



# News Release

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Date: March 26, 2004

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## Corps adjusts April releases to save reservoir water

The Army Corps of Engineers announced today that it is altering its release schedule during April to conserve additional water in the three largest Missouri River reservoirs.

The Corps normally sets releases from Gavins Point Dam to meet flow targets at Sioux City, Iowa, Omaha and Nebraska City, Neb., and Kansas City, Mo., for water supply, water quality, river recreation and commercial navigation. The navigation industry has indicated that it will not be using the upper reaches of the river when the season opens on April 1. Therefore, the Corps will not set releases from Gavins Point to meet either the Sioux City or Omaha targets during April. While there will not be enough flow to support navigation above Nebraska City, there will be sufficient flow for the other purposes. Increased releases to meet minimum service would be made only if the navigators indicate that they will use the river in those reaches.

The schedule will change in early May with the beginning of the nesting season for the interior least tern and piping plover. The current plan, as presented in the 2004 Annual Operating Plan, is to increase Gavins Point releases to an initial steady release rate of 28,000 cubic feet per second. The actual rate will be determined in early May based on runoff conditions at that time. The rate will be increased throughout the summer if needed to support downstream flow targets, but only for the targets in reaches that will be used by commercial navigation.

These increases will be made in accordance with the 2003 Amended Biological Opinion of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This steady-release / flow-to-target regulation will provide for the authorized project purposes while minimizing the impact to the terns and plovers.

After the birds' nesting season ends in mid-August, the Corp will reevaluate the need to serve all of the flow targets. If the navigation industry does not intend to use the upper reaches, the Corps may consider limiting service to one or more flow targets if that would reduce releases and conserve water in storage.

Typically, however, releases are targeted to meet the requirements at Kansas City in the late summer and fall due to lack of tributary inflow downstream of Gavins Point. In this case, the question of releases necessary to meet the other three flow targets on the river is moot, since they would be met by the releases necessary to meet the Kansas City target.

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](http://www.nwd.usace.army.mil).