



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

**Spring/Summer 2009**

## Nebraska NRCS Announces Expansion of WREP to MNRR!!

by Steve Grube, Nebraska NRCS

In 2004 Nebraska NRCS applied for funding through the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) for purpose of restoring approximately 18,000 acres of wetlands along the Missouri River Floodplain. The application was approved and NE became the first state in the country to receive funds for the new Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP). The geographic region targeted with those funds included the floodplain along the Missouri River from Ponca, NE down to Rulo, NE.

In December 2008 Steve Chick, NRCS State Conservationist in NE, extended the geographic boundary to now include the Nebraska side of the Missouri River from Ponca, upstream to where the river crosses into South Dakota.

For all the partnering agencies that have been working with Missouri River Futures, this was a welcomed extension that will address many of the goals and objectives set by this active group.

The Nebraska WREP program is a voluntary program aimed at restoring wetlands and rebuilding a corridor along the floodplain of the river. This is a slightly different approach



Field visit in Cedar County

to preserving and restoring wetlands then what is currently available in the WRP. The main difference is the land eligibility. With WREP, ALL land within the floodplain AND within 1 mile from high bank of Missouri River is eligible to enroll. There are 30 year and perpetual easement options and offers are based mainly off of geographic area rate caps (GARC). The GARC breaks down per acre payments based on land use. Each has an established rate per acre that varies by region.

In January 2009 NRCS and MRF (thanks to Theresa Smydra) kicked off an informational campaign with news releases, public meetings in Niobrara and Newcastle, private mailings to ALL landowners within a mile of the river, and personal farm visits. As a result of these efforts

the counties of Knox, Cedar, and Dixon counties submitted 55 WREP/WRP applications totaling over 7,100 acres to the NRCS state office in Lincoln.

These are great programs that offer a lot of opportunities for resource issues and provides landowners with the needed financial security they have been requesting. These are ongoing programs so the NRCS offices will take applications at any time. This includes WRP also offered in South Dakota.

If any partnering agency has been working with a landowner along the Missouri River in Nebraska, please feel free to offer the WREP as another option for conservation.

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### Special points of interest:

- June 6, Water trail kickoff—Vermillion, SD
- Watch for upcoming Clean Boat Event!
- July 21-23, MRRIC—Pierre, SD
- Sept. 19-20, Missouri River Outdoor Expo—Ponca State Park, NE

## National Park Service: New Faces, New Places by Michael Madell, NPS



The times are changing at the National Park Service (NPS). For much of the first 30 years that the Missouri National Recreational River has existed, the NPS headquarters has been in O'Neill, Nebraska. But, by the spring of 2009, the headquarters will be moved to Yankton, South Dakota. The relocation of the office will allow NPS staff to work more efficiently and to develop closer connections to the river and river communities.

To facilitate this major move, this past July the NPS assigned the river's new Superintendent, Michael Madell, directly to Yankton. A veteran river manager, Madell recently stated, "I look forward to working with landowners, community leaders, local governments, interest groups, and all who love the Missouri River to increase stewardship, awareness, and enjoyment of this wonderful resource." Madell invites anyone who has a con-

cern, question, or idea related to the National Recreational River to call him at 605-214-3389 or email Mike at michael\_madell@nps.gov. The new NPS headquarters is at 508 E 2nd Street near downtown Yankton. The facility is expected to be fully operational and open for business by late August 2009.

*Photos: Upper - New headquarters, Lower - New Supt. Madell*

## Missouri River Riparian Forest Project by John Hinners, SDDA-RCF



*Cottonwoods along bank of Missouri River*

Historical evidence from the 1800's indicates there were large and healthy riparian forests along the Missouri River, and many of the streams and rivers flowing into it. By the early 1900's harvest and other pressures had depleted these riparian areas. Today, trees that survived or regenerated since that time have become mature, and in many cases are dying. Few small trees are establishing to replace the older trees as they die out.

Healthy riparian forests provide flood control, help stabilize stream bank, improve water quality, and provide wildlife and fish habitat.

The Missouri River Conservation/Forestry Project is designed to help conserve, improve, restore and expand riparian forest in the Missouri River watershed. This project will provide riparian area landowners technical assistance and tree planting cost share at a 50/50 match. Cost share is

available in South Dakota only.

While this information might be too late for this planting season and seems too early for tree planting in 2010, there is a lot of planning needed to properly install a riparian buffer, so having plans done by fall ground preparation is critical.

For more information, contact John Hinners with the South Dakota Division of Resource Conservation and Forestry at 605-353-7187.

## 2nd Annual Workshop Attendance Up! by Theresa Smydra, MRF



*Landowners interacting with agency personnel*

Again this year, Missouri River landowners had an opportunity to interact with agency personnel who are active in the MNRR area in various aspects of its management. The 2nd Annual Missouri River Landowner Conservation Workshop was held at the same location as in 2008 at the 4-H building in Yankton, SD March 18. Nearly 50

landowners (up from 40 in 2008) came to follow-up with ongoing projects, investigate new ones, voice opinions, learn from each other, and in general just become more aware of the many activities going on with and around the river.

We were lucky to have another beautiful March day in which to have out-

door pallid sampling gear, rainfall, and GPS demonstrations. Inside were 26 booths (up from 19 in 2008) and again landowner talks from opposite sides of the river. Many thanks to all of those attending. This has proven an invaluable tool to improve communication amongst the many aspects of our river.

## MRRIC – Hope for Future of Missouri River by Steve Chick, NE NRCS

The week of May 11, I drove to Bismarck, ND to represent NRCS on the MRRIC Committee. MRRIC was created by law in 2007 as a stakeholder group that (among many purposes) advises and consults with the Corps of Engineers on development of the Missouri River Ecosystem Recovery Plan (MRERP). The core group of MRRIC is comprised of 28 stakeholders who represent irrigation, recreation, navigation, power, conservation, agriculture, flood control, Tribes and other interests within the Basin. In addition there are non voting representatives from Federal and state agencies that interact with the committee. I have attended two of the five MRRIC meetings and I am very impressed by the commitment of these diverse interests to work together

to restore the critical species, while also minimizing impacts to other uses and needs associated with the river.

The following draft starting point for a purpose and needs statement crafted by MRRIC is a good summary statement for the focus of MRRIC. "To determine the actions required to the Missouri River and Tributaries to mitigate losses of aquatic and terrestrial habitat; to recover federally listed species under the Endangered Species Act; and to restore the ecosystem to prevent further declines among other native species in harmony with the Congressionally-authorized purposes of the mainstem of the Missouri River, Congressionally-authorized purposes on its tributaries, and cultural, social and economic

needs for current and future generations."

There have been many unsuccessful efforts to resolve conflicting issues associated with the river, but I doubt there has ever been a more comprehensive, consensus-based effort as MRRIC with all interests striving to find common ground for the overall good of the river. While there is a long way to go and many difficult issues to resolve, I am impressed that all parties seem to be in agreement that the status quo is not acceptable. I look forward to working with MRRIC and with the Cooperating Agencies on MRERP as we move towards strategies for real improvement of the Missouri River Basin.

*MRRIC=Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee*



*First MRRIC meeting in St. Louis*



*Tour of Garrison Hatchery in ND*

## First Area River Festival! by Mary Robb, City of Yankton

Missouri River Watershed School Festival gets great scores! Responses from the 1<sup>st</sup> MRWSF has gotten great reviews from some of the schools that attended.

Sally Stoll, MA, 7<sup>th</sup> grade Science Teacher from Vermillion had this comment – "Thank you for a wonderful day. The sessions were very well run and fun for all. The fish, of course, was the favorite because they got to touch them. Please pass on the kudos. Will you do this again next year? We'd like to come!"

Marcia Olnes, Science Instructor at Sacred Heart

School gave this response – "Wow! It was a great morning and a fantastic "First Festival"! My students and I thank you all for the efforts in providing this valuable learning experience. ...Thanks again for all you do for kids and our Beautiful Missouri River."

The students who attended the event; students from 5 area SD & NE schools were a great audience at the event. The students really seemed to enjoy themselves and learned from the event.

All of the organizations who worked on planning

this event put forth a great team effort. Hats off to everyone from these organizations who were involved in planning the MRWSF! Also, many businesses in the community aided the festival through donations. All were ready and willing to help this event to succeed. Without strong community support, it would not have been possible.

The presenters from various agencies did a wonderful job of holding outdoor classrooms for the students. Each session was unique and informative. Thanks to everyone who took the time to be a part of this fun event.



*Tim Porter stealing the show!*



*Students find stream modeling very interesting.*

# MISSOURI RIVER FUTURES

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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!



*Enjoy our river, but please be careful (sign near Blair)*

**Call MRF or check out  
[www.missouririverfutures.com](http://www.missouririverfutures.com) for your copy of  
the conservation programs available for your  
area, newsletters, and other useful information!**

## Lewis & Clark Lake Sediment Mgt. Study Update by Paul Boyd, USACE

Since our last update early this spring, we have made good progress, found a new opportunity, and completed data collection and organization.

In May our contractor at Colorado State University (CSU) worked with a team of Chinese Federal engineers who manage reservoirs throughout China. Through their collaboration, they were able to gain access to a couple of very detailed sets of pre- and post-flush survey sets on these reservoirs. CSU has worked out an agreement to use this data, and USACE has dedicated additional time and funding resources to CSU so they can extensively test the reservoir model structure with this data.

Due to this opportunity, we have

extended the timeline of the project from completion in September 2008 to June 2009. While any delay is unfortunate, we feel that taking the time and effort to refine the model with this data will result in a model with less uncertainty in the end. As CSU continues to work with this data, USACE continues to deliver the last of Gavins Point Dam data necessary for the reservoir model. We are planning for initial results from the reservoir scenarios to be available in late fall 2009.

As discussed at the first public meeting, we intend to provide a second public meeting when the team has some initial results to discuss. We expect this meeting to be held in Yankton, SD in early spring 2010. We will send an-

other update when we get closer to that date.

Finally, we have finished the processing of the survey data for the flow model from Gavins Point Dam to Sioux City, IA. As CSU works on the reservoir model this spring, USACE will be developing this 'downstream' flow model to be ready to run the flow scenarios developed with the reservoir model.

All in all, we are moving forward, albeit with a slight change in schedule that we think benefits the project as a whole.

Please feel free to contact me with any specific questions you may have. Otherwise, watch for another update as we near the fall meeting.



*Delta on upper Lewis & Clark Lake near Springfield, SD*

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