

Corps

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FLOOD FACTORS

But while the Corps discussed drought, the audience of about 50 members focused on last year's flood.

In 2011, the basin saw record rainfall and snowpack melt. In turn, the Corps released 160,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) — the equivalent of 1.1 million gallons of water with each tick of the clock — during the summer and into early fall.

The 160,000 cfs figure represented more than twice the previous record of 70,000 cfs for Fort Randall Dam at Pickstown and Gavins Point Dam near Yankton.

At Wednesday's meeting, one man commended the Corps for giving out more information and providing better communication than during last year's flooding. However, he feared the current dropping reservoir levels reflect many of the same procedures leading to last year's flooding.

"Maybe you could react a little quicker to things. How come you allow the river to fall that low? Did somebody fall asleep?" he asked. "You can't sit and study things. Didn't we learn that last year?"

Much of the flood damage became irreversible, according to some audience members.

The region's agricultural sector took a huge hit from flooding, said Tekamah, Neb., farmer Scott Olson.

"We lost hundreds of thousands of acres that we will never get again. That's a lot of jobs, taxes and income," he said. "The ag dollar turns seven times in a community before it leaves, so that's a lot of dollars that are now gone."

The flooding worsened bank erosion that began with "hungry water" when the dams were constructed, according to Vermillion resident Jim Peterson with the Missouri River Bank Stabilization Association (MRBSA).

"The flooding goes down, and the inundated land is still there," he said. "But the eroded land goes to the Gulf of Mexico and never comes back."

Two members of the Santee Sioux Tribe in northeast Nebraska spoke about flood damage on tribal lands.

Santee Sioux member Clement Mackey said the tribe has removed some of the flood debris. However, he sought a meeting between the tribe and Corps to assess flood damage, sand intrusion, bank erosion and the loss of land and riverfront vegetation. He also sought a riverfront wildlife assessment.

The tribe is also concerned about flood-damaged infrastructure, including Nebraska Highway 12 that had portions closed during flooding. The tribe also wants to discuss the dams' hydropower generating capacity and water rights within the Missouri River basin.

"We want remedial action and a plan for all areas concerned," Mackey said.

Fellow tribal member Jeff Kydney said the flooding had a devastating effect not only on the Santee Sioux reservation but up and down the Knox County shoreline. He estimated 90 percent of those Knox County farmers lost 80 percent of their crops.

Kydney offered to introduce Corps officials to local residents. "If you want to know the devastation of last year's flood, talk to us," he said.

He alluded to climate change as a reason for the radical change in weather and river conditions from one year to the next.

"Our seasons are changing," he said. "The earth is shifting on its own. We had snow, and it already has melted."

While the flood and drought are frustrating, assistance remains available, Kydney said. "You can get help — talk to your congressman and senators," he told the audience.

A Springfield woman warned of the dangers of sediment in operating the reservoir system.

"Sediment accumulation in and near the system's reservoirs negatively impacts flood control capabilities," said Sandy (Korkow) Stockholm, executive director of the Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition (MSAC).

Sediment management accomplishes several objectives, Stockholm said. Desirable water flow can be achieved by decreasing the silt entering the system and increasing the channel capacity through dredging and other measures, she said.

Stockholm noted the Corps' recent report on remaining vulnerabilities after last year's flood. The location of sedimentation — much of it in the Springfield and Niobrara, Neb., area — creates problems far beyond the 5 percent of lost storage capacity in the Missouri River system, she said.

"We recognize that the Annual

Operating Plan acknowledges 89,700 acre feet of estimated sediment inflow annually," she said. "However, the hundreds of years indicated to fill the reservoirs barely begin to tell the story of how sediment is negatively impacting the system."

MSAC applauds the Corps' framework of "repair, restore and enhance" to revitalize the river system, Stockholm said.

"Getting an accurate picture of sedimentation problems to the public is one step in this process, which MSAC wants to assist the Corps and other agencies in doing," she said.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

During Wednesday's meeting, a man asked about increasing the level devoted for flood control.

"We hear about 'extreme,' but everything is extreme anymore. Nothing is normal," he said.

The 2011 flood event would still have occurred even with

such changes, said Jody Farhat, chief of water management for the Missouri River Basin.

"If we would have decreased our releases, we would still have had a flood event," she said. "We would likely have been at 100,000 cfs. There would have been much less for releases, but there would still have been a lot of devastation."

The Corps estimates that the mainstem dams have prevented \$51.5 billion in flood damages from 1938 to the present time — \$5.5 billion last year alone — indexed to 2011 levels.

In response to a audience question, Farhat said she didn't have any dollar figures for last year's flood damage in the basin. "There has never been a good estimate of what the impact of the flood was," she said.

The Corps is looking at a variety of long-range solutions, Farhat said. "You can't solve the problems by the reservoirs alone. You need to look at it

holistically," she said.

"We can't adjust (the reservoirs) on a monthly basis because other parties need certainty," she said.

The Corps plans to reduce Gavins Point releases to 16,000 or 18,000 cfs on Nov. 21, then slowly reduce releases to 12,000 cfs for the winter, Grode said.

The Corps plans minimum Gavins Point winter releases during 2012 and will minimize periods of zero releases at Fort Randall, said Mike Swenson, the Corps team leader for power production.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) outlook calls for drought conditions at least through January, Swenson said. The conditions will likely persist through spring for most areas.

"As far as the drought outlook, it's uncertain as to when it will end," he said. "The possibility of a multi-year drought does exist."

Out On The Town

Happy Halloween!

No Chicken Buffet on Oct. 31st.

We will be back on Wednesday, Nov. 7th

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- Miami @ Indianapolis

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- Minnesota @ Seattle
- Tampa Bay @ Oakland
- Pittsburgh @ New York Giants

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VFW Post 791

209 Cedar, Yankton • 665-3562 • Open To Public

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St. John's Lutheran Church

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Thursday, November 1 • Serving 11am-7pm

Menu: Soups, Taverns, Hot Dogs, Pie, Coffee & Milk

TUESDAY STITCHERS ANNUAL BAZAAR

Peace Presbyterian Church

206 East 31st, Yankton

November 3, 2012 • 9AM-2PM

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CELEBRATION

16TH ANNUAL BAND AID CONCERT

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YMS BAND & USD SOUND BYTES

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★Decorate a Tree

...Help a Family in Need!

Please help us make this holiday season a little brighter for some families in need.

2 Ways You Can Help Out:

1. Sponsor and decorate a artificial christmas tree and coordinating gift box for food donations
2. Vote for your favorite tree by placing one non-perishable food item in the gift box located by that tree

Trees will be on display at the Yankton Mall with voting November 12th-December 10th. Trees will be picked up by the families in need and food delivered to our local food pantry Dec. 13th-15th.

Tree Registration Due: November 7th

Call the mall office 665-5999 or Rita's Purse-O-Nalities 260-8362

Tree Setup/Decorate Tree: November 10th-11th

Please check in at Rita's Purse-O-Nalities or the Yankton Mall before setting up.

Grand Prize For Best Decorated Tree is an \$100 Yankton Mall Gift Card Winner will be announced December 12th

Brought to you by the Press & Dakotan & the Yankton Mall

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The Corps plans a steady release at Gavins Point and intraday peaking patterns at Fort Randall for the threatened and endangered species of the piping plover and least tern, Swenson said.

Neither pulse was conducted in 2012, and neither pulse is planned in 2013, he said.

As far as hydropower, this year's forecast calls for 10.3 billion kilowatt-hours (kwh) compared to the normal 10 billion kwh with a full pool, Swenson said. Next year, with median runoff, should produce 8.9 billion kwh.

After the meeting, Stockholm said she thought the attendance was good and remained higher than similar meetings prior to the 2011 flood. She sought to build awareness with her remarks.

"One way or another, sedimentation affects some operation of the mainstem system and the authorized purposes," she said. "People are keenly aware of the

impact, but we need greater attendance at these meetings."

The Corps' river vulnerability report contains pages dedicated to sediment, but the AOP contains little mention of the problem, she said. She foresees a long process ahead.

"Getting sediment addressed is not the result of one meeting," she said.

The nation must put its effort into maintaining its current river system before taking on new construction, and that includes addressing sediment, she said.

"We have too big of an investment," she said.

Written and email comments on the draft AOP will be accepted through Nov. 23. Email comments should be sent to: MissouriWaterManagement@nwd02.usace.army.mil.

You can follow Randy Dockendorf on Twitter at twitter.com/RDockendorf

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Wed., Nov. 7th • 11am-7pm

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