



News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Monthly News Release

OMAHA – Continuing drought combined with court ordered release restrictions resulted in low flows on the Missouri River in August. Runoff above Sioux City, Iowa, was only 31 percent of normal.

“Hot dry weather during August produced only 400,000 acre feet of runoff, the second lowest in 106 years of record keeping. Parts of the basin received little or no rain. Inflows into Garrison were only 14 percent of normal,” said Larry Cieslik, Chief of the Missouri River Water Management Division in Omaha.

Recent court action required Gavins Point releases be reduced to comply with the Biological Opinion published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in November 2000. “The reduced releases were not sufficient to meet minimum service flow targets from Nebraska City to the mouth,” said Cieslik.

“Flow restrictions required by the biological opinion ended on Sept. 1, allowing us to increase releases to meet minimum service levels,” he said. The releases were gradually increased from 25,000 cfs to 30,500 cfs. They will vary as necessary to meet downstream targets for the remainder of the navigation season. The season will be shortened 6 days to make up for the additional water released last winter for downstream water intakes. It will end at the mouth near St. Louis on Nov. 25.

Releases from Tuttle Creek Reservoir in Kansas will be increased in mid-September to supplement flows on the Missouri River from Kansas City to the mouth. Additional releases from Milford and Perry reservoirs are being coordinated with the State of Kansas. The current release rate from the Kansas projects is 1,000 cfs for water quality. Current plans call for an increase to 2,000 cfs, but may change depending on localized rain.

The runoff forecast for 2003 has been reduced to 18.5 million acre feet (MAF). Normal annual runoff is 25.2 MAF.

System storage ended August at 42.9 MAF, a record low for that date. The previous record was 44 MAF in 1990. Last year at this time it was 46.9 MAF. The amount of water currently stored in the reservoirs is nearly 17 MAF below average.

Three public meetings to review the draft 2003-2004 Annual Operating Plan for the Missouri River will be held next month. The first will be on Tuesday, Oct. 28 in Pierre, S.D. The second will be on Wednesday, Oct. 29 in Omaha, Neb. The third will be on Thursday, Oct. 30 in Columbia, Mo. Sites and times will be announced in the coming weeks.

Gavins Point releases averaged 24,900 cfs in August, compared to the long-term average of 36,300 cfs. Lewis and Clark Lake will gradually rise to elevation 1207.5 feet msl during September.

Fort Randall releases averaged 24,500 cfs in August. In September, they will range from 28,000 to 31,000 cfs as needed to maintain Lewis and Clark Lake near its desired elevation. Lake Francis Case ended the month at 1353.8 feet msl. It will remain near that level through most of September before beginning its annual drawdown. The lake will end October near elevation 1345 feet msl.

Lake Oahe dropped two feet during August, ending the month at elevation 1584.4 feet msl. It will drop more than three feet during September, ending the month 22 feet below normal. The reservoir is 4 feet lower than last year at this time.

Garrison releases averaged 21,100 cfs during August. They were reduced to 19,500 cfs on Sept. 3, and will be held at that rate until Sept. 14 and then gradually reduced to 10,000 cfs by Sept. 17. Lake Sakakawea fell three feet in August, ending the month at 1822.9 feet msl. It will drop less than two feet in September, ending the month nearly 18 feet below normal. The lake is 6 feet lower than last year at this time.

Fort Peck releases averaged 7,100 cfs in August. They will remain at that rate until mid-September and then be reduced to 4,500 cfs. The lake dropped more than one foot in August, ending the month at elevation 2210.8 feet msl. It will fall less than one foot in September, ending the month 25 feet below normal. Last year at this time it was 8 feet higher.

The six main stem powerplants generated 763 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in August, 72 percent of normal. The forecast for 2003 energy production is 7.5 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 1967-2002 Average	Change in Aug
Fort Peck	2210.8	-1.5	10,694	68	-256
Garrison	1822.9	-3.2	14,042	72	-815
Oahe	1584.4	-2.1	12,691	68	-446
Big Bend	1420.4	+0.6	1,707	99	+25
Fort Randall	1353.8	-0.1	3,434	92	+0
Gavins Point	1206.4	+0.0	368	86	+0
			42,936	72	-1,492

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	7.1	436	65
Garrison	21.1	1296	177
Oahe	25.9	1592	214
Big Bend	23.2	1428	84
Fort Randall	24.5	1504	156
Gavins Point	24.9	1532	66
			763