



MAINTAINING MISSOURI RIVER NAVIGATION

Ensure that Reliable Navigation Is Maintained as a Congressionally Authorized Purpose of the Missouri River

The Missouri River Master Manual is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers document that provides guidance for the release of water from the Missouri River mainstem reservoirs to provide flows for navigation, drinking water, industrial use, recreation and wildlife. Since the Flood Control Act of 1944, navigation has been officially authorized by Congress as a primary purpose of the Missouri River system, and since the 1960s, it has provided the nation with an environmentally friendly highway for waterborne traffic. An average of nine million tons of commodities travel by barge along the Missouri River each year, and Missouri River flows ensure the navigational viability of the Mississippi River. Without reliable flows from the Missouri River, the 30 million tons of commodities that move through the middle Mississippi River would be at risk as the system would lose reliability, especially during the agricultural export season. The Congressionally authorized Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC) was established to provide advice to recover three threatened or endangered species while maintaining the Congressionally authorized purposes of the Missouri River system, including navigation. Congress and federal agencies should continue to rely on MRRIC to help them achieve the multiple missions of the system.

Eliminate Funding for an Unnecessary Study

A Congressionally authorized study, the Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study (MRAPS), will provide recommendations to Congress on the authorized purposes of the river and will potentially result in navigation being removed as a primary purpose. Such a result would be crippling to those who depend on the Missouri and Mississippi rivers for reliable transportation. Furthermore, MRAPS is an unnecessary expenditure of taxpayer money, especially during these difficult economic times, because MRRIC is already working to protect all Congressionally authorized purposes while recovering threatened and endangered species. Congress should ensure adequate funding for MRRIC and remove funding for the MRAPS process.

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