Missouri River Recovery Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | Fact Sheet

What is the Missouri River Recovery Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement?

The Missouri River Recovery Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is a three-year effort that will evaluate the effectiveness of current habitat development and recommend any needed modifications to more effectively create habitat and avoid jeopardy to the species. The plan will:

- Include an adaptive management plan for all Missouri River Recovery Program actions to ensure management decisions and actions are continuously improved by the learning that takes place from regular monitoring of the river;
- Incorporate actions proposed by the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee, an advisory body that provides recommendations and guidance to the Corps; and
- Comply with the National Environmental Policy Act and other statutory mandates, regulatory requirements and authorizations.

What is the Missouri River Recovery Program?

This effort is led by the Kansas City and Omaha Districts of the Corps.

The Missouri River Recovery Program is an effort on the Missouri River to replace lost habitat and avoid a finding of jeopardy to threatened and endangered species (pallid sturgeon, least tern and piping plover) resulting from Corps projects.

- This program includes propagation and development of emergent sand bar habitat, shallow water habitat and wetland and terrestrial habitat. It also includes ongoing data collection and monitoring to determine if these actions are effective.
- These actions are requirements outlined by the:
    - Various Water Resources Development Acts that authorize the Missouri River Bank Stabilization and Navigation Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Project; and
    - 2000 Biological Opinion, amended in 2003 (collectively referred to here as the BiOp), issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. See sidebar for more details.

Why is it important to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act?

The Council on Environmental Quality describes the National Environmental Policy Act as our Nation's charter for protection of the environment. For major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, an agency is required to prepare a document describing the environmental impact of the proposed action, any adverse environmental effects, alternatives to the proposed action, a description of the relationship between the short-term uses of the human environment and long-term productivity, and any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources caused by the action.

What is a Biological Opinion?

The Corps is required by federal law to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) to determine the potential effects of proposed actions on threatened or endangered species. These consultations can result in a biological opinion (BiOp) issued by the Service.

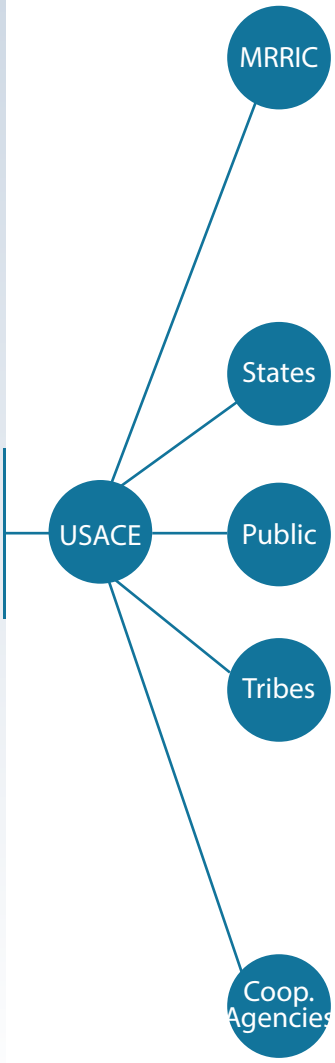
In 2000, the Service issued a BiOp (later amended in 2003) that found that actions proposed by the Corps would jeopardize the continued existence of three federally listed species, the piping plover, least tern and pallid sturgeon. The BiOp recommended recovery actions that are carried out by the Missouri River Recovery Program, such as creating sandbar habitat and shallow water habitat, as well as propagation efforts.

How the Corps will coordinate throughout the Management Plan and EIS process

Coordination

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) plans to coordinate with the public, other federal agencies, states and Tribes throughout the Management Plan and EIS process:

Scoping
Public Outreach
Draft EIS review
Final EIS available
Tribal outreach



The Corps will collaborate with the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC), which represents a cross-section of basin interests, including federal and state agencies, Tribes, industry and other interests. Collaboration with MRRIC will allow for substantive input on key activities and products in a tight project timeline.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will support the Corps by engaging state fish and wildlife agencies in the Management Plan and EIS consistent with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. State agencies are encouraged to take full advantage of this opportunity.

The Corps will provide opportunities to hear information about plan development and the science used to inform decision making. Initial public comments were collected in September 2013. Additional public scoping will be offered following the selection of a draft plan.

The Corps will engage with Tribes pursuant to Tribal Trust responsibilities, including government to government consultation as requested by Tribes.

Cooperating agencies have jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in the federal action.

Details of the Management Plan and EIS

1. The goal is to develop an Adaptive Management Plan and to assess effectiveness of Corps actions being taken pursuant to the 2003 Amended Biological Opinion.
2. The geographic scope is limited to the Missouri River mainstem from Fort Peck Reservoir to the confluence of the Mississippi River and the Yellowstone River from Intake Dam at Intake, Montana, to the confluence with the Missouri River.
3. The scope does not include ecosystem restoration or work in the tributaries.
4. The plan will provide the Corps' Missouri River Recovery Program with National Environmental Policy Act coverage through the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement.
5. The effort will be completed by Spring 2016.
6. Due to the expedited timeline, focused engagement will be implemented with MRRIC, the public and other agencies.