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March-April 1976

MRBC to meet in Omaha May 5-6

The Missouri River Basin Commission (MRBC) will hold its 16th regular quarterly meeting in Omaha Wednesday and Thursday, May 5-6, at the New Tower Hotel Courts, 78th and Dodge Streets.

Warren D. Fairchild, director of the U.S. Water Resources Council, has been invited to speak at the noon luncheon May 5.

Regular business will be conducted beginning at 1 p.m. May 5. End of business will be at noon May 6.

The public is invited to attend.

Bill introduced to amend Water Resources Planning Act

A bill to amend the Water Resources Planning Act of 1965 and the Water Resources Research Act of 1964 was introduced March 16 by Sens. Frank Church, D-Idaho, Mark Hatfield, D-Ore., and Henry Jackson, D-Wash.



Senator Church

The Water Resources Planning Act (P.L. 89-80) authorized the U.S. Water Resources Council (Title I), river basin commissions (Title II) and water planning grants to the states (Title III).

The Water Resources Research Act of 1964 contemplated the creation of water resources research institutes and provided additional grant programs for research and development work related to water and related natural resources.

Senator Church said the most significant changes contained in his bill (S. 3142) to amend the acts are as follows:

- The Water Resources Council would be established in the Executive Office of the President and its chairman appointed by the President with the advice and consent of the Senate.
- The duties of the council would be significantly expanded

and made more explicit. In addition to other duties so specified, the Water Resources Council would advise the President on national matters related to water resources research and planning and on the budgets of all federal water-related agencies; the council would also coordinate the planning activities of the council with other water resources planning bodies and would attempt to assist states by making it possible to consolidate grant applications.

- A non-federal advisory committee would be established to provide greater voice for the states and others interested in council deliberations and decisions.
- An annual report would be required of the council, with provision for inclusion of separate comments by the non-federal advisory council, to provide more current publication of date, identification of issues and evaluation of policy.
- An Office of Water Research would be established within the Water Resources Council to be directed by a deputy director appointed by the President. This amendment would transfer the state water research institute program from the Department of the Interior to a new Water Resources Council.
- A strengthened role in the coordination of planning done by various federal water-related agencies would be provided for the river basin commissions.
- Centralized funding to the river basin commissions would be established for Level B and other planning processes conducted under the auspices of the river basin commissions.
- Increased funding under the grants to states programs would be provided for on a uniform, continuing basis; specifically, the bill would provide \$200,000 per state so long as the states match every \$2 of federal funds with \$1 of state funds.
- Accountability requirements placed on the states would be strengthened through the provision that the states undertake the development of comprehensive state water plans.

Senator Church said the bill incorporates most of the major suggestions made by various states, river basin commissions, the Western States Water Council, the Interstate Conference on Water Problems and others.

President's 1977 budget shows increase for RBC's

The President's recommended budget for fiscal year 1977 contains a request of \$2.5 million for river basin commissions, an increase of more than \$1.1 million over fiscal year 1976.

Details of the President's budget for P.L. 89-80 activities were contained in testimony by Warren D. Fairchild, director of the U.S. Water Resources Council (WRC), before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Public Works Feb. 26.

P.L. 89-80 (the Water Resources Planning Act of 1965) authorizes Congress to appropriate funds to the Water Resources Council (Title I) and river basin commissions (Title II) and for water planning grants to states (Title III).

The President's total FY 77 appropriations request for P.L. 89-80 activities is \$9.5 million, a decrease of almost \$1.3 million. The decrease results primarily from the administration's decision not to request funding for the Title III grant program.

The increase in funds requested for river basin commissions reflects the new concept of CCJP (comprehensive, coordinated joint planning) budgeting by commissions.

Now separate from the commissions' administrative budgets which will continue to reflect 50/50 state and federal cost-sharing, the commissions' CCJP budgets will receive 75 percent funding from the federal government and 25 percent funding from the states.



Fairchild

CCJP budgets include funding for coordination and program review, analysis and assessment, priority reports and special studies.

"The proposals reflected in the FY 1977 budget request of the U.S. Water Resources Council are a conscious effort on the part of the members of the council to achieve a shift in council programs to emphasize WRC's role in water policy, program analysis, coordination and assessment," Fairchild said.

"In turn, the council will look more to other agencies at the state, regional and federal levels for leadership and input to water planning activities.

"This decision has merit," he concluded, "because (1) it will result in a more coordinated national water program addressed to needs and reflecting national policy, and (2) planning leadership will come from agencies with strong interdisciplinary staffs, closely identified with the planning setting."

Water assessment and appraisal given top WRC priority

The U.S. Water Resources Council (WRC) has given top priority for funding to its water assessment and appraisal program. That program formerly was called the national planning strategy.

WRC Director Warren Fairchild said the objective of the program "is to give the executive branch of the federal government, through WRC, an analytical mechanism for the appraisal of existing and proposed water and related land programs.

"From the output of such a program, the council will be in a better position to make sound recommendations to the President and the Congress," Fairchild said.

"It can serve as a guide for them in making allocations of federal resources to meet the critical water requirements of the nation.

"The program builds upon state and regional plans as they compare to a continuing national assessment," Fairchild said.



Krause

Vice-Chairman testifies for Title III funding

Missouri River Basin Commission Vice-Chairman Keith Krause of Kansas testified March 29 before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Public Works in support of funding for Title III water planning grants to the states.

The President's budget for fiscal year 1977 recommends that the Title III program not be funded.

Krause, speaking for the 10 states on the commission, asked that Congress implement the full funding authority of \$5 million for Title III grants in FY 1977.

The vice-chairman said the grants have enabled Missouri Basin states to carry out a number of activities:

"All have initiated statewide comprehensive water and related land use planning; all are engaged in the development of the national water assessment program; all are engaged in interstate programs through the Missouri River Basin Commission and in some instances with two or more river basin commissions," Krause said.

"All have increased their staff functions and capabilities; all are involved to some extent (some extensively) in resolving water related energy problems; all are involved with water related food and fiber production programs and problems; all are involved to some degree in water quality management programs.

"Some are involved in water marketing programs; most are involved in water rights administration programs and problems; all are participating to some degree in flood plain management programs.

"All are involved in project and program feasibility studies in cooperation with the federal agencies; and all are participating on a full partnership basis with their federal colleagues at the state and interstate level on a multitude of plans and programs which challenge us locally, as states and as a nation," he said.

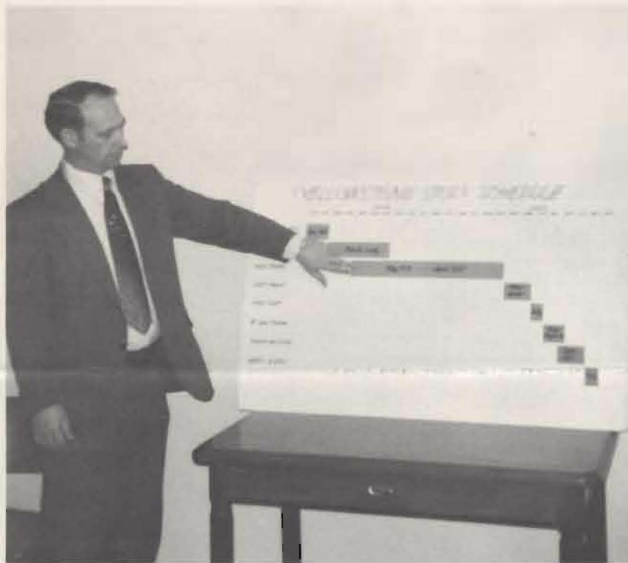
"All of this has been started as a result of the financial aid provided by Title III grants. The amount of the federal grant varies from about 10 percent in the better funded states to nearly 50 percent in others. Those funds have also contributed significantly by focusing attention to an often neglected area--that of planning for the wise use of one of the nation's basic resources.

"This summary may provide an insight to what may be foregone in the event Title III is not available in the future.

"We believe it is necessary to (1) continue federal funding assistance, and (2) to continue it at a constant and dependable level if the states are to remain strong building blocks in this effort."

MRBC staff present Yellowstone briefing

Missouri River Basin Commission staff presented a special congressional briefing on the Yellowstone River Basin and Adjacent Coal Field Area Level B Study March 11, in Washington, D.C.



Madsen discusses study schedule

Executive Secretary Richard Brown presented the background on commission establishment and membership and its commitment to a joint state-federal partnership in water and related land resources planning and coordination.

Yellowstone Study Manager Robert Madsen utilized a series of maps and charts to present background information on the critical issues, objectives, organization, process and scope of the study.

Paul Shore, assistant study manager for Wyoming, contributed to the discussion of water for energy requirements in the study area.

The briefing emphasized the openness of the planning process and the extensive opportunity for direct public involvement through all phases of the study.

A brochure covering the same subjects as the congressional briefing is being prepared for public distribution to further explain the study process and schedule.

MRBC receives funds for proposals to study

The Missouri River Basin Commission (MRBC) has received \$16,800 from the U.S. Water Resources Council to develop two proposals to study in the basin.

The proposals are for a Level B study of the Upper Missouri River Basin in Montana and for a special study of water and related land resources problems associated with Indian and federal reservations throughout the Missouri River Basin.

Of the total, \$6,400 is for the Upper Missouri Level B and \$10,400 is for the special study of reservation water.

The Level B study of the Upper Missouri in Montana proposes to recommend a mid-term plan for the development, utilization, conservation and management of resources that is compatible with the long-range goals of the nation and the region.

The special study proposes to clearly identify present and future issues and to determine the water requirements for the Indian and federal reservations.

MRBC Chairman John W. Neuberger appointed an ad hoc committee and a task force to develop the proposals. Reports are to be presented at the May quarterly meeting.

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Water Resource Problems and Issues Associated with Indian and Federal Lands are Vern Butler (chairman), South Dakota; John E. Acord, Montana; George L. Christopulos, Wyoming; Vernon Fahy, North Dakota; George Jennings, Bureau of Indian Affairs; Robert McPhail, Bureau of Reclamation; Bill Noble, Bureau of Land Management; and Craig Giffen, U.S. Forest Service.

Members of the Task Force on the Level B Study of the Upper Missouri River Basin in Montana are John E. Acord (chairman), Montana; Vern Fahy, North Dakota; Wayne Stuftt, Corps of Engineers; Phil Gibbs, Bureau of Reclamation; Bill Noble, Bureau of Land Management; and John VanDerwalker, Fish and Wildlife Service.

When developed and approved by MRBC, the proposals will be returned to the U.S. Water Resources Council to be considered for implementation.



Upper Missouri River Basin study area



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