

Multiple Efforts Addressing Missouri River Management

By Steve Gaul

If you like acronyms, Missouri River studies and programs provide a bonanza. MRRIC, MRERP, MRAPS and the AOP are currently subject to participation and monitoring by NDNR and MORAST. However, fun as the names might be, the issues are serious for Nebraska – **the only state that is entirely within the Missouri River Basin.**

Management of the Missouri River is currently primarily led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with reservoir system management in accordance with the Missouri River Master Manual. Efforts underway may ultimately alter river management and affect the distribution of costs and benefits that management provides. The issues may arise in part from what the distribution of costs and benefits would be under different options.

Currently, with public input as well as consultation on historic properties, the Corps produces an Annual Operating Plan (AOP) designed to meet reservoir regulation objectives in the Master Manual. **The existing authorized purposes for which the Corps manages are flood control, navigation, irrigation, power, water supply, water quality control, recreation, and fish and wildlife.**

The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR) provides input to this and other efforts in part through serving on the Board of Directors of the Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MORAST). This regional interstate

organization was formed by joint resolution of the Governors of Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Kansas and the Mni Sose Intertribal Water Rights Coalition. It serves as a forum for better communication and helps facilitate management of the natural resources of the basin.

The NDNR is also the Nebraska representative to the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC), which is a collaborative forum to develop a shared vision and a comprehensive plan for restoration of the Missouri River ecosystem. The committee involves a wide spectrum of stakeholders and is to provide recommendations on efforts to recover threatened and endangered species and restore their habitats while sustaining the river's many uses. While federal agencies will not participate in decisions regarding recommendations, they will support and inform the committee through a federal working group.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission provides the Nebraska representation for the Missouri River Ecosystem Restoration Plan (MRERP). The plan is intended to identify the actions necessary to mitigate, recover and restore the Missouri River. The planning process is to

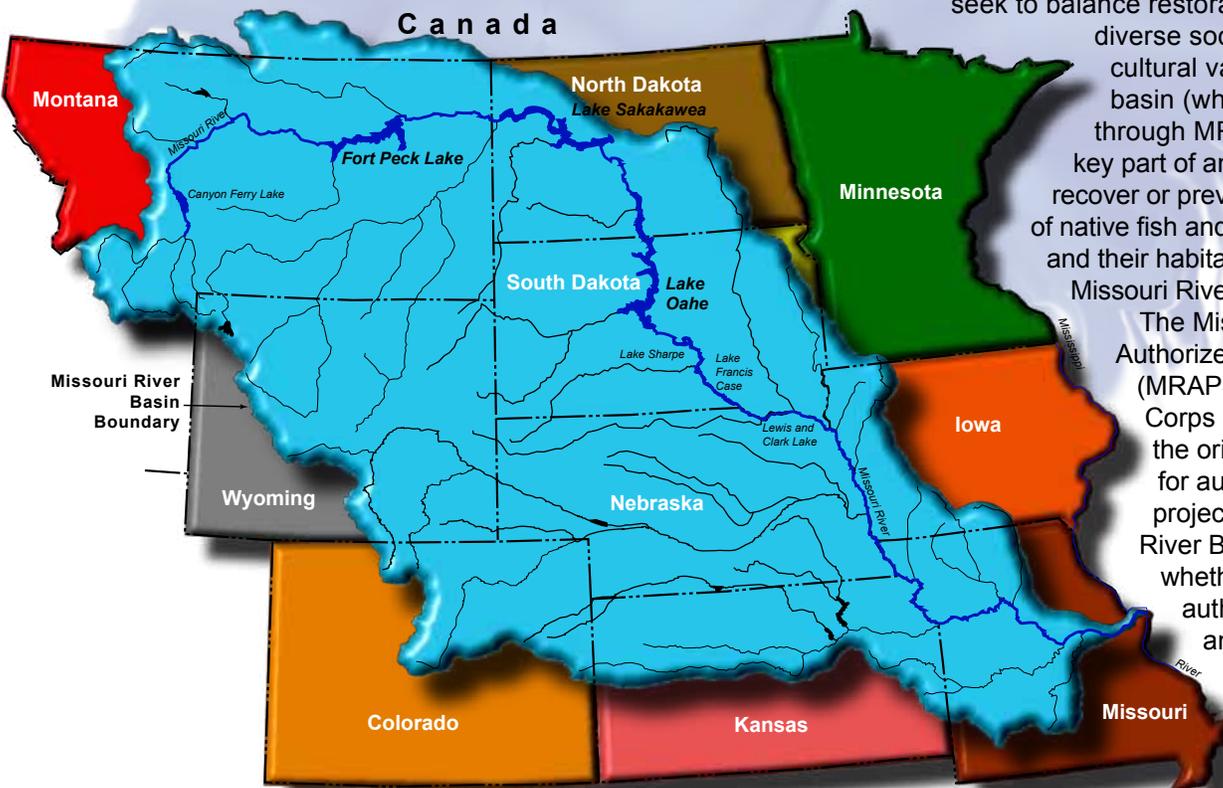
seek to balance restoration actions with diverse social, economic, and cultural values within the basin (which are determined through MRRIC). The plan is a key part of an extensive effort to recover or prevent further declines of native fish and wildlife populations and their habitats and to restore the Missouri River ecosystem.

The Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study (MRAPS) is a separate Corps led effort to review the original eight purposes for authorized federal projects in the Missouri River Basin and determine whether changes to the authorized purposes and infrastructure may be warranted. This is a major effort authorized by

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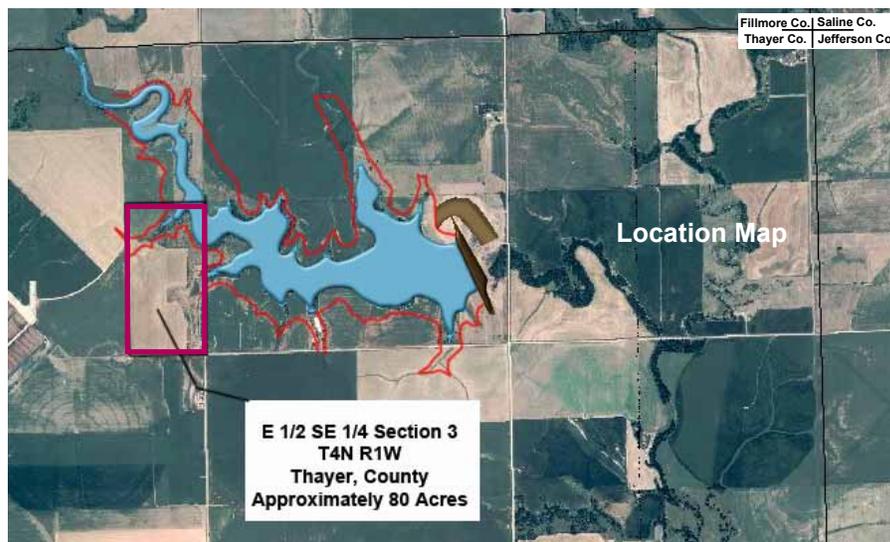
Land Auction January 13, 2010

By Kent Zimmerman

The Little Blue NRD and the Department of Natural Resources' Small Watersheds Flood Control Fund will auction off an 80 acre tract of land in the E1/2 SE1/4 of Section 3, Township 4 North, Range 1 West of the 6th P.M. in Thayer County, Nebraska on **Wednesday, January 13, 2010, at 1:30 p.m. at the Little Blue NRD office in Davenport.** This 80 acre track is part of a 400 acre track purchased by the fund for the purpose of building Site #40, one of the NRD's Little Sandy Creek Flood Control project dams. The remaining 320 acres are scheduled for sale during 2011.

Additional Information can be found at

<http://dnr.ne.gov/LittleSandyCreek>



First Nebraska Floodplain Conference a Success

By Gloria Bucco

One hundred and two people representing 39 counties and 49 communities attended the state's first Conference for Floodplain Managers on July 31, 2009, at the State Office Building in Lincoln. The Conference was sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (NDNR) and the Nebraska Floodplain and Stormwater Manager's Association (NeFSMA). Its purpose was to provide a forum for the state's floodplain managers and other interested parties to learn and network.

Of the 102 attendees, 46 were floodplain managers, and the remaining 56 were consultants and other community officials. One consultant traveled from Kansas City, Mo.

Attendees were welcomed by Brian Dunnigan, director of NDNR, and Laurie Carrette-Zook. Six seminars were offered including:

- FEMA Elevation Certificate Workshop
- Structural and Non-structural Options for Reducing Flood Losses
- Emergency Management for Floodplain Managers
- Floodplain Management 101
- Hydrology and Hydraulics for the Non-engineer
- Flood Insurance Basics and the NFIP

Featured speakers were Dean Ownby, an Insurance Program Specialist with Federal Emergency Management Agency Region VII; Steve McMaster, NDNR Natural Resources Planner Coordinator; Cindy Newsham, Response and Recovery Division Manager with the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency; Bill Jones, NDNR Floodplain Management Specialist; and Shuhai Zheng, NDNR Floodplain Management Section Chief.

During the luncheon, attendees heard a keynote presentation by Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Public Works Special Project Administrator in Watershed Management for the City of Lincoln.



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the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009, Title 1, Section 108. Its official kickoff was October 1, 2009. It is a broad-based multipurpose study that has the opportunity to identify options to provide more multi-purpose benefits, facilitate discussion of tradeoffs and efficiencies, and evaluate river management options in relation to current values and priorities.

Interestingly, even with all of these major efforts there are additional federal efforts occurring on the river such as the Missouri National Recreational River, the Missouri River Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project, and the Corps revised Regional Sediment Management Program.

The NDNR both monitors and participates in this variety of Missouri River related activity and has separately solicited input for its Missouri River Association of States and Tribes representation through meetings with stakeholders. As the Corps studies and other efforts move forward, the challenges may well involve how to develop sound information for a balanced analysis that provides options for addressing the needs of all Missouri River stakeholders in a fair, cost effective, and sustainable manner. This may be a tall order no matter what acronyms are used.