

MRRIC Newsletter



Premier Edition of MRRIC Newsletter

This is the first in a series of planned newsletters intended to keep those interested in the recovery of the Missouri River informed of the progress being made toward the implementation of the stakeholder involvement committee, known as the **Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee**. New editions will be distributed as noteworthy progress continues to be made.

The newsletter is prepared by the MRRIC Federal Working Group, a team of representatives from the federal agencies with programs that affect the Missouri River (as noted on page 4).



Ponca Habitat Complex

What is MRRIC?

The federal agencies with programs affecting the Missouri River view the **Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee**, or MRRIC, as a basin forum for collaboration on Recovery Actions. The basin's wide range of interests will be represented on MRRIC.

A primary focus of MRRIC will be to provide recommendations to the federal, tribal, state, local, and private entities in the basin on activities affecting the threatened and endangered species and the ecosystem. MRRIC will be a

critical part of the implementation of an Adaptive Management strategy within the Missouri River basin, and in an advisory capacity, will guide research and ensure independent scientific review is part of the process.

Special points of interest:

- Recovery of the Endangered Species in the Missouri River basin will require many actions.
- Input from basin tribes and stakeholders in recovery actions is essential.
- The Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee will be formed using a phased approach.
- A MRRIC Planning Committee will be formed to make the initial decisions and craft a charter for the formal MRRIC.
- To comment on the contents of this newsletter, please send an e-mail to:

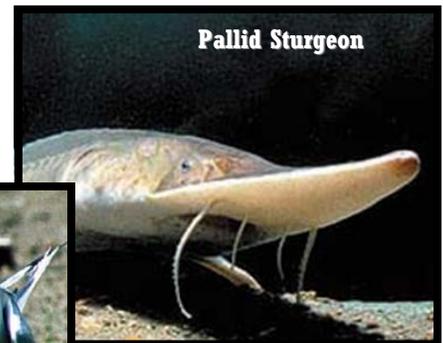
Missouri.Water.Management
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Piping Plover



Interior Least Tern



Pallid Sturgeon

Recommended by National Research Council

With the sponsorship of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Research Council (NRC) formed a committee of experts to help provide a better scientific basis for river management decisions in the Missouri River basin. The committee's recommendations were released in the 2002 NRC report, *"The Missouri River Ecosystem, Exploring the Prospects for Recovery"*.

One recommendation of the NRC report was the development of significant stakeholder participation and input. Without stakeholder input, the report warns, progress toward improved ecological conditions may be limited by litigation and gridlock.

Many of the NRC recommendations are being considered during the development of MRRIC.

These recommendations include:

- Participation by a broad spectrum of interest groups.
- Inclusion of tribal interests.
- Continuous two-way communication with the public.
- Visible participation by federal, state, and tribal governments and non-governmental organizations.
- Support from an independent, interdisciplinary scientific panel.
- Consensus decision-making by the stakeholder group.
- Bounding the process with defined goals and with timelines for achievement.

Phased Approach to MRRIC

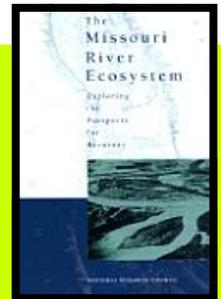
In 2005, Missouri River basin stakeholders enlisted the assistance of the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution (USIECR) and their contractor, CDR Associates, in assessing the basin's potential for implementing a successful collaboration process for Missouri River recovery. The resulting report, *Situation Assessment Report on the Feasibility and Convening of a Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee*, was completed in April 2006.

The *Situation Assessment* concluded that a Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC) is needed to assist in coordinating Recovery Actions in the basin. In response to the *Situation Assessment's* recommendation for federal leadership in the establishment of MRRIC, the Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable (MRBIR), a forum for federal agencies advocating a collaborative approach to solving issues within the Missouri River watershed, established a Federal Working Group to guide the genesis of MRRIC.

As also recommended in the *Situation Assessment*, MRRIC will be developed using a phased approach. An interim Planning Committee of interested stakeholders will be convened to recommend the initial decisions on the formation of MRRIC. The Federal Working Group is preparing a draft *Framework Document* which will outline the federal agencies' views on the vision, scope, purpose, and tasks for MRRIC and will propose the organization, membership, focus, operating procedures, and tasks of the interim Planning Committee. The *Framework Document* will be presented to the basin tribes and stakeholders for review and comment in late summer 2006. Following the incorporation of comments, and finalization of the document, applications for membership on the interim Planning Committee will be solicited and accepted. The Federal Working Group will select members by early 2007.

As an interim body, the Planning Committee will meet in early 2007 to establish the Charter for the formal MRRIC.

"Without stakeholder input, there is a high risk of litigation and further gridlock that will limit progress toward improved ecological conditions."



Situation Assessment

The *Situation Assessment Report on the Feasibility and Convening of a Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee* is available on the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution's website:

<http://missouririver.ecr.gov>

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