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Corps cancels March pulse as James and Missouri Rivers too high

Omaha, Neb. – The scheduled pulse of water into the Missouri River for this month to benefit the endangered pallid sturgeon has been canceled. A natural pulse from the eastern South Dakota tributaries is occurring instead.

The melt of the extensive plains snowpack in eastern South Dakota has raised river levels well above the flow limits, eliminating the need for a two-day pulse.

Tributary streams in eastern South Dakota are well above flood stage and are forecast to remain high for the next several weeks. The magnitude of the March pulse was to be 5,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) minus the flow on the James River at just above its confluence with the Missouri River upstream of Sioux City.

Today's flow on the James River is nearly 25,000 cfs. It is expected to crest later this week, but remain high for the foreseeable future.

The Missouri River is above the downstream flow limits at all three locations: Omaha, Nebraska City and Kansas City.

“The downstream flow limits are safeguards to reduce or eliminate the pulse to ensure that it does not cause flooding of agricultural land along the river,” said Jody Farhat, Chief of the Water Management office here. “The stream gauge information we are receiving coupled with forecasts from the National Weather Service indicate that our most prudent action is to eliminate the pulse in March.”

A pulse is also scheduled to be conducted in May. River conditions will be evaluated after May 1 to make a determination on the feasibility and timing of the pulse.

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