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PUBLIC HEARING
ACCEPTING COMMENTS REGARDING
MISSOURI RIVER REVISED DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
MASTER WATER CONTROL MANUAL

PROCEEDINGS HELD AT:

Ramkota Convention Center
920 West Sioux Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501

Monday, October 29, 2001
7:00 o'clock p.m.

Reported by Carla A. Bachand, RMR, Capital Reporting
Services, P.O. Box 903, Pierre, South Dakota 57501 (605)
224-7611.

1 MONDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2001

2 (Colonel David Fastabend gave a short welcome and
3 opening statement, followed by the showing of a video.)

4 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: I will call the names of
5 those who have submitted cards, beginning with the elected
6 officials. We will first hear from Ms. Jackie Stocklin from
7 Senator Daschle's office.

8 JACKIE STOCKLIN: I do have a statement if you would
9 like the copy afterwards.

10 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: We need to check your
11 microphone there, Jackie.

12 JACKIE STOCKLIN: I am Jackie Stocklin from Senator
13 Daschle's office, Rapid City, South Dakota.

14 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: Hold up a second. You
15 having trouble in the back? Can we get some help up here on
16 the mike? Anybody know how to control the volume?

17 JACKIE STOCKLIN: We will go from here. Again, I am
18 from Senator Daschle's office and this is his statement.
19 Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to testify
20 about South Dakota's priorities for the revision of the
21 Missouri River Master Water Control Manual. I appreciate all
22 of you coming to Pierre today and I wish I could have joined
23 you in person to discuss this matter with you.

24 Twelve years ago the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
25 started the process of revising the Missouri River Master

1 Manual. This effort was long overdue. And while I am pleased
2 that the Corps took on this issue, the review process has
3 dragged on far too long. It is my firm hope that this hearing
4 will bring us closer to its completion and to a meaningful
5 revision of the river's management plan.

6 The current Master Manual was written decades ago. It
7 is outdated. It does not provide for enough water to support
8 recreation. It is not sensitive to the needs of fish and
9 wildlife. Instead it supports a small downstream barge
10 industry at the cost of undermining the other major values of
11 the river.

12 When the dams were constructed decades ago, we lacked
13 a full understanding of their broad impact. We knew they
14 would benefit the economy, but we didn't understand that their
15 main benefit, aside from flood control, would be from
16 recreation.

17 Today, hunting, camping, fishing, boating and other
18 forms of recreation are an \$85 million industry. They support
19 thousands of jobs and provide thousands more families with a
20 way to enjoy themselves together.

21 Despite economic impact of the recreation industry,
22 the Master Manual calls for the Corps to release water from
23 the dams during the peak summer months of recreation to
24 support the downstream barge industry. Releasing this water
25 leaves South Dakota's boat docks high and dry and takes a

1 heavy toll on South Dakota's economy.

2 It would be one thing if water were sent downstream to
3 meet a compelling national need. However, the truth is that
4 water is released from the dams because the economists who
5 helped to write the Master Manual in the 1960s got it wrong.
6 They vastly overestimated the number of barges that would use
7 the river.

8 Today's barge industry is valued at only \$7 million.
9 It is so small that it carries only a tiny fraction of our
10 regional agricultural products and has absolutely no
11 competitive effect on rail rates. Yet this small industry
12 exercises a lot of political clout. Barge operators know that
13 they are getting the deal of a lifetime and will do whatever
14 they can to keep the Master Manual from being changed. It is
15 time for the Corps to stand up to the barge industry and
16 restore fairness to the management of the Missouri.

17 The second major issue that needs to be addressed is
18 the effect that dams have had on fish and wildlife. Because
19 of the unnatural way in which water is released from the dams,
20 three species have been brought to the brink of extinction.
21 Unless the Corps changes the way it manages the river, the
22 Corps of Engineers could be found in violation of the
23 Endangered Species Act and the courts could intervene in river
24 management. If that happens, it would be virtually impossible
25 for the public to have any direct input into the river

1 management.

2 Fortunately, these two problems can both be remedied
3 if the Corps modernizes the Master Manual and incorporates a
4 spring rise and split season in its management plan.
5 According to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the spring rise
6 will better mimic the natural flow of the river and help
7 restore fish and wildlife to health. In addition, the split
8 season plan will retain more water behind the dams in summer
9 months when it is needed for recreation, while releasing water
10 in the spring and fall to meet the needs of the barge industry
11 during its time of heaviest use.

12 I strongly support both the spring rise and split
13 season. These proposals will modernize the management of the
14 river to meet today's needs and uses. And they will benefit
15 South Dakota by improving hunting and fishing and
16 strengthening our economy.

17 Finally, the Corps needs to understand that there is a
18 consequence to inaction. Unless the Corps sticks to its
19 current schedule and modernizes river management by 2003, a
20 lawsuit could open the way for courts to manage the river.
21 For that reason, I asked for and received assurances from both
22 Secretary of the Army Tom White and Assistant Secretary of
23 Civil Works Mike Parker that the Corps will release a
24 recommendation for a river management plan by next May. It is
25 important for the Corps to keep this pledge. It already has

1 taken 12 years to revise the Master Manual. No further delay
2 is acceptable.

3 These two officials also pledged that the Corps will
4 follow the law during this process. Since the Corps must
5 adopt a spring rise in order to comply with the Endangered
6 Species Act, I see no legal way for the Corps to adopt
7 anything other than that plan.

8 The Missouri River is at a crossroads. For the first
9 time in decades, we are growing closer to adopting a new
10 management plan for the Missouri. I urge the Corps to choose
11 a management plan that will more fairly distribute the river's
12 economic benefits and restore its fish and wildlife to
13 health.

14 Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to
15 testify. I look forward to our continued work together.

16 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: Thank you, Ms. Stocklin.
17 Mr. Pirner.

18 STEVE PIRNER: Colonel, thank you. I can speak loud
19 enough, I think. My name is Steve Pirner, I am the Secretary
20 of the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural
21 Resources. I would like to read a joint statement that was
22 prepared by both the Department of Environment and Natural
23 Resources and by the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and
24 Parks. I would also like the record to show that Secretary
25 Cooper is also present this evening from the South Dakota

1 Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

2 Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on
3 the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the
4 Missouri River Master Water Control Manual. This subject is
5 not new to the Corps, the South Dakota Department of
6 Environment and Natural Resources, which I will refer to as
7 DENR, or the Department of Game, Fish and Parks. For the past
8 12 years, the Corps has been engaged in a process to change
9 the management of the Missouri River. Publication of the
10 Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement by the Corps
11 which contains six different alternatives is a huge step
12 forward, but this is no time to rest. It is time to study the
13 alternatives, make the final decisions, and move forward with
14 implementing a new Master Manual that works for the river.

15 Officials of the Corps have said the final decision or
16 alternative must meet all three of the following objectives:
17 Number one, it must serve congressionally authorized project
18 purposes. Number two, it must serve the contemporary needs of
19 the basin. And number three, it must comply with all
20 applicable laws to include the federal Threatened and
21 Endangered Species Act.

22 Game, Fish and Parks and DENR agree with using these
23 three criteria to make the final alternative and decision. We
24 believe that approach will result in the best plan for the
25 entire Missouri River basin.

1 The Corps included the current Water Control Plan as
2 one of the six alternatives in the Revised Draft Environmental
3 Impact Statement. Using the three criteria just listed, it is
4 clear the current 40-year-old Master Manual cannot be the
5 final alternative. When the mainstem dams were built, the
6 vision for the river was one of flood control, hydropower,
7 navigation, and irrigation. While flood control and
8 hydropower followed the vision and have been very successful,
9 irrigation and navigation have not. Less than 10 percent of
10 the land authorized for irrigation under the Flood Control Act
11 of 1944 is irrigated today. Only slightly more than 10
12 percent of the annual commercial navigation anticipated under
13 the Flood Control Act of 1944 takes place today, and the Corps
14 estimates it to be a \$7 million industry.

15 Clearly the contemporary uses of the Missouri River no
16 longer reflect these 40-year-old visions. Instead of using
17 the river for large scale irrigation and navigation projects,
18 people have found other uses for the river. Fishing, boating,
19 and recreation uses have increased tenfold, and recreation is
20 now an annual \$87 million industry in the basin. However, the
21 current Master Manual drains the upper basin reservoirs during
22 even moderately dry periods to maintain navigation flows
23 downstream and leaves recreational users high and dry.
24 Therefore, the contemporary uses of the river demand that
25 changes are made to the Master Manual and keeping the current

1 Master Manual is simply not an acceptable option.

2 The remaining five alternatives in the Revised Draft
3 Environmental Impact Statement share several proposed changes,
4 all of which we strongly support, and I would like to talk
5 about each of those proposed changes and make a few brief
6 remarks. Number one, adaptive management. In a river whose
7 watershed encompasses one-sixth of the continental United
8 States, there will never be normal conditions. There will be
9 constant changes in the weather patterns, runoff, and river
10 uses. Consequently, giving the Corps the authority and the
11 flexibility to address constantly changing conditions must be
12 a component of the final decision. Having the Corps locked
13 into the current inflexible Master Manual makes no sense,
14 breeds hostility between the users of the river, and has
15 driven certain species onto the federal Threatened and
16 Endangered and Species list. Number.

17 Two, drought conservation measures. The current
18 Master Manual does very little for water conservation.
19 America has entered a new era. We are no longer a country
20 with unlimited natural resources. Upper basin states know
21 conservation measures are important because we have seen the
22 consequences of river management with little or no
23 conservation measures under the current Master Manual. Low
24 water levels in upper basin reservoirs eliminate recreational
25 uses, devastate local economies, and increase the risk of

1 having catastrophic drought impacts downstream. It is
2 absolutely critical that drought conservation measures be part
3 of the final decision.

4 Number three, unbalancing of the upper three
5 reservoirs. Unbalancing the reservoirs will improve habitat
6 conditions for nesting terns and plovers and trigger spawning
7 for the pallid sturgeon. At the same time, unbalancing of the
8 reservoirs provides benefits to other fisheries in these three
9 lakes. South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and
10 DENR support the concept of unbalancing and recommend it to be
11 a component of the final decision.

12 Number four, flow modification of the Fort Peck
13 reservoir. Construction of the mainstem reservoirs has had
14 very negative impacts to several of the native river species.
15 Flow modification from Fort Peck is a logical and reasonable
16 approach to help restore these species. If these species
17 can't be restored, the entire basin benefits by avoiding the
18 potential court ordered management of the river through the
19 Endangered Species Act. Game, Fish and Parks and DENR
20 strongly support the concept of flow modifications from Fort
21 Peck, when water availability makes it feasible.

22 Four of the alternatives listed in the Revised Draft
23 Environmental Impact Statement share the following attribute,
24 which Game, Fish and Parks and DENR also support:

25 Flow modifications from Gavins Point Dam, which we

1 also strongly support. As mentioned previously, construction
2 of the mainstem reservoirs has had very negative impacts on
3 several native river species. Flow modification from Fort
4 Peck when water availability makes it feasible has been
5 largely agreed upon as a way to help restore these species.
6 However, proposed flow modifications from Gavins Point have
7 been much more controversial. Game, Fish and Parks and DENR
8 support flow modification from Gavins Point Dam for the same
9 reasons as we support flow modifications from Fort Peck.

10 Of the four alternatives in the Revised Draft
11 Environmental Impact Statement that contain flow modifications
12 from Gavins Point, the Department of Game, Fish and Parks and
13 DENR strongly support the Corps having the ability to
14 implement the GP20/21 alternative through adaptive
15 management. The science behind this alternative has gained
16 nearly universal support from the technical fish and wildlife
17 community and provides maximum recreational benefits for South
18 Dakota. The Missouri River recreation is critical to South
19 Dakota's economy and quality of life.

20 This concludes our comments and recommendations for
21 the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Using the
22 criteria established by the Corps for selecting the final
23 alternative, Game, Fish and Parks and DENR are confident our
24 recommendations will become the Corps's final decision. We
25 look forward to working with the Corps and the other basin

1 states to implement the new Master Manual and maximize the
2 beneficial uses and quality of life throughout the entire
3 river basin.

4 Those comments again were signed by John Cooper,
5 Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and
6 Parks, and myself, Steve Pirner, Secretary of the Department
7 of Environment and Natural Resources.

8 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: Thank you, Mr. Pirner. Mr.
9 Gary Drewes, mayor of Pierre.

10 GARY DREWES: Thank you, and welcome to Pierre. I
11 have no prepared remarks, Carla. I will keep my remarks short
12 this evening. I am in my twelfth year serving as mayor of
13 Pierre. We have three-year terms here. One of the first
14 meetings that I ever attended after being elected mayor was
15 talking about the Master Manual and the revisions of it. At
16 the time I thought I would probably go through at least my
17 first term as mayor and into my second term before we would
18 receive some results from that. I am now at the point where I
19 am going to be finishing my fourth term and I still don't
20 think we are going to see any results actually implemented for
21 the Master Manual. Twelve years definitely, as has been
22 stated already before, is too long. I encourage you to move
23 forward on this in the most expedient manner that you possibly
24 can.

25 Initially going back, one of the reasons that this

1 particular area in South Dakota primarily was interested in
2 the reservoir system and the dams was the prospects of
3 irrigation. Those prospects never developed. Even after
4 millions of dollars were spent, after lots of dirt was moved,
5 equipment was installed, that project was scrapped and
6 Congress even deauthorized the project itself. So the
7 benefits of irrigation never came about. But one of the side
8 benefits, as also has been mentioned, that probably wasn't
9 recognized was how beneficial it would be for recreation.
10 Recreation has proved very beneficial for this area, for a
11 large area of the area where reservoirs are included. And I
12 think it is time for a change and to recognize the value of
13 that recreation to its full extent. I think we have
14 accomplished a lot with the recreation, but at the same time I
15 can see where in the future that recreation is jeopardized
16 unless changes are made.

17 I recognize that the Corps of Engineers has many
18 concerns with the endangered species, with wildlife issues,
19 with the historic and cultural issues that come about.
20 Recreation is another one, the barge interests in it, but at
21 the same time I think that we have to weigh those in their
22 entirety at this point and move forward and make the changes
23 that are necessary. I couldn't agree more with the statement
24 that was made by Senator Daschle relative to the impact, the
25 economic impact that the barge industry has in comparison to

1 the recreation industry. Even with all the concerns that has
2 been brought to the Corps of Engineers, and I know that during
3 this 12 years you have had many new concerns that have been
4 brought to you, but I think one of the concerns that's been
5 not necessarily left out but has not been highlighted is
6 concern of people and the future generations and what this
7 reservoir system is going to mean to those future generations,
8 and it won't mean a lot unless things are done in the near
9 future.

10 I also have the privilege of serving as the chairman
11 of a new organization called the Missouri Sedimentation Action
12 Coalition, and just briefly to tell you that this is a group
13 that's designed to assist in trying to clean up some of the
14 sedimentation issues in the Missouri River, as we see
15 sedimentation as something that's going to really be, have a
16 large impact, negative impact on many of the things, the
17 amenities that we receive from the river, not to mention the
18 hydropower and the recreation. Our effort on that will be
19 positive towards the Corps of Engineers. We do want to lobby
20 and encourage Congress to give the responsibility of
21 sedimentation, whether it's from the tributaries or whether
22 it's from the shoreline, to the Corps of Engineers and at the
23 same time we want to lobby to fund those programs, such as the
24 Missouri River Restoration Act, to give you the money to take
25 care of those needs in those particular areas. So we are

1 looking forward to continuing to work with the Corps of
2 Engineers to resolve the issues not only on the Master Manual
3 but on the sedimentation issues. I thank you for the
4 opportunity of being here this evening.

5 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: Thank you, Mayor Drewes.

6 RICHARD MOORE: Nell McPhillips.

7 NELL McPHILLIPS: Good evening. My name is Nell
8 McPhillips. I am here this evening on behalf of the U.S. Fish
9 and Wildlife Service to issue a brief statement on the Revised
10 Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Missouri River
11 Master Water Control Manual. I'm also here to listen to the
12 comments in person from citizens on this important issue.

13 The Service has primary authority for oversight of our
14 nation's rarest animals under the Endangered Species Act. The
15 Missouri River is home to the endangered pallid sturgeon and
16 least tern, and the threatened piping plover. The decline of
17 these species tells us that the river is not healthy for its
18 native fish and wildlife, and that there needs to be a change
19 in its management to restore the Missouri to a more naturally
20 functioning river system. A healthy river provides wildlife
21 habitat, supports fishing, and makes boating an attractive
22 recreational activity.

23 Congress committed the federal government to
24 preventing extinctions by requiring federal agencies to use
25 their authorities to conserve endangered and threatened

1 species. During the last 12 years our agency has been working
2 with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to modernize the
3 management of the Missouri River to help stabilize and
4 hopefully begin to increase and recover populations of these
5 very rare animals. This new approach was described recently
6 in a document called the Missouri River Biological Opinion,
7 published in November 2000.

8 The biological opinion looks at the river as a system
9 and outlines the status of these rare species, the effects of
10 the current operation on them, and a reasonable and prudent
11 alternative to the current operation that will not jeopardize
12 their continued existence.

13 Our biological opinion is based on the best available
14 science and includes nearly 500 scientific references. In
15 addition, we have sought out six respected scientists, big
16 river specialists, who confirmed the need to address flow
17 management, as well as habitat restoration. Further, the
18 Missouri River Natural Resources Committee, a group comprised
19 of the state experts on Missouri River management, endorses
20 the science in the opinion.

21 If you have read the RDEIS or the summary document,
22 you understand that the GP alternatives encompass the range of
23 flows identified by the Service as necessary below Gavins
24 Point Dam to keep the listed species from being jeopardized.
25 Our agency, and the Corps, also recognized the importance of

1 some flexibility in management that would enable Missouri
2 River managers to capitalize on existing water conditions to
3 meet endangered species objectives without having to go
4 through another 12-year process.

5 Other management changes identified in the biological
6 opinion include a spring rise out of Fort Peck Dam, an
7 improved hatchery operation to assist declining pallid
8 sturgeon populations, restoration of approximately 20 percent
9 of the lost aquatic habitat in the lowest one-third of the
10 river, intrasystem unbalancing of the three largest
11 reservoirs, and acceptance of an adaptive management framework
12 that would include improved overall monitoring of the river.

13 In closing, the Service supports the identified goal
14 of the revised Master Manual, to manage the river to serve
15 contemporary needs of the Missouri River basin and nation.
16 These needs include taking steps to insure that threatened and
17 endangered species are protected while maintaining many other
18 socioeconomic benefits being provided by the operation of the
19 Missouri River dams. The Service stands behind the science
20 used in the opinion and is confident that the operational
21 changes identified in our opinion and included in the RDEIS as
22 GP alternatives will insure that these rare species continue
23 to be a part of the Missouri River's living wildlife legacy.

24 The Missouri River is a tremendous river, with a
25 significant and revered heritage. Our influence has altered

1 the river greatly. Changes are needed to modernize and
2 restore health to the river, for the benefit of rare species
3 and for people, too. Thank you.

4 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: Thank you, Ms. McPhillips.

5 RICHARD MOORE: Curt Hohn.

6 CURT HOHN: Thank you. My name is Curt Hohn from
7 Aberdeen, South Dakota, and I am the manager, general manager
8 of the WEB Pipeline project, a rural water system that
9 provides drinking water to 17 counties in South Dakota and
10 part of North Dakota. I have a written statement that I will
11 submit after the testimony. I want to thank the Corps for
12 holding this hearing and getting public comment.

13 Rural water, domestic water delivered to ranches and
14 farms is a new benefit to the Missouri River system that was
15 not envisioned in the 1940s. It was replaced, a replacement
16 for the irrigation that was not accepted here in this part of
17 the country and in turn we traded irrigation that we could not
18 agree on for drinking water systems that we needed. I have a
19 map that's attached to this testimony which shows the rural
20 water systems that have developed in South Dakota. There are
21 some 60 systems, and of that, there are some 11 that provide
22 drinking water to South Dakota ranches, farms and towns from
23 the Missouri River system. I will give you a copy to look at
24 of that map and it will be submitted as part of the record.

25 The alternative that we would support is consistent

1 with the state's position, which is 2021. We think it's an
2 alternative that offers the best overall advantage for the
3 people of South Dakota and for all the multiple uses on the
4 river, some of which have changed in the last 40 years and
5 rural water is a part of it.

6 I am here today to talk for WEB and speak for WEB, but
7 there are many rural water systems that have the same concerns
8 about how the river is managed. The EIS talks about the fact
9 that access to water is the most important concern for
10 municipal water systems. Obviously a wet intake is essential
11 for a water system. But we are also concerned about the
12 quality of the water and how it's maintained. The
13 fluctuations of the river can move as much as 23 to 38 foot in
14 a given period of time or a given season, and those
15 fluctuations affect water quality. Suspended solids,
16 particles that are floating in the water that have to be
17 treated and removed have an effect on water quality. When you
18 keep the pool of the reservoir high, as high as you can, you
19 result in a better quality of water for treatment. It
20 requires less chemical, obviously it requires less electricity
21 for pumping and moving the water and it results in a cleaner,
22 better quality of water.

23 There is a term called trihelimethanes, THM, and
24 essentially what causes them in water quality is when fine
25 microscopic particles of sediment in water are not completely

1 removed and molecules of chlorine attach to them. It's
2 becoming a problem and a concern for water systems, and the
3 federal agencies like the EPA and others who are involved in
4 water quality are urging water systems to reduce the levels of
5 THM in drinking water. That's difficult to do when your water
6 supply changes and fluctuates and sediment loads change
7 because of the management of the system. We think GP 2021
8 offers the best option for water quality in our part of the
9 river.

10 Our intake structure is south of Mobridge about seven
11 miles. We draw water out of Lake Oahe and the water quality
12 is very good when the pool is high and especially in the
13 summer it declines when that water level fluctuates. We would
14 like to see a stable summer pool, not just for drinking water
15 but also for recreation. The towns of Mobridge and Gettysburg
16 and Pollock and others are seeing a developing recreational
17 industry and it's successful when the fish are biting and it's
18 not when they aren't. The years when the river was low and we
19 saw mud flats along the Missouri River in the Mobridge area,
20 tumbleweeds as large as Christmas trees rolled into the town
21 of Mobridge. It's hard to sell recreation when you have that
22 kind of impact. So low flow has a very dramatic effect on
23 water quality and it also has an effect on the economy and
24 recreational base that we are trying to develop there.

25 We have sympathy certainly for those downstream who

1 are affected by the operations of reservoirs and the effect it
2 has on farm lands, but much of the lands that were lost,
3 almost four to 500,000 acres of land that was lost when the
4 dams were built came from those counties and those areas that
5 are in the area that we serve now along the Missouri River,
6 Lake Oahe. So we have lost the land already and the benefits
7 of irrigation were not feasible, did not work. We have other
8 alternatives like rural water which we have utilized and
9 developed, but recreation is the next opportunity we need and
10 we would like to see.

11 In terms of cost, the WEB system extended its intake
12 pipeline out into the Missouri River an additional 1,000 feet
13 in order to accommodate the fluctuating flows in elevations in
14 the early 1990s. That cost 1.3 million additional dollars to
15 extend that intake. It gave us an additional 21 feet below
16 the pool. The cost of moving water increased of course, it's
17 going to increase as we lift it additional feet, but we had to
18 guarantee our intake and our water quality source. That
19 investment has been made.

20 When you look at the costs, the additional costs that
21 result in changing or going from 2021 to some of the other
22 alternatives, it's less than one percent and I would contend
23 that the additional cost that municipalities and rural water
24 systems will see in treatment of water because of sediment and
25 turbidity would probably offset those differences, so I think

1 you should look very closely at the impact water quality has
2 on drinking water, and it's more than just the municipalities
3 that were drawing out of the river when the dams were built.
4 Now we see rural water systems covering most of South Dakota.
5 And most of them are drawing their water, the large ones are
6 drawing their water from the Missouri River.

7 My father operated a blade and was a construction
8 operator who helped build the Oahe reservoir near Pierre and
9 he took great pride in that project and everything that it
10 brought to the country and to South Dakota. But things have
11 changed, a lot of things have changed in the 40 years that
12 have passed. Dams were built by men and women and they can be
13 changed and they need to be changed if they benefit, if we see
14 a better benefit and a greater benefit for community. South
15 Dakota made decisions and traded essentially irrigation for
16 drinking water and now most of South Dakota is covered by
17 drinking water systems that rely on the Missouri River. Water
18 quality needs to be looked at closely and so does recreation
19 that was part of that promise.

20 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: I need to advise you your
21 time has expired. If you can go ahead and wrap up in one
22 sentence, that would be fine.

23 CURT HOHN: In closing, we think the Corps of
24 Engineers should look at the broader benefits of the river
25 that are provided under GP2021. Thank you.

1 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: Thank you, Mr. Hohn.

2 RICHARD MOORE: Bill Beacom.

3 BILL BEACOM: My name is Bill Beacom and I am a
4 navigator. It would seem that there is the need to make a
5 decision, whether you look up the sprint man or maybe get a
6 hat to cover up the scapegoat across my forehead because I
7 have gotten blamed for everything that has happened on the
8 Missouri River above Gavins Point for the last 14 years. Even
9 Senator Daschle plays silly games with silly little plans that
10 go against the Endangered Species Act. Below Gavins Point, we
11 are told that we must encourage erosion and encourage more
12 sediment so we can benefit the habitat of the fishes, but the
13 Missouri River Restoration Act in South Dakota says that we
14 must discourage erosion and discourage sediment because it
15 costs us money, and South Dakota money is certainly more
16 important than the downstream money.

17 I have heard nothing but blame placed on the
18 navigators for the problems that South Dakota, North Dakota
19 and Montana has caused for themselves. There is not anyone in
20 South Dakota that would try to raise pheasants on a fox farm,
21 but yet they have put every known fish predator into their
22 water system that could possibly live in this area and they
23 cannot figure out why 32 species of native fish are on the
24 decline. My gosh, let's change the habitat, certainly we
25 don't want to get rid of the foxes, they are making us money.

1 Blame it on somebody downstream. Now, you can't tell me that
2 there is this many fisheries biologists that are unaware that
3 of the hundred species that have gone down in the last -- of
4 the 40 species that have gone down in the last hundred years,
5 that 43 percent was caused by intentional introduction by U.S.
6 Fish and Wildlife and only 38 percent was caused by habitat
7 change. I mean, this is not a secret to anybody.

8 Why is it that everybody wants to avoid reality and
9 wants to get somebody else to blame for what they have caused
10 themselves? I don't understand this kind of approach.

11 Navigation is struggling. You people built an \$87 million
12 recreation industry under the current water control plan and
13 yet you say it's not feasible. If you could build something
14 from zero to 87 million, what do you want to do? Are you so
15 greedy that you don't want any of the downstream states to
16 have any part of it? Do you want to grow your recreation to
17 any bounds possible at the expense of the lower states?

18 A gentleman come up here and talks about his water.
19 The reason the water is hard to clean is because it's got
20 sediment in it. If it's got sediment in it, it's got
21 nutrients in it. Should we take all the nutrients out of the
22 water so the small fish have nothing to eat? None of this
23 makes any sense. It's nothing but a nonsensical approach to a
24 problem that's not going to get solved until we start facing
25 the reality and the reality is you got to take responsibility

1 for what you are doing and quit blaming it on everybody else.

2 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: Thank you, Mr. Beacom.

3 RICHARD MOORE: Tracie Weber.

4 TRACIE WEBER: Hi, my name is Tracie Weber and I am
5 speaking on my own behalf as a concerned individual. I live
6 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota today, but I grew up on a farm in
7 southeast South Dakota near the James River and my father
8 loved to take us to the Missouri River. We fished, we camped,
9 we went boating, and we just went there to enjoy the river
10 itself. I went on to obtain my biology degree from the
11 University of South Dakota and I chose to stay here in South
12 Dakota and work to protect our natural treasures.

13 Two hundred years ago Lewis and Clark traveled up the
14 Missouri. The river that they encountered was much different
15 than the river that we know today. We can't go back to the
16 days of Lewis and Clark, but we can take this opportunity, the
17 revision of the Master Manual, to try to restore as much as
18 possible the natural flow regime of the river, therefore,
19 restoring natural habitat and protecting threatened and
20 endangered species. We need to support the recommendations by
21 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for a spring rise and
22 summer low flow, to assist in the recovery of the endangered
23 species on the river by providing a semblance of the
24 Missouri's historical, natural rise and fall of water levels.
25 This will, as you know, increase the frequency of water levels

1 that cue fish spawning, increase sandbar habitat for birds and
2 other species, increase shallow water habitat for native
3 fishes, and increase fishing, canoeing, hunting and other
4 forms of recreation and all the benefits that they bring to
5 local economies.

6 We must also support the U.S. Fish and Wildlife
7 Service recommendations for restoration of river and
8 floodplain habitat, for unbalancing of the three main
9 reservoirs, for adaptive management of the river system, and
10 for biological monitoring of the river system.

11 The Missouri belongs to us all and it needs to be
12 managed with that in mind. For too long it has been
13 controlled by the needs of a single industry, navigation,
14 which continues to provide very little economic benefit for
15 the Missouri River basin. It's time for the Corps of
16 Engineers to listen to biologists and fish and wildlife
17 experts who know how to protect vulnerable plant, fish and
18 wildlife species and the habitat and water conditions they
19 need to survive. I urge you to adopt the GP2021 alternatives
20 and I thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening.

21 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: Thank you, Ms. Weber.

22 RICHARD MOORE: Peter Carrels.

23 PETER CARRELS: Thank you for the opportunity to
24 present testimony. My name is Peter Carrels, I live in
25 Aberdeen, South Dakota. I work for the organization American

1 Rivers, but this testimony is not presented on their behalf.

2 Dissatisfaction with the status quo and a widespread
3 and growing desire to continue the process of healing the
4 Missouri River is why the Master Manual is being reviewed.
5 This is why the Corps of Engineers has worked for more than a
6 decade to resolve issues related to updating and reforming
7 management of the river's mainstem dams.

8 I endorse the Fish and Wildlife Service's biological
9 opinion and encourage the Corps of Engineers to adopt
10 alternative GP2021.

11 No fair-minded individual, organization or unit of
12 government can deny that circumstances have changed on the
13 Missouri River during the past 50 years. These changes have
14 rendered current dam management techniques, the status quo, if
15 you will, out of date, inadequate, and inappropriate.

16 Consider recent history to understand such changes.
17 South and North Dakotans were enticed to approve five major
18 dams on the Missouri River because of the large irrigation
19 projects that were promised to these states by the federal
20 government. The economic impact associated with the loss of
21 hundreds of thousands of acres inundated behind the dams was
22 to have been replaced by these large irrigation projects. But
23 the federal government and the promoters of these irrigation
24 projects did not understand the full spectrum of critical
25 issues regarding such irrigation on the Northern Plains. They

1 did not correctly understand the long-term irrigability of the
2 soils they proposed to irrigate. Ultimately, large federal
3 irrigation projects in the region were not built.

4 But the dams were built and the large reservoirs
5 behind them filled, and some of the most biologically
6 productive land and water environments in the plains were
7 destroyed.

8 Not only did federal planners fall short in their
9 understanding of the irrigation in the Dakotas, they also
10 failed to correctly project the suitability and economics of
11 the channelized Missouri River for navigation. For several
12 key reasons, the commercial navigation industry on the
13 Missouri has never matched expectations. Commercial cargo
14 shipped on the river is scant, and independent economists have
15 proved this is an inefficient enterprise. But navigation
16 supporters keep inventing arcane gimmicks to support the
17 viability of the industry, and river and dam management
18 continues to place high priority on waterborne shipping.

19 Times have changed and so have priorities. South
20 Dakotans recognized the need to shift their expectations from
21 the river. Irrigation was replaced by domestic water
22 pipelines. When Pick-Sloan was passed, no one anticipated
23 that domestic water pipelines would one day utilize water from
24 the Missouri. Also unanticipated was the recreation industry
25 that developed along the large impoundments behind the

1 mainstem dams.

2 Reservoirs bring their own set of complicated issues,
3 but recreation and wildlife have become a new focus not only
4 in the upper basin but in the lower basin as well, where many
5 residents point to lost oxbow lakes and wildlife habitat and
6 the need to restore the river's former ecology.

7 Supporters of the status quo, particularly the state
8 of Missouri, warn of large, out of basin water transfers from
9 the reservoirs. These worries are largely baseless. Where is
10 solid evidence that plans for out of basin transfers are in
11 the works? There is criticism of efforts to protect
12 endangered species. But the upshot of protecting endangered
13 species is to protect countless other species of wildlife.
14 Floodplain farmers in the lower basin contend that a spring
15 rise will destroy their lands. That's not what the research
16 modeling indicates.

17 The current management approach was motivated and
18 compelled by the inaccuracies and exaggerated projections.
19 What if we knew 50 years ago that Missouri River navigation
20 and irrigation would never materialize? What if we had
21 anticipated the desire of so many Americans to hunt, fish,
22 camp, hike, paddle or bird watch along the Missouri River?
23 How would that have changed our approach?

24 Fifty years ago, the people of the Missouri River
25 region were fighting against the river. Today they are

1 fighting against each other. Neither approach, we have
2 learned, is as economically and environmentally productive and
3 useful as learning to coexist with rivers.

4 In 1952, Time Magazine called the Missouri River the
5 most useless river there is. That was a different era, a less
6 informed era, an era filled with mistakes about managing
7 natural resources. Today, people want more from their rivers
8 than just industrial trenches or holding ponds behind dams.
9 The Corps of Engineers can take an important step in righting
10 past mistakes on the Missouri River by adopting dam management
11 techniques that are friendlier to the river. Do we want to
12 continue to kill the Missouri River, or do we want to take
13 real steps that will help heal it? Thank you.

14 COLONEL DAVID FASTABEND: Thank you, Mr. Carrels. We
15 have gone through our list of cards. Is there anyone here
16 tonight that would like to make a statement? In closing,
17 then, I would like to remind you that the hearing
18 administrative record will be open through 28 February 2002
19 for anyone wishing to submit written facts or electronic
20 comments. Also, if you want to be on our mailing list or
21 receive a copy of the transcript, you need to fill out one of
22 the cards available at the table by the entrance. If there
23 are no further comments, this hearing session is closed.
24 Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for being here tonight and
25 providing us with some very valuable information. Thank you

1 very much.

2 (Whereupon, the proceedings were concluded at 8:30
3 p.m.)

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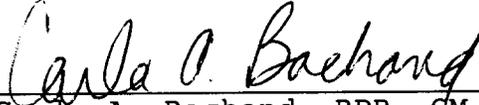
STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA)
) ss.
COUNTY OF HUGHES)

I, Carla A. Bachand, RPR, CM, Freelance Court Reporter for the State of South Dakota, residing in Pierre, South Dakota, do hereby certify:

That I was duly authorized to and did report the testimony and evidence in the above-entitled cause;

I further certify that the foregoing pages of this transcript represents a true and accurate transcription of my stenotype notes.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand on this the 5th day of November, 2001.



Carla A. Bachand, RPR, CM
Freelance Court Reporter
Notary Public, State of South Dakota
Residing in Pierre, South Dakota.

My commission expires: June 10, 2006.

THOMAS DASCHLE
SOUTH DAKOTA

COMMITTEE

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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4103

Statement of Senator Tom Daschle on the Missouri River Master Manual Revision October 29, 2001

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Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to testify about South Dakota's priorities for the revision of the Missouri River Master Water Control Manual. I appreciate all of you coming to Pierre today, and I wish I could have joined you in person to discuss this matter with you.

Twelve years ago, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers started the process of revising the Missouri River Master Manual. This effort was long overdue. And while I am pleased that the Corps took on this issue, the review process has dragged on for far too long. It is my firm hope that this hearing will bring us closer to its completion and to meaningful revision of the river's management plan.

The current master manual was written decades ago. It is outdated. It does not provide for enough water to support recreation. It is not sensitive to the needs of fish and wildlife. Instead, it supports a small downstream barge industry at the cost of undermining the other major values of the river.

When the dams were constructed decades ago, we lacked a full understanding of their broad impact. We knew they would benefit the economy, but we didn't understand that their main benefit, aside from flood control, would be from recreation.

Today, hunting, camping, fishing, boating and other forms of recreation are an \$85 million industry. They support thousands of jobs, and provide thousands more families with a way to enjoy themselves together.

Despite economic impact of the recreation industry, the master manual calls for the Corps to release water from the dams during the peak summer months of recreation to support the downstream barge industry. Releasing this water leaves South Dakota's boat docks high and dry and takes a heavy toll on South Dakota's economy.

It would be one thing if water were sent downstream to meet a compelling national need. However, the truth is that water is released from the dams because the economists who helped to write the master manual in the 1960s got it wrong. They vastly overestimated the number of barges that would use the river.

Today's barge industry is valued at only \$7 million. It is so small that it carries only a tiny fraction of our regional agricultural products and has absolutely no competitive effect on rail rates.

Yet, this small industry exercises a lot of political clout. Barge operators know that they're

getting the deal of a lifetime and will do whatever they can to keep the master manual from being changed.

It is time for the Corps to stand up to the barge industry and restore fairness to the management of the Missouri.

The second major issue that needs to be addressed is the effect the dams have had on fish and wildlife. Because of the unnatural way in which water is released from the dams, three species have been brought to the brink of extinction. Unless the Corps changes the way it manages the river, the Corps of Engineers could be found in violation of the Endangered Species Act and the courts could intervene in river management. If that happens, it will be virtually impossible for the public to have any direct input into river management.

Fortunately, these two problems can both be remedied if the Corps modernizes the master manual and incorporates a spring rise and split season in its management plan. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service, the spring rise will better mimic the natural flow of the river and help restore fish and wildlife to health. In addition, the split season plan will retain more water behind the dams in summer months, when it is needed for recreation, while releasing water in the spring and fall to meet the needs of the barge industry during its time of heaviest use.

I strongly support both the spring rise and the split season. These proposals will modernize the management of the river to meet today's needs and uses. And, they will benefit South Dakota by improving hunting and fishing, and strengthening our economy.

Finally, the Corps needs to understand that there is a consequence to inaction. Unless the Corps sticks to its current schedule and modernizes river management by 2003, a lawsuit could open the way for courts to manage the river.

For that reason, I asked for and received assurances from both Secretary of the Army Tom White and Assistant Secretary for Civil Works Mike Parker that the Corps will release a recommendation for a river management plan by next May. It is important for the Corps to keep this pledge. It already has taken 12 years to revise the master manual. No further delay is acceptable.

These two officials also pledged that the Corps will follow the law during this process. Since the Corps must adopt a spring rise in order to comply with the Endangered Species Act, I see no legal way for the Corps to adopt anything other than that plan.

The Missouri River is at a crossroads. For the first time in decades, we are growing closer to adopting a new management plan for the Missouri. I urge the Corps to choose a management plan that will more fairly distribute the river's economic benefits and restore its fish and wildlife to health.

Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to testify. I look forward to our continued work together.



October 29, 2001

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Attn: Project Manager, Master Manual Review and Update
12565 West Center Road
Omaha, NE 68144

Re: Comments from South Dakota Department of Environment & Natural Resources and Game, Fish & Parks on Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Missouri River Master Water Control Manual

Dear Project Manager:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Missouri River Master Water Control Manual. This subject is not new to the Corps, South Dakota Department of Environment & Natural Resources (DENR) or Game, Fish & Parks (GF&P). For the past twelve years, the Corps has been engaged in a process to change the management of the Missouri River. Publication of the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement by the Corps which contains six different alternatives is a huge step forward. But this is no time to rest. It is time to study the alternatives, make the final decisions, and move forward with implementing a new Master Manual that works for the river.

Officials of the Corps have said the final decision or alternative must meet all three of the following objectives:

1. it must serve congressionally authorized project purposes;
2. it must serve the contemporary needs of the basin; and
3. it must comply with all applicable laws to include the federal Threatened and Endangered Species Act.

GF&P and DENR agree with using these three criteria to make the final alternative and decision. We believe that approach will result in the best plan for the entire Missouri River basin.

The Corps included the current Water Control Plan as one of the six alternatives in the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Using the three criteria above, it is clear the current 40-year old Master Manual cannot be the final alternative. When the mainstem dams were built, the vision for the river was one of flood control, hydropower, navigation, and irrigation. While flood control and hydropower followed the vision and have been very successful, irrigation and navigation have not. Less than 10 percent of the land authorized for irrigation under the Flood

Control Act of 1944 is irrigated today. Only slightly more than 10 percent of the annual commercial navigation anticipated under the Flood Control Act of 1944 takes place today, and the Corps estimates it to be \$7 million industry.

Clearly, the contemporary uses of the Missouri River no longer reflect those 40-year old visions. Instead of using the river for large-scale irrigation and navigation projects, people have found other uses for the river. Fishing, boating, and recreation uses have increased ten-fold, and recreation is now an annual \$87 million industry in the basin. However, the current Master Manual drains the upper basin reservoirs during even moderately dry periods to maintain navigation flows downstream and leaves recreational users high and dry. Therefore, the contemporary uses of the river demand that changes are made to the Master Manual and keeping the current Master Manual is simply not an acceptable option.

The remaining five alternatives in the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement share several of the following changes from the existing Master Manual, all of which we strongly support:

- **Adaptive management** - In a river whose watershed encompasses one-sixth of the continental United States, there will never be "normal" conditions. There will be constant changes in the weather patterns, runoff, and river uses. Consequently, giving the Corps the authority and flexibility to address constantly changing conditions must be a component of the final decision. Having the Corps locked into the current inflexible Master Manual makes no sense, breeds hostility between the users of the river, and has driven certain species onto the federal threatened and endangered species list.
- **Drought conservation measures** - The current Master Manual does very little for water conservation. America has entered a new era. We are no longer a country with unlimited natural resources. Upper basin states know conservation measures are important because we have seen the consequences of river management with little or no conservation measures under the current Master Manual. Low water levels in upper basin reservoirs eliminate recreational uses, devastate local economies, and increase the risk of having catastrophic drought impacts downstream. It is absolutely critical that drought conservation measures be part of the final decision.
- **Unbalancing of the upper three reservoirs** - Unbalancing the reservoirs will improve habitat conditions for nesting terns and plovers and trigger spawning for the pallid sturgeon. At the same time, unbalancing of the reservoirs provides benefits to other fisheries in these three lakes. GF&P and DENR support the concept of unbalancing and recommend it be a component of the final decision.
- **Flow modifications from Fort Peck reservoir** - Construction of the mainstem reservoirs has had very negative impacts to several of the native river species. Flow modification from Fort Peck is a logical and reasonable approach to help restore these species. If these species can be restored, the entire basin benefits by avoiding the potential court-ordered management of the river through the Endangered Species Act. GF&P and DENR strongly support the concept of flow modifications from Fort Peck when water availability makes it feasible.

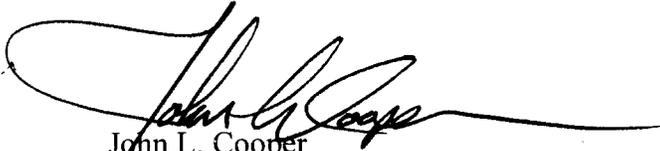
Four of the alternatives in the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement share the following attribute, which GF&P and DENR also support:

- **Flow modifications from Gavins Point dam** - As mentioned above, construction of the mainstem reservoirs has had very negative impacts on several native river species. Flow modification from Fort Peck when water availability makes it feasible has been largely agreed upon as a way to help restore these species. However, proposed flow modifications from Gavins Point have been much more controversial. GF&P and DENR support flow modifications from Gavins Point dam for the same reasons as we support flow modifications from Fort Peck.

Of the four alternatives in the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement that contain flow modifications from Gavins Point, GF&P and DENR strongly support the Corps having the ability to implement the GP20/21 alternative through adaptive management. The science behind this alternative has gained nearly universal support from the technical fish and wildlife community and provides maximum recreational benefits for South Dakota. Missouri River recreation is critical to South Dakota's economy and quality of life.

This concludes our comments and recommendations for the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Using the criteria established by the Corps for selecting the final alternative, GF&P and DENR are confident our recommendations will become the Corps' final decision. We look forward to working with the Corps and the other basin states to implement the new Master Manual and maximize the beneficial uses and quality of life throughout the entire Missouri River basin.

Sincerely,



John L. Cooper
Secretary
Game, Fish & Parks



Steven M. Pirner
Secretary
Environment & Natural Resources

cc: Governor William J. Janklow
U.S. Senator Tom Daschle
U.S. Senator Tim Johnson
U.S. Congressman John Thune

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Public Comments
Missouri River Master Manual Hearing
Pierre, South Dakota, October 29, 2001

Good evening, my name is Nell McPhillips and I'm here this evening on behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to issue a brief statement on the Revised Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Missouri River Master Water Control Manual. I'm also here to listen to the comments in person from citizens on this important issue.

The Service has primary authority for oversight of our nation's rarest animals under the Endangered Species Act. The Missouri River is home to the endangered pallid sturgeon and least tern, and the threatened piping plover. The decline of these species tells us that the river is not healthy for its native fish and wildlife, and that there needs to be a change in its management to restore the Missouri to a more naturally functioning river system. A healthy river provides wildlife habitat, supports fishing, and makes boating an attractive recreational activity.

Congress committed the Federal Government to preventing extinctions by requiring Federal agencies to use their authorities to conserve endangered and threatened species. During the last 12 years our agency has been working with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers to modernize the management of the Missouri River to help stabilize and hopefully, begin to increase and recover populations of these vary rare animals. This

new approach was described recently in a document called the “Missouri River Biological Opinion,” published in November 2000.

The biological opinion looks at the river as a system and outlines the status of these rare species, the effects of the current operation on them, and a reasonable and prudent alternative to the current operation that will not jeopardize their continued existence.

Our biological opinion is based on the best available science and includes nearly 500 scientific references. In addition, we’ve sought out 6 respected scientists – “big river specialists” – who confirmed the need to address flow management, as well as habitat restoration. Further, the Missouri River Natural Resources Committee, a group comprised of the state experts on Missouri River management, endorses the science in the opinion.

If you have read the RDEIS or summary document, you understand that the “GP alternatives” encompass the range of flows identified by the Service as necessary below Gavin’s Point Dam to keep the listed species from being jeopardized. Our agency, and the Corps, also recognized the importance of some flexibility in management that would enable Missouri River managers to capitalize on existing water conditions to meet endangered species objectives without having to go through another 12-year process.

Other management changes identified in the biological opinion include a “spring rise” out

of Fort Peck Dam, an improved hatchery operation to assist declining pallid sturgeon populations, restoration of approximately 20% of the lost aquatic habitat in the lowest 1/3 of the river, intrasystem unbalancing of the three largest reservoirs, and acceptance of an adaptive management framework that would include improved overall monitoring of the river.

In closing, the Service supports the identified goal of the revised master manual - to manage the river to serve the contemporary needs of the Missouri River Basin and Nation. These needs include taking steps to ensure that threatened and endangered species are protected while maintaining many other socioeconomic benefits being provided by the operation of the Missouri River dams. The Service stands behind the science used in the opinion, and is confident that the operational changes identified in our opinion, and included in the RDEIS as GP alternatives will ensure that these rare species continue to be a part of the Missouri River's living wildlife legacy.

The Missouri River is a tremendous river, with a significant and revered heritage. Our influence has altered the river greatly. Changes are needed to modernize and restore health to the river – for the benefit of rare species and for people, too.

**Testimony To The
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Public Hearing
Missouri River Management Plan
Pierre, South Dakota
Oct. 29, 2001**

**Presented By
Curt Hohn, General Manager
WEB Water Development Association, Inc.
Aberdeen, SD**

I am Curt Hohn, General Manager of the WEB Water Development Association, Inc., Aberdeen, SD. I want to thank the Corps of Engineers for holding these hearings throughout the Missouri River Basin for the purpose of gathering public comment proposed modification of the operating plan for the Missouri River.

I'm here today representing the WEB Rural Water System, which operates a 6,000-mile regional pipeline system that provides drinking water to 74 towns and bulk users and 6,000 farms and rural hookups in 14 counties in north-central South Dakota and 3 counties in south-central North Dakota. The WEB system provides drinking water to approximately 30,000 people and a 500,000 head livestock industry. Water available from ground water wells in the area is often brackish and violates one or more federal drinking water standards. The Missouri River is the sole source of water for the WEB Project.

The WEB Intake Pumping Plant and Water Treatment Plant are located about 7 miles south of Moberge, SD along the east bank of Lake Oahe Reservoir in Walworth County. Enclosed with our testimony is a map of South Dakota showing the location of the WEB Project and other rural water systems in the state. There are 11 rural water pipeline systems in South Dakota, which draw water from the Missouri River. Combined, these rural water systems provide water service to farms, ranches, and rural homes in all or parts of 50 counties and serve more than 175 towns and bulk users in South Dakota. That doesn't include the Lewis & Clark Project, which was recently authorized by Congress and will draw water from the Missouri River near Vermillion.

I'm here today on behalf of the WEB Rural Water System to present the following testimony:

- Of the various alternatives being considered, **we believe that GP2021 offers the best overall advantage for South Dakota** rural water use, as well as recreational and economic development needs of the area.
- We believe that the Revised Environmental Impact Statement (REIS) understates the impact of various options on municipal and rural water supplies. The REIS claims that Option GP1528 has the "highest total water supply benefits" and that GP2021 and GP1521 have the lowest. The REIS states... "options on water supply were measured by determining the annual water supply benefits in millions of dollars per year for intake facilities along the main stem reservoir". "Access to the water rather than the quantity of water available is the main concern of the intake operators because changes in river flows and lake elevations affect the cost of operating intake facilities."

- Did the EIS take into consideration the economic impact of the options on drinking water supply systems? Municipal and domestic water use for human and animal consumption is supposed to have one of the highest priorities within federally managed water systems like the Missouri River system. It should have been given more consideration in the cost benefit analysis of the various options being considered. We are not aware of anyone from the Corps or the federal government securing information or input from WEB, which is one of the largest federally funded rural water systems in the Missouri River Basin. That's why we are here today.
- The operating methods used in previous years have resulted in reservoir level fluctuations during drought periods. Lake Oahe elevation has ranged from a normal level of around 1,604 feet elevation to as low as 1,581 feet in 1989. Large mud flats developed and large tumbleweeds grew along the shoreline and blew in to Mobridge blocking city streets.
- We agree with the following statement in the REIS...."Low lake and river levels may increase day-to-day operating costs, lead to capital costs for intake modification or development of an alternative water source or even cause a shutdown". The lowering of the river pool during the summer months results in a change in water temperature and turbidity, which required more chemical and treatment and increases the risk of THM's in the drinking water provided to our customers. This at a time when the federal government is lowering the allowable levels for THM's and directing water utilities to look at replacement of conventional chlorine treatment with micro filtration, ultra-violet, and other system changes that will be costly to build and more costly to operate. Lowering reservoir levels in summer months will only aggravate the situation.
- As part of the original construction in 1984-85, WEB spent \$2.1 million constructing the Intake Pipe and Pumping Plant. Because of low operating levels, WEB was forced to spend an additional \$1.4 million dollars in 1990-91 to lower its intake screen and extend the 36 inch intake pipe 1,000 feet further out into the Missouri River and lower the intake pipe and screen 21 feet lower, from the original installation elevation of 1,561.3 feet to elevation 1,540 feet elevation.
- Our chemical costs to treatment water and electrical costs to pump and treat 1,000 gallons of water have went up 50% over the past 10 years. Some of that cost can be attributed to inflation. However, I believe more than half is attributed to management of reservoir flows.
- The difference between GP2021 and GP1528 is only 0.4% (less than 1%) per year, or about \$2.6 million. Having been involved in water system management for 25 years, it's my opinion that municipal and rural water system providers that rely on the Missouri River as their source of water could very easily experience more expense than \$2.6 million per year if GP1528 is adopted and implemented.
- WEB is concerned that the cost impact to municipal and rural domestic water systems may not have been taken into consideration. The REIS states water supply benefits were averaged and calculated by estimating the capital and operating costs that would result from electricity generating capability when heated water discharges are constrained.

As we see it, there are obvious benefits to municipal/rural domestic water systems and South Dakota in general if the GP2021 is adopted and implemented:

- Higher releases in the spring will be comparable to natural flows and should result in clearing the channel of silt and debris downstream.
- Lower releases in the summer months will provide a stable and predictable water levels and should improve water quality and reduce turbidity, all of which will benefit municipal and rural water systems and the populations and industries they serve.
- Lower releases in the summer months will provide water for better fishing and recreation along the Missouri River in communities like Pollock, Mobridge, Gettysburg, and Pierre in our area as well other areas downstream, and improve the economy and the tax base of the surrounding communities all of which lost land when the Oahe Dam was constructed.
- As our rural economy declines, we need to increase the fishing and hunting recreational economy and the Missouri River is the key. When the fish are hitting on Lake Oahe or the hunting is good, vehicles with out-of-state license plates crowd the gas pumps and the parking lots of stores in Aberdeen, Webster, and other towns that share Highway 12, the main east-west highway that connects Minneapolis to the Missouri River.
- We are not unsympathetic to the concerns of downstream property owners and communities who feel increased spring flows will have a negative impact on property and farm lands. However, the landowners, farmers, ranchers, tribes and local governments in our part of the Missouri River Basin gave up rich bottom lands as part of the original 500,000 acres lost to construction of the reservoirs, which for years have provided flood control that downstream communities and property owners have enjoyed.
- When the dams were built, the landowners and local governments in the area WEB serves were promised benefits such as irrigation, municipal domestic water and recreation. Irrigation materialized along the river with moderate success because of pumping costs and the short growing season.
- Beyond drinking water, the one success we have seen is recreation and resort development, which has brought a positive impact to the local economy. However, the progress has been limited by the uncertainties of reservoir level management.
- One would think that it would be better to have a higher flow in the spring and then lower flow in the summer so that low lands can be farmed. The Corps of Engineers and the federal government have compensated homeowners whose property is being impacted near Pierre. If farm and ranch land is impacted by the change in operation then funds should also be made available to compensate farmers and landowners impacted.
- If hydropower is impacted, the Corps of Engineers should work closely with the rural electric systems and explore selling surplus power generated in the spring of the year during periods of high flow out of the area at a higher value and allow the revenues to be used to help offset the loss of power generated in the lower flow summer months.

- As to the impacts on the barge industry,.....the movement of products and commodities by barge has been replaced by the interstate highway system and rail transportation and should not control or dictate sound management of the river system.

Rivers have a way of reclaiming what, by virtue of nature, elevation and topography is their own. Local, state, and federal policy should discourage construction and development within flood plains and flood prone areas to avoid economic loss and to assure public safety.

My father helped build the Oahe Dam and Reservoir near Pierre as a construction equipment blade operator. Lake Oahe was always a source of great pride for him and the others who helped build it. But a lot has changed in the past 40 years. Dams and reservoirs built by man can be modified and operated to better meet changing needs and changing times.

The operating manual for the Missouri River should not remain static and must take into consideration the needs of the future and not be based on the assumptions, science and technology of the 1950's.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other wildlife experts confirm that restoring more natural flows to the Missouri River under option GP2021 will increase fish spawning, increase sand bar habitat for birds and other species, improve habitat for native fish, and increase fishing, boating, hunting and recreational opportunities. To many South Dakotans, changing the management of the Missouri River to prevent the loss of 3 endangered species,...the piping plover, the interior least tern, and the pallid sturgeon.....may not seem compelling standing alone. But, as anyone who knows rivers and who hunts and fishes can tell you.....the plover, the tern, and the surgeon may very be to the Missouri River what a canary is to a miner. The decline of fish and wildlife often signals the decline of a river system.

What is endangered is not just 3 species of wildlife...but a river ecosystem that provides the fish and wildlife and water quality and recreation that we have come to know and rely on. Like most rivers, the Missouri is the lifeblood of South Dakota. It's provides drinking water we need to live. It provides water for our livestock industry and business. It provides water for electricity to heat and light our homes. But, the measure of this river is also a measure of the quality of life here. Family outings on the Missouri River lower blood pressure and create memories. It has brought fishermen, hunters and tourists to South Dakota from all over the country and is just now being discovered.

The Corps of Engineers should “follow through” so that the country, the basin, and South Dakota can recognize the broad benefits the river can provide with a more progressive flexible management and flow plan included in the option or alternative defined as GP2021.

Testimony presented on the RDEIS of the Missouri River Master Manual
by Peter Carrels, Aberdeen, SD
Presented at the Pierre, SD hearing, October 29, 2001

Dissatisfaction with the status quo, and a widespread and growing desire to continue the process of healing the Missouri River is why the master manual is being reviewed. This is why the Corps of Engineers has worked for more than a decade to resolve issues related to updating and reforming management of the river's mainstem dams.

I endorse the Fish and Wildlife Service's biological opinion, and encourage the Corps of Engineers to adopt alternative GP 2021.

No fair-minded individual, organization or unit of government can deny that circumstances have changed on the Missouri River during the past fifty years. These changes have rendered current dam management techniques –the status quo, if you will- out of date, inadequate, and inappropriate.

Consider recent history to understand such changes. South and North Dakotans were enticed to approve five major dams on the Missouri River because of the large irrigation projects that were promised to these states by the federal government. The economic impact associated with the loss of hundreds of thousands of acres inundated behind the dams was to have been replaced by these large irrigation projects. But the federal government and the promoters of these irrigation projects did not understand the full spectrum of critical issues regarding such irrigation on the Northern Plains. They did not correctly understand the long-term irrigability of the soils they proposed to irrigate. Ultimately, large federal irrigation projects in the region were not built.

But the dams were built and the large reservoirs behind them filled, and some of the most biologically productive land and water environments in the Plains were destroyed.

Not only did federal planners fall short in their understanding of irrigation in the Dakotas, they also failed to correctly project the suitability and economics of the channelized Missouri River for navigation. For several key reasons the commercial navigation industry on the Missouri has never matched expectations. Commercial cargo shipped on the river is scant, and independent economists have proved this is an inefficient enterprise. But navigation supporters keep inventing arcane gimmicks to support the viability of the industry, and river and dam management continues to place high priority on waterborne shipping.

Times have changed, and so have priorities. South Dakotans recognized the need to shift their expectations from the river. Irrigation was replaced by domestic water pipelines. When Pick-Sloan was passed, no one anticipated that domestic water pipelines would one day utilize water from the Missouri. Also unanticipated was the recreation industry that developed along the large impoundments behind the mainstem dams.

Reservoirs bring their own set of complicated issues, but recreation and wildlife have become a new focus not only in the upper basin, but in the lower basin as well, where many residents point to lost oxbow lakes and wildlife habitat, and the need to restore the river's former ecology.

Supporters of the status quo, particularly the state of Missouri, warn of large, out-of-basin water transfers from the reservoirs. These worries are largely baseless. Where is solid evidence that plans for out-of basin transfers are in the works? There is criticism of efforts to protect endangered species. But the upshot of protecting endangered species is to protect countless other species of wildlife. Floodplain farmers in the lower basin contend that a spring rise will destroy their lands. That's not what the research modeling indicates.

The current management approach was motivated and compelled by inaccuracies and exaggerated projections. What if we knew fifty years ago that Missouri River navigation and irrigation would never materialize? What if we had anticipated the desire of so many Americans to hunt, fish, camp, hike, paddle or birdwatch along the Missouri River? How would that have changed our approach?

Fifty years ago, the people of the Missouri River region were fighting against the river. Today, they're fighting against each other. Neither approach, we have learned, is as economically and environmentally productive and useful as learning to co-exist with rivers.

In 1952, Time magazine called the Missouri River the most useless river there is. That was a different era, a less informed era, an era filled with mistakes about managing natural resources. Today, people want more from their rivers than just industrial trenches or holding ponds behind dams. The Corps of Engineers can take an important step in righting past mistakes on the Missouri River by adopting dam management techniques that are friendlier to the river. Do we want to continue to kill the Missouri River, or do we want to take real steps that will help heal it?