



News Release

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Water Management Monthly News Release

OMAHA – Reservoir levels continue to fall to record low levels as drought conditions persist across much of the upper Missouri River basin.

August's runoff above Sioux City, Iowa, was 893,000 acre feet, only 67 percent of normal. "Timely rains kept downstream tributary flows up during August, and allowed Gavins Point Dam releases to remain at 25,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) for the entire month," said Larry Cieslik, Chief of the Water Management office in Omaha. The average release rate for August is 36,000 cfs.

The constant release rate at Gavins Point contributed to another successful nesting season for the least terns and piping plovers. Both species exceeded the fledge ratio goals set by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "A record number of adult plovers were counted this year. The least terns were also near their highest numbers," added Cieslik.

Gavins Point releases were increased to 26,000 cfs on Sept. 1. "Flows below Kansas City, Mo., have stayed up due to some isolated rain," said Cieslik. "But with tributary flows beginning to fall, releases will be adjusted throughout the month to meet flow targets."

The current runoff forecast for 2004 is 16.2 million acre feet (MAF), compared to a normal of 25.2 MAF. As previously announced, the navigation season will be shortened 47 days, in accordance with the revised Master Manual and its more stringent drought conservation measures.

Flow support for the commercial navigation season will end as follows:

Sioux City, Iowa	October 6
Omaha, Nebraska	October 8
Nebraska City, Nebraska	October 9
Kansas City, Missouri	October 11
Mouth near St. Louis, Missouri	October 15

System storage ended August at 36.6 MAF. Last year at this time it was 42.9 MAF. The amount of water currently stored in the reservoirs is nearly 23 MAF below average.

Three public meetings to review the draft 2004-2005 Annual Operating Plan for the Missouri River will be held next month. The first will be on Tuesday, Oct. 12 in Williston, N.D. at the El Rancho Motor Hotel, 1623 Second Ave. W. The second will be on Wednesday, Oct. 13 in Pierre, S.D. at the Best Western Ramkota Hotel, 920 West Sioux Ave. The third will be on Thursday, Oct. 14 in Kansas City, Mo, at the Hilton Kansas City Airport.

Lewis and Clark Lake behind Gavins Point Dam will remain near elevation 1207 feet above mean sea level (msl) during September.

Fort Randall releases averaged 24,300 cfs in August. They will range from 24,000 cfs to 26,000 cfs in September as needed to maintain Lewis and Clark Lake near its desired elevation. Lake Francis Case ended August at 1352.8 feet msl. Its annual fall drawdown is now underway. It will end the month near elevation 1343 feet msl. The reservoir will end October near its normal fall elevation of 1337 feet msl. The drawdown is occurring sooner than in previous years due to the reduced releases as flow support for the navigation season ends early next month.

Lake Oahe dropped two feet during August, ending the month at elevation 1572.1 feet msl. It will rise nearly a foot in September, ending the month 30 feet below average. The reservoir is 12 feet lower than last year at this time.

Garrison releases averaged 17,200 cfs during August. They will remain near that rate until mid-September, and then be reduced to 12,000 cfs. Lake Sakakawea dropped two feet during August,

ending the month at elevation 1814.3 feet msl. It will drop more than one foot in September, ending the month 26 feet below average. The reservoir is 9 feet lower than last year at this time.

Fort Peck releases averaged 7,200 cfs in August. They will remain near 7,000 cfs until the end of the irrigation season in mid-September when they will be reduced to 4,000 cfs. The reservoir dropped more than one foot during August, ending the month at elevation 2200.9 feet msl. It will drop less than one foot during September, ending the month 35 feet below average. Last year at this time it was 10 feet higher.

The six main stem power plants generated 686 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in August, 65 percent of normal because of reduced releases from the dams. The forecast for 2004 energy production is 6.6 billion kWh, compared to a normal of 10 billion kWh.

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Daily and forecasted reservoir and river information is available on the water management section of the Northwestern Division homepage at www.nwd.usace.army.mil.

MISSOURI RIVER MAIN STEM RESERVOIR DATA

	Pool Elevation (ft msl)		Water in Storage - 1,000 acre-feet		
	On Aug 31	Change in Aug	On Aug 31	% of 1967-2003 Average	Change in Aug
Fort Peck	2200.9	-1.5	9,121	58	-236
Garrison	1814.3	-2.2	11,914	61	-487
Oahe	1572.1	-2.2	10,112	55	-428
Big Bend	1420.3	-0.2	1,699	99	-11
Fort Randall	1352.8	-1.1	3,351	93	+3
Gavins Point	1207.3	+0.1	393	93	+3
			36,590	62	-1,236

WATER RELEASES AND ENERGY GENERATION FOR AUGUST

	Average Release in 1,000 cfs	Releases in 1,000 af	Generation in 1,000 MWh
Fort Peck	6.9	426	63
Garrison	17.2	1059	139
Oahe	23.9	1471	179
Big Bend	22.1	1362	82
Fort Randall	24.3	1494	155
Gavins Point	25.0	1537	68
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