

OFFICIAL COMMENTS

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TO

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS'  
NORTHWESTERN DIVISION

REGARDING THE

PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR ESTABLISHING THE MISSOURI RIVER  
RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (MRRIC)

OCTOBER 24, 2006

## OFFICIAL COMMENTS

### PROPOSED FRAMEWORK FOR ESTABLISHING THE MISSOURI RIVER RECOVERY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (MRRIC)

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Framework for Establishing the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC Framework). My family lives in Warren County Missouri and we farm Missouri river bottom ground. A large portion of our yearly income is based on our farming operation. Our family plus the hundreds of other river bottom farmers are very concerned with the COE operation of the Missouri river.

I am voicing my concerns and respectfully request that the COE consider these issues in the final draft of the MRRIC framework.

It appears that the main focus of the MRRIC is the recovery of endangered species and their habitat. The appearance of this narrow focus will only lead to mistrust of any conclusions that may be reached. As in the past, mistrust on any level will only lead to negative results. If you are trying to protect the river and its total value to the citizens of our country then all uses, including those mandated by Congress (flood control and navigation) should always be included in your agenda and mission statement. The perception of the farming population in my area is that your goal is to recover all the adjacent land that you can to provide "the ecosystem upon which they (endangered species) depend". Until you specifically address the "needs" of the adjacent landowners the MRRIC will always be perceived as the "enemy". Reference to mitigation of impacts resulting from recovery actions is always a gun held to our heads because we will always be the loser; nowhere have I read that if the impact is so negative to the farming community will measures be taken to "save us".

We put little faith in the science you always reference your opinions on (the 2003 Amended BiOp). This so called science has not shown any positive results plus it takes such a narrow view when it totally eliminates the wildlife that is thriving in the Mississippi River system. The two rivers are tied to each other, the waters flow together, so it only makes sense that the Missouri River wildlife restoration could learn from the benefits found in the Mississippi river. Perhaps some species would not be considered threatened if populations in the Mississippi river would be included in the count of living species. Why would you not study the species population in the Mississippi river and then consider those successes in determining the best recovery efforts for the Missouri river? Again, no common sense, so why should we put trust in your limited narrow views and scientific studies?

Did you intentionally set up limited membership in MRRIC to make sure certain groups are outnumbered? Four members from agriculture when we can be so negatively impacted by the conclusions that are reached! Why should I take this group seriously when the chances of my knowing or even being able to contact my "representative" on

your committee is slim. Who chooses these representatives and how will they be able to contact the people they represent to even know if they are actually sharing with the group our concerns and needs?

The description of "consensus" is also a point of concern. Your solution to a situation where a representative cannot totally agree and he clearly indicates why he cannot support a proposal but he also cannot come up with an accepted alternative proposal is for that member of the committee to resign is ridiculous. You are then saying that those concerns he expressed are to be ignored and they are of no value. Why should I put faith in a committee that will not address the real problems they have to face?

Your time frame for meeting is also detrimental to obtaining a true representative from agriculture. I'm not sure where you will find someone in agriculture that can devote that much time at his own expense to represent us. That is pitting him against a group of businessmen who are paid to devote that much time, while his farming practices are left to suffer.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my concerns but my faith and trust that you will take them seriously is not very good considering past performances by the COE.

Submitted by,

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