

South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society
Annual Meeting
3 March, 1998

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE MISSOURI RIVER MONITORING AND
ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

WHEREAS:

The Missouri River and its floodplain have been significantly modified in the past 50 years to serve a diversity of important human needs including flood control, navigation, hydropower generation, municipal and industrial water supply, and irrigation; and

WHEREAS:

These modifications have profoundly impacted essential habitat for three federally-listed species and at least eight species of native fish, but also have created economically significant reservoir and tailwater sport fisheries; and

WHEREAS:

Public and agency input to the ongoing Corps of Engineers Master Manual Review and Environmental Impact Statement process clearly identified the need for collection of comprehensive long-term natural resource data to understand the effects of management changes to the river system; and

WHEREAS:

The Missouri River system is long and complex having six large storage reservoirs, unchannelized and channelized reaches, reaches affected by severe alterations in water temperatures and daily and seasonal flows, and other confounding factors that affect fish and wildlife of the river and its floodplain; and

WHEREAS:

The range of uses demanded of the Missouri River and its floodplain is also large and complex with some uses being in conflict or competing with river fish and wildlife needs; and

WHEREAS:

The Corps of Engineers, natural resource, and water quality management agencies need consistently collected, system-wide long-term biological, physical, and chemical data to identify, evaluate, prioritize, and implement cost-effective restoration and management actions that recover threatened and endangered species and preclude listing of additional species while maintaining all of the other important benefits the system provides; and

WHEREAS:

Existing local, state and federal habitat restoration and protection programs already underway on the Lower Missouri River such as the Missouri River Mitigation Project, the U.S. Fish and Service's Big Muddy Refuge and U.S. Department of Agriculture wetland easements, should be comprehensively evaluated to determine the best restoration designs and concepts and

what projects result in long-term benefits to the river*s ecological health; and

WHEREAS:

Systemic sampling of the entire river will provide data that not only benefits management of fish and wildlife resources, but data useful to a wide range of river interests including floodplain agriculture, commercial navigation, river recreation, municipal and industrial water users, Native American Tribes; and

WHEREAS:

The Missouri River Basin Association requested that the Missouri River Natural Resources Committee develop a system-wide monitoring and assessment program for the Missouri River to provide the best scientific data possible for future river management decisions; and

WHEREAS:

The Missouri River Natural Resources Committee, working with the United States Geological Survey-Biological Resources Division, developed a comprehensive monitoring and assessment program for the river--*The Missouri River Environmental Assessment Program*--in cooperation with 11 state and 6 federal agencies and 26 Native American Tribes with fish and wildlife, water quality, water supply, flood control and power generation responsibilities for the Missouri River;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society, at their joint meeting on 3 March 1998 hereby support Congressional authorization and funding for *The Missouri River Environmental Assessment Program*.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society recognize that sufficient information from a number of disciplines is needed to ensure that decision makers at all levels utilize this information to restore and protect the ecological integrity and functioning of the Missouri River ecosystem for present and future generations.