



News Release

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Water Management Monthly News Release

OMAHA – Persistent drought throughout the Missouri River basin and below-normal snow accumulation means lower reservoir levels and reduced flows again this year.

However, Army Corps of Engineers officials have agreed to support a request from Missouri River basin governors and tribal chairmen to implement all possible drought conservations within the framework of the Master Manual this year. The request was made during the Governors Summit hosted by South Dakota Gov. Mike Rounds in Sioux Falls on Feb. 7 to find ways to stave off hitting the “navigation preclude” in 2006. This equates to total system storage of 31 million acre feet, at which point commercial navigation would not served.

“As of Feb. 2, the mountain snowpack was only 68 percent of normal in the reach above Fort Peck, and 72 percent of normal in the reach from Fort Peck to Garrison,” said Brig. Gen. William Grisoli, Northwestern Division Engineer. Normally, 61 percent of the peak snow in the mountains is accumulated by early February.

“With below normal plains and mountain snow and normal rain the rest of the year, we are forecasting annual runoff to be 18 million acre feet (MAF), 71 percent of normal,” said Larry Cieslik, Chief of the Water Management Office here. “It’s likely that dry soil conditions will reduce the runoff this year.” Normal runoff is 25.2 MAF. System storage ended January at 35 MAF. A year ago it was 38.2 MAF.

“The Corps will continue to pursue ways to conserve water and mitigate the impacts of the drought to the basin,” said General Grisoli. “We are increasing our resources in the upper basin to mitigate the impacts to domestic water intakes, cultural resource sites, boat ramps and noxious weeds.”

Support for the 2005 navigation season will begin April 1 at the mouth near St. Louis. River flows will be at minimum service levels. The season length is expected to be shortened 40 to 61 days depending on runoff. The final decision will be based on the amount of water in storage on July 1.

Releases from Gavins Point Dam averaged 13,700 cubic feet per second (cfs) in January. They ranged from 12,000 cfs to 15,000 cfs based on weather and river ice conditions. They were cut to 10,000 cfs this week because of warm weather and downstream tributary flows. “We will continue to monitor weather and river conditions to assure adequate water supply along the river, while setting releases as low as possible to conserve water in the reservoirs,” said Grisoli.

Gavins Point Reservoir is currently near elevation 1208 feet above mean sea level (msl). It will fall to 1206 feet by the end of the month.

Fort Randall releases averaged 12,200 cfs in January. In February, they will be near 7,000 cfs as needed to lower Gavins Point Reservoir nearly two feet. Fort Randall Reservoir ended January at 1346.3 feet msl. It will continue to refill, ending the month near 1350.5 feet msl.

Oahe Reservoir lowered half a foot January, ending the month at elevation 1575.2 feet. It will rise one foot in February, ending the month 26 feet below normal. The reservoir is 2.4 feet lower than last year at this time.

Garrison releases averaged 15,000 cfs during January, 65 percent of normal. Releases in February will average 13,000 cfs to balance storage in the three biggest reservoirs. Garrison Reservoir fell 1.6 feet in January ending the month at elevation 1808.4 feet msl. It will drop half a foot in

February. It will end the month 25 feet below normal. The reservoir is 8.3 feet lower than last year at this time.

Fort Peck releases averaged 6,000 cfs in January, 54 percent of normal, and will average 5,500 cfs in February. The reservoir fell half a foot, ending the month at elevation 2198.5 feet. It will fall about half a foot in February, ending the month 32 feet below normal. Last year at this time it was 6.8 feet higher.

The six main stem powerplants generated 473 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in January, 63 percent of normal. This is the second lowest January generation since 1967, when the system first filled. The record low was 426 million kWh in 2002. The forecast for 2005 energy production is 5.9 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 Jan 31	Change in Jan	On Jan 31	% of 1967-2004 Average	Change in Jan
Fort Peck	2198.5	-0.4	8749	60	-80
Garrison	1808.4	-1.6	10,574	61	-362
Oahe	1575.2	-0.6	10715	62	-109
Big Bend	1420.8	+0.2	1,725	100	+24
Fort Randall	1346.3	+4.5	2,846	93	+297
Gavins Point	1207.8	+0.4	405	95	+10
			35,014	64	-220

WATER RELEASES AND ENERGY GENERATION FOR JANUARY

	Average Release in 1,000 cfs	Releases in 1,000 af	Generation in 1,000 MWh
Fort Peck	6.0	370	53
Garrison	15.4	950	118
Oahe	17.0	1046	130
Big Bend	15.5	951	58
Fort Randall	12.3	754	73
Gavins Point	13.7	842	41
			473