

Gavins

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The safety concerns that reached high gear during last year's flooding continued even after the releases were dropped dramatically, Becker said.

"They were releasing 40,000 cfs for a lot of the fall, with about 30,000 cfs going through the power plant and 10,000 cfs through the spillway," he said. "We have been running the spillway continually all winter. This was the first winter in my 18 years (at Gavins Point) that we had to run the spillway like that. It's not a normal situation, but we are better prepared for this spring, based on how we ran the spillway this winter."

Becker said continuation of the restrictions has been a local decision. He emphasized the restrictions don't cover shore fishing and would be in effect only when the spillway is in use.

"We don't run that spillway all the time. Most of the time, the spillway isn't open," he said. "It will probably create a larger safety buffer for boats in the future when the spillway is open."

Becker acknowledges the decision to maintain the restrictions has raised concerns from those who enjoy using the spot. "We have received inquiries from local people," he said.

Holly said he has spoken with Becker about the situation, hearing the Corps' concerns about public safety and the need to move water.

However, Holly believes the Corps will close down the area on a fairly regular basis.

"Now, any time the gates are open, that whole area of prime fishing is closed," he said. "The 200 yards, where they are keeping us out, that's where the best fishing is and that's where the paddlefish congregate. If it's closed to boats during paddlefish season, you're going to hear a lot of complaints."

Holly has fished below Gavins Point Dam for 12 years and knows a number of anglers who have enjoyed the site for 20 years. But he's also seeing a number of those enthusiasts checking out other spots upstream.

"March through April is the prime walleye fishing. Basically, anyone that owns a boat, they are up at Niobrara or Fort Randall," he said.

"I went last week for three days at the tailwaters at Fort Randall, and you would see 40 boats a day. Half of those guys I recognized were from Yankton. They were walleye fishermen, and their whole crew picked up and went off (to Fort Randall)."

The exodus, when multiplied, will have a major economic impact on Yankton's economy, Holly predicted.

"It's not just a bunch of fishermen who aren't able to fish. It's a lot more than that. The big thing, it's the businesses that are losing all the revenue from the fishermen," he said. "If you have 20 to 50 boats out on that water, those people are spending money to be there. They are going to bring revenue to both states' campgrounds and to the bait shops, restaurants, motels and gas stations. And those (business owners) already took a hit last year because of flooding."

Becker said he hears the recreational concerns, but the Corps also needs to

take into account whether lives are lost because of dangerous boating conditions.

As recent years have shown, those concerns have a very real basis, Becker said.

"We just have to have a safer environment when the boaters are out and the spillway is running," he said. "We need the additional safety buffer so the boaters aren't pulled into the spillways."

Over the years, the Corps has used buoys to mark the area below the dam where boats were not allowed, Becker said. With last year's flooding, the Corps used electronic signs to inform the public of the larger restricted area, he said.

Based on studies conducted over the winter, Becker looks for the possible continued use of buoys this spring. However, he sees an increasing reliance on signage to warn recreationists when the restrictions are in place.

"In general, we are leaning more toward keeping a sign downstream so the boaters stay behind and so they don't even come close to the spillway," he said.

However, Becker looks for different signage than used last year.

"During the flooding, we had to put up signs of some sort. We were basically looking at a stop-gap measure," he said. "We are using the electronic billboards right now, but we have been renting those and they are very expensive. We are not staying with them."

The Corps is making the final choice on how best to warn boaters and anglers, Becker said.

"We are in the process of getting permanent signage for those times during the spillway usage so it says that (the public) should stay behind that point,"

he said. "That way, the boaters won't get as close to the spillway and eddies."

Holly prefers continued use of buoys, saying they can be modified to meet changing needs.

The Corps' movement of water in recent months has paid off, Becker said.

"We have about 300,000 acre-feet of additional storage capacity for water in the (Missouri River) basin," he said.

"That's roughly the equivalent of another Gavins Point (reservoir)."

Holly worries the Corps is placing too much emphasis on moving water, and taking actions such as restricting usage below the dam, to satisfy downstream interests.

He said he recognizes the Corps wants to avoid a repeat of last year's flooding that caused millions of dollars of damage throughout the basin. But he also believes the emphasis on moving water could backfire in the coming months.

"I wonder where (the Corps) will get the water if we get into a severe drought," he said. "You look at all the snowpack, and we are way behind."

Becker believes the Corps has struck a balance between flood control and public safety on the one hand and the region's economic and recreational interests on the other hand.

"We are placing boaters a good safe distance downstream. We need the additional safety buffer so the boaters aren't pulled into the spillways," he said.

"They can't get as close to the dam, which reduces the fishing area, but increasing the boaters' and fishermen's safety is what our major concern is all about."

Accused Soldier Flown Out Of Afghanistan

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The American soldier accused of shooting 16 Afghan villagers in a pre-dawn killing spree was flown out of Afghanistan on Wednesday evening, the U.S. military said.

The soldier was taken out of Afghanistan "based on a legal recommendation," said Navy Capt. John Kirby, a Pentagon spokesman.

"We do not have appropriate detention facilities in Afghanistan," he said, explaining that he was referring to a facility for a U.S. service member "in this kind of case."

The soldier was taken aboard a U.S. military aircraft to a "pretrial confinement facility" in another country, a U.S. military official said, without saying where. The official, who spoke anonymously because he was not authorized to release the information publicly, would not confirm if that meant an American military base or another type of facility.

Kirby said the move did not necessarily mean the trial would be held outside Afghanistan, but the other military official said legal proceedings would continue elsewhere. The soldier has not yet been charged.

Afghan lawmakers had demanded that the soldier be publicly tried in Afghanistan to show that he was being brought to justice, calling on President Hamid Karzai to suspend all talks with the U.S. about an long-term military presence here until that happens.

Out On The Town

MARCH 16, 17, 18

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Students \$2.00 Adults \$5.00

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Pinocle Tournament
6:30pm Registration
7pm Start – \$5 pp
Bring Your Partner! Everyone Welcome!

Wednesday & Sunday

5-7pm Cooks Choice

Thursday

Karaoke with Papa Ray
7-11pm
6-7pm – Domestic Beers \$1.50
5-7pm – Hamburger/ Pizza Burger & Fries \$5.00

Friday

French Dip Sandwiches
Serving 5:30-8:00

Saturday

Freddies Combo
Reg Menu 5:30-8:00

Bingo Wed. at 7:00pm
Sunday at 6:30pm
Happy Hour M-F 4:30-7:30

Chislic Served Last Wednesday of Each Month

Trinity Lutheran Church
403 Broadway, Yankton

SOUP KITCHEN

Thursday, March 22, 2012
11:00 A.M.-7:00 P.M.

Serving Taverns, Egg Salad, Chili, Ham & Bean and Chicken Noodle Soup and Pies – FREE Coffee!

Supplemental funds provided by Thrivent Financial For Lutherans

MONDAY'S IN MARCH

Monday Match Play
Buy \$10 in Credits Get \$5 in Free Play—First 25 Customers at 1 & 7PM

SATURDAY, MARCH 17TH

St. Patrick's Day ~ \$1,000 In Total Cash Drawings
\$100 Drawn Every 30 Minutes from 7:30PM-Midnight

WEDNESDAY'S IN MARCH

March Match Play
Buy \$10 in Credits Get \$5 in Free Play—First 25 Customers at 1 & 7PM

OHIYA BINGO

March 16th & 17th Only
Warm-Ups 6PM, Reg. Session 6:30pm

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Saturday, March 17th
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St. Patrick's Day Special!
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