Final Environmental Impact Statement
Fact Sheet

1. **Missouri River Needs New Master Manual.** The interests for which the dams and reservoirs were built have broadened over time, with increased emphasis on Tribal and endangered species issues. Originally written more than a quarter of century ago, the review and update of the Master Manual began after the impacts of drought in the late 1980s demonstrated the impacts of the original plan to draw water from the reservoirs during times of drought.

2. **Best Balance for Serving Multiple Uses**. The Corps believes the preferred alternative in the FEIS is the best balance for serving the multiple purposes of the reservoir system as authorized by Congress, meets the Corps' trust and treaty obligations to federally recognized Tribes, and complies with environmental laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act and Endangered Species Act.

3. **Complies with the USFWS Biological Opinion December 2003**. The preferred alternative complies with the USFWS Biological Opinion December 2003.

4. **Major Step Toward Restoration Using Sound Science and Engineering to Benefit Species**. The PA embraces prudent operational changes based upon existing sound scientific and engineering principles and practices, monitoring and evaluation, and identified measures of success, and adaptive management initiatives involving basin stakeholders.

5. **Opportunity to Move Ahead with Cooperative Basin-Wide Approach**. Management of the river flows and reservoir levels of the Missouri River main stem system may be the most contentious watershed management issue in the country today. The Corps has worked hard to seek and understand the multiple perspectives of all the stakeholders in this important issue. While the FEIS applies to only the regulation of the water in the Missouri River Mainstem Reservoir System, the Corps is pursuing physical changes along the river to restore the natural processes that will contribute to the recovery of listed fish and birds. The many interests in the basin now have a real opportunity to move forward in a balanced and comprehensive, basin-wide approach to restore the ecosystem and maximize the resource value of the Missouri River.

6. **A 14-Day Comment Period Begins March 5.** To comply with the U.S. District Court for Minnesota, A 14-day comment period on the FEIS, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act, begins today and ends on March 19, 2004. Comments will be accepted in writing or via e-mail. Send written comments to: Master Manual Project Manager, Northwestern

Division, 12565 West Center Road, Omaha, NE 68144. By e-mail to: mastermanual@usace.army.mil.

7. **The Drought Conservation Measures**. The drought conservations measures included in the Draft Master Manual were presented in the Missouri River Biological Assessment November 2003. They describe physical and management changes of the river that begin saving water in the three biggest reservoirs earlier in a drought than under the Current Water Control Plan and halt navigation earlier during periods of extreme drought. The Corps believes they best meet the overall uses along the main stem and the needs of the people of the basin during periods of drought.

8. **Reservoir Levels Fluctuate with Inflow**:

- Mar 15 storage less than 54.5 MAF – Transition to minimum navigation flows at 49 MAF
  [Currently – Less than 54.5 MAF – Transition to minimum navigation flows that begin at 46 MAF]
- Mar 15 storage less than 31 MAF – No service to navigation. Secretary of the Army must approve consecutive no-navigation years.
  [Currently 21 MAF – No service to navigation]
- Jul 1 storage less than 57 MAF – Transition to minimum navigation flows at 50.5 MAF
  [Currently – Less than 59 MAF – Transition to minimum navigation flows that begin at 50.5 MAF]
- Jul 1 storage less than 51.5 MAF – Stepped approach to season shortening to 6 months that begins at 36.5 MAF
  [Currently – Less than 31 MAF – Stepped approach to season shortening to 5.5 months that begins at 25 MAF]

9. **System Unbalancing is a major feature.** Unbalancing storage in the three largest reservoirs will occur on a three-year cycle. The reservoirs will rotate on a schedule where one will fall approximately three feet to allow for revegatation along its rim, another will be refilling and the third rising approximately three feet above normal levels. The operation will be suspended during times of drought and high runoff.

10. **No "spring rise" until 2006.** The Corps will engage with all stakeholders of the basin over the next two years to shape and address the Amended 2003 Biological Opinion requirements for a spring rise. The BiOp provides the basin the flexibility to shape the solution rather than just implementing the default spring rise as written in the biop.

11. **Missouri River Recovery Implementation Program.** The Corps is also proposing a comprehensive set of measures directed toward recovery of protected species. These include land acquisition from willing sellers for

pallid sturgeon, least terns and piping plovers, opening old chutes and oxbows, notching and removing selected control dikes, moving or breaching selected levees, hatchery support and test flows from Fort Peck, Fort Randall and Gavins Point dams. Stakeholder participation in a newly formed Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee will be critical to such efforts to recovery these protected species.

12. **New Master Manual will be published following completion of comment period**. The Draft Missouri River Master Water Control Manual is available based on the preferred alternative in the FEIS. It describes how water management decisions by the Army Corps of Engineers will made in the years ahead. It complies with the requirements of the National Environmental Protection Act and Endangered Species Act. It contains:

    - New drought conservation measures
    - Provisions to adapt spring and fall releases from Gavins Point, Fort Randall and Fort Peck to benefit endangered species as recommended through the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Program.

13. **Draft 2004 Annual Operating Plan is available.** A draft of the Final 2004 AOP based on the new Master Manual is available. The final version will be available by 15 April 2004. The draft AOP features:

    - Minimum navigation flows from April 1 to May 1.
    - With the acquisition and development of 1,200 acres of shallow water habitat for the pallid sturgeon, low summer flows will not necessary this summer. Steady releases from Gavins Point Dam of 28,000 cfs in May and June and 30,000 cfs in Jul and Aug will provide minimum navigation service.
    - Shortening of the navigation season length by 31 days, from the normal ending on Dec 1 to Nov 1.
    - New drought conservation measures.
    - No increased flows from Gavins Point Dam above full service navigation flows in the spring.
    - No test flows from Fort Peck Dam because of insufficient reservoir level to conduct test.

14. **Missouri River Mitigation Efforts Must Continue**. The 2003 Amended BiOp reinforces the need to maintain and expand efforts to build habitat to recover the listed species.

15. **Additional Information on Website**. The FEIS and related information are available on the Northwestern Division website at www.nwd.usace.army.mil and on the "Hot Topics" section of Corps' website at www.usace.army.mil. Also, www.nwd-mr.usace.army.mil/rcc/index.html.