

**Your One-Stop Conservation Shop for the Missouri
National Recreational River (MNRR)!!!**

Winter 2010

New Corps Land Purchases on MNRR *by Galen Jons, USACE*

This last year was an interesting one for folks curious about river restoration along the 59-mile Missouri National Recreational River. For many, the most exciting news was that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) purchased two large tracts of land along the Missouri River. One tract, referred to as North Alabama Bend is in South Dakota and the other tract, referred to as Audubon Bend, is located in Nebraska.

These properties were purchased with funds from the Missouri River Recovery Program (MRRP) in an effort to restore some of the natural functions of the river. The vision of the MRRP is to create a sustainable ecosystem supporting thriving populations of native species while providing for current social and economic values. See www.moriverrecovery.org for more information about the MRRP.



While the ultimate disposition of these properties is yet to be decided, they will be managed to focus on river restoration. In the meantime, interim management plans are being developed and will be implemented by the Gavins Point Project. These management plans are designed to keep the properties from deteriorating while initiating processes for restoring the native riparian habitats.

Noxious and exotic vegetation is present on the properties. Species such as purple loosestrife and leafy spurge will need to be controlled, most likely with bio-control insects that specifically target these plants. Other invasive vegetation, such

as eastern red cedar, will be managed with the best possible management tools when they become an issue.

The Corps does allow public to access the land; however, only foot traffic is allowed. Several parking areas may be established on the properties, with the possibility of additional parking lots built further into the interiors. Like other properties that the Corps owns, these tracts will be subject to the state laws in which the property resides. For example, this means that hunters can use the property just as they would for any state properties that they might hunt, unless such use is restricted by Corps regulations. These rules have been established in the interest of more effective resource management and to increase the overall enjoyment of the visitor experience.

Permitted uses may change as management needs of the property change. For example, if learning/outreach activities become a priority in the future, hunting may be limited in the interest of safety. (More on page 3).

(For least tern and piping plover recovery update, see www.missouririverfutures.com)

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Upcoming 2010 events:

- March 17-19, MRNRC Conf.—Nebraska City, NE
- March 31, MRF Missouri River Landowner Conservation Workshop—Niobrara, NE
- April 14, MRI Symposium—Vermillion, SD
- May 8, Missouri River Cleanup —Yankton, SD
- Sept. 18-19, Missouri River Outdoor Expo—Ponca State Park, NE

More Changes for NPS by Gia Wagner & Anne Doherty-Stephan, NPS

It's been a busy fall for the National Park Service (NPS) at Missouri National Recreational River (MNRR). The park welcomed three new employees to the team in October – Gia Wagner is the new Chief of Resources Management, Anne Doherty-Stephan is the new Chief of Interpretation and Education, and Heidi Eckel is the new Administrative Assistant.



The move to the new Yankton Headquarters building at 508 East Second Street is complete, with the previous headquarters office closing in late November.

The park's first Fire Management Plan was approved in October and on November 18th it conducted its first prescribed fire on 70 acres of the Bow Creek tract. The primary purpose of this fire was to burn off invasive brome grass to begin native prairie restoration efforts. The fire was quite successful, burning 44 of the targeted 70 acres. The next steps in the restoration effort will be chemical treatment of invasive, non-native plants and seeding of the area with native prairie species. Previous restoration efforts on this tract of land as well as at Mulberry Bend Overlook have also included clearing of eastern red cedar and Russian olive trees. The burn was conducted and managed by MNRR staff as well as staff from other NPS units including Wind Cave National Monument, Pipestone National Monu-

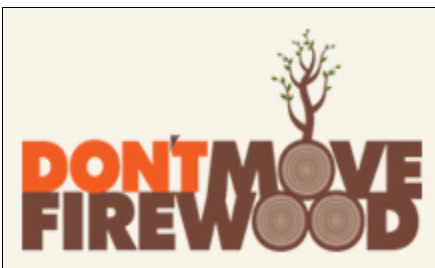
ment, Homestead National Monument of America, the Black Hills Fire Use Module, and the Fish & Wildlife Service. The prescribed burn was followed by an archeology survey, conducted by Ann Vawser of the NPS Midwest Archeological Center with assistance from MNRR staff.

Filling key vacancies on the park team, creating the new headquarters in Yankton, and completing an approved Core Operations Report are some of the major accomplishments of Superintendent Michael Madell over the past year and a half. In mid-January, Superintendent Madell will be moving on to new challenges as the Superintendent of Vicksburg National Military Park in Mississippi. During the interim between Madell's departure and the selection of a new MNRR Superintendent, park operations will continue under the purview of park staff and an Acting Superintendent yet to be selected. On the drive back to Yankton from the November Missouri River Futures meeting, discussion turned to the idea of creating a new working group, the Missouri River Education Council or MRED, to focus on teaching teachers and their students about the Missouri River Corridor. If you are interested in participating in the MRED work group, please contact Anne either by email at Anne_Doherty-Stephan@nps.gov or by phone at 605-665-0209 ext. 29.

Protect Our Trees, Don't Move Firewood! by Constance Miller, NRCS

Our forests are threatened by nonnative insects that can kill large numbers of trees. Introduced species from Asia, such as emerald ash borer (all types ash trees), Asian longhorned beetle (prefers maple, but has infested 17 other kinds of trees), and Sirex woodwasp (prefers pines)—are wood-infesting insects that can be transported long distances in firewood. Once transported into new areas, these insects can become established and kill local trees.

You can help stop the spread of these insects and protect our forests and trees. How?



- Leave firewood at home – do not transport it to campgrounds or parks.
- Use firewood from local sources.
- If you have moved firewood, burn all of it before leaving your campsite.

For more information visit the following web sites:

www.emeraldashborer.info; www.na.fs.fed.us/fhp;

www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ep; www.dontmovefirewood.org.

New Corps Land Purchases on MNRR (continued from page 1)

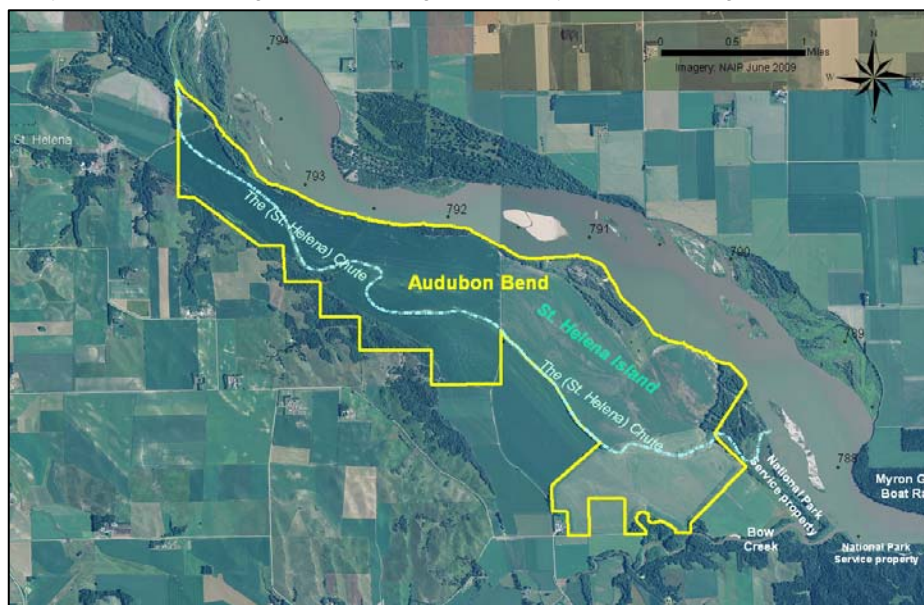
North Alabama Bend– This is a 546-acre tract of land located about two miles southwest of Vermillion, SD. Currently, about 55% of the land is wooded, 35% is open grassland that is being invaded with cedar trees, and the remaining 10% is a mixture of trees and grassland meadows. There is approximately 1.5 miles of river frontage with an additional 32 acres of accreted land, and around 60 acres of unattached sandbars that would likely fall under the jurisdiction of the State of South Dakota.



The land has been sitting idle for several years and is being invaded by numerous eastern red cedar trees. Efforts will be made to remove a large percentage of these trees as they can easily grow unchecked and reduce the variety of habitat as well as shade out grasses. Efforts will also be made to reduce the amount of smooth brome grass and restore native grasses. Controlled burns, seeding and possibly mowing or high-intensity grazing may be used to help restore the native grasses.

Audubon Bend – This is a tract of land 2372 acres in size and located about 2.5 miles north of Wynot, NE. Currently, about 77% of the land is cultivated, 6% is riparian forest, 5% is upland forest, 2% is open grassland, and the remaining 10% is a mixture of riparian vegetation. There are approximately 4.5 miles of river frontage with an additional 31 acres of sandbars associated with the property.

This property has approximately fourteen miles of boundary. Access by land is limited and efforts will be made to increase that access while limiting vehicle traffic only to established roads and trails. The cultivated portion of this property will eventually be restored to native riparian habitat, such as grasses and possibly some cottonwood forest. The land may remain cultivated until those restoration efforts actually take place as cultivation will reduce the possibility of undesirable vegetation invading the property. Once native grasses are established, they may be managed



using controlled burns, mowing or high-intensity grazing.

A historic channel of the Missouri River, dubbed “The (St. Helena) Chute”, runs through this property and forms the border of the former St. Helena Island. It is possible that portions of this chute may be deepened in the future to restore some of the river’s natural riparian habitat, such as oxbow lakes or backwaters.

NOTE: Missouri River Futures was proud to assist with these acquisitions which were from willing sellers interested in preserving truly unique river features.

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I was wondering...when the heck is spring coming?

Goal of the Missouri River Futures (MRF): To improve communication, understanding, and trust among all stakeholders; leading to effective resources conservation. Providing information on conservation options for landowners/stakeholders along the MNRR from Ft. Randall Dam to Ponca State Park. Please contact Theresa for information on the authors and articles contained in this newsletter, to get on the newsletter contact list or to submit articles. Please provide your email address and help us conserve!

Call MRF or check out
www.missouririverfutures.com for your copy of
the conservation programs available for your
area, newsletters, and other useful information!

Seeking Access for Hunting by Jarett Sievers & Sam Schelhaas, SD GF&P

Given the uncertain economic times that our state and nation are currently facing, many landowners in South Dakota are searching for additional sources of income from their own land. Additionally, sportsmen and women continue to have a vested interest in gaining access to quality habitat on private land for recreational opportunities here in South Dakota. With these thoughts in mind, the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks (GFP) continues to offer landowners an opportunity to be compensated for allowing hunting access on their land. At the present time, landowners have never had more options for enrolling their land into a state-sponsored public access program.



One opportunity that landowners may have to earn a few extra dollars while providing hunting access is through the Controlled Hunter Access Program. The Controlled Hunter Access Program (CHAP) allows landowners the flexibility to limit the number of hunters that have access to their property. Hunters must follow a registration process agreed upon by the landowner and department staff. In addition to control over hunter use, participating landowners also have control over what game species may be hunted and which dates during the season access will be allowed. Landowner payments are based solely on hunter use rather than on the number of acres enrolled.

Landowners who are not concerned about limiting hunter use may find that the Walk-In Area Access Program is the best fit. The Walk-In Area Access Program does not require hunters to follow a registration process. Landowner payments are determined directly by the number of acres enrolled rather than by the amount of hunter use that the enrolled property receives. This may be an advantage for landowners who want a consistent annual payment from one year to the next.

For those landowners in the James River Watershed Basin, the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) may be of interest. The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program is a state-sponsored Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) that requires landowners to provide hunting and fishing access during the length of the 10 or 15 year contract. Landowners participating in CREP receive cost-share assistance, annual rental payments, and financial incentives for providing access on the enrolled property.

Regardless of which access program a landowner chooses to enroll in, participation grants the cooperator with liability protection through South Dakota Codified Law and a steady, reliable source of income every year. If you would like more information about the hunting access programs offered through the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks, please contact your local conservation officer or GFP Regional Office.