped studies." Griesel said. "More than 50 such areas have been designated."

After the results from the problem inventory have been analyzed, broad water development and management plans will be formulated. Recommendations for project and program implementation or further study will be made in an effort to more effectively address the basin's severe water and related land problems, Griesel said.

MRBC Chairman John W. Neuberger said the inventory results point to the need for taking a coordinated and integrated approach involving federal, state, local and private interests in resolving these problems.

ERDA replaces AEC on river basin commissions

The Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) is currently a member of the Missouri River Basin Commission (MRBC) and other Title II river basin commissions which had the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) as a member prior to enactment of the Energy Reorganization Act of 1974.

That's the opinion of the Office of General Counsel of the U.S. Water Resources Council (WRC) in which ERDA Office of General Counsel concurs, according to a memo from WRC Director Warren Fairchild dated June 17.

The Energy Reorganization Act abolished AEC and created two separate entities -- ERDA and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

All licensing and related regulatory functions of AEC were transferred to NRC. "Operational functions" such as research and development were transferred to ERDA. "Included among these 'operational functions' were functions involving membership of the RBC's," the WRC legal opinion stated.

MRBC, at its 11th quarterly meeting in Kansas City in February, had asked President Ford to appoint ERDA a member by executive order. The recent WRC opinion said the original executive order that established the membership function of AEC is still in effect regarding the performance of ERDA.

ERDA is among 10 federal agencies on MRBC with interest in water and related land resources. The 10 states of the Missouri Basin also are members.

New members, alternates named to MRBC

The State of Minnesota and the Energy Research and Development Administration (ERDA) have each named new members to the Missouri River Basin Commission (MRBC).

Minnesota appointed Archie Chelseth, assistant commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources and formerly an MRBC alternate, to replace Peter L. Gove, a staff assistant to Gov. Wendell R. Anderson.

Donald R. Rye, comprehensive planning director in the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, will become Chelseth's alternate.

Walter G. Belter has been named ERDA member, replacing Clarence Karl, who is retiring from federal service. Belter is ERDA's Division of Biomedical and Environmental Research in Washington, D.C.

Randolph Newton of the same division was named ERDA alternate. Newton has been strongly involved in ERDA's energy-related national assessment program and its coordination with river basin commission activities.



Chelseth



Belter



Karl

Karl, formerly of the Cincinnati Area Office of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), was a charter member of the Missouri River Basin Commission when it was organized in June 1972. He became the Energy Research and Development Administration member after AEC was abolished in 1974.

Missouri has designated Robert L. Dunkeson, resource planner with the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Planning and Policy Development, as the new alternate

to MRBC Member James L. Wilson. Dunkeson replaces Mrs. Charlotte Watchinski.

Marvin Monk Jr., a charter alternate representing the Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW), has announced his retirement from federal service in Kansas City. A new alternate to HEW Member Max M. Mills has not been named.

Department of the Interior has appointed Hal Boeker of the Biological Service Division of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Denver, as second alternate to Interior Member Bill Rogers. Paul Harley remains as first alternate.

It was reported in the last Basin Bulletin that Cmdr. Ralph W.H. Bartels of the 2nd Coast Guard District in St. Louis is the new member representing the Department of Transportation. His photograph was not available for that edition and is included here.



Bartels



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