

MISSOURI SEDIMENTATION ACTION COALITION

Following are some facts about the serious problem of sediment accumulation in the Missouri River main stem reservoirs, and the MSAC position on this problem. The six dams, Fort Peck, Garrison, Oahe, Big Bend, Fort Randall and Gavins Point provide many benefits to people in many states over the entire U.S. Sediment accumulation in the reservoirs is a serious problem, and is not being addressed. Following are some facts and MSAC's position on this issue.

FACTS

- ❑ Sediment accumulates in these reservoirs at the approximate rate of 89,700 acre feet per year. That is the equivalent of 10 square miles of mud slightly more than 14 feet deep.
- ❑ Flood control averages approximately 500 million dollars per year in benefits, and flood control benefits alone have paid for the dams. Sediment accumulation will ultimately destroy most of that benefit.
- ❑ Hydropower produced by the dams is sold by WAPA and these sales average 240 million dollars per year over the last six years. Sediment will destroy much of that benefit, and has already affected some power production.
- ❑ Irrigation and drinking water intakes have been affected already, and this will get worse. In many areas, there is no other suitable water source.
- ❑ Navigation relies on a water flow in the river adequate to float barges. The reservoirs can not provide enough water if they are filled with sediment.
- ❑ Recreation is a major industry, but is being affected by sediment accumulation and low water levels. Sediment is causing environmental degradation in the reservoirs and on the tributary streams, with a loss of wildlife habitat.
- ❑ Personal property is being affected, and the federal government is in the process of spending millions of dollars in a "Buy Out" program which does not deal with the problems. It only addresses the symptoms.

MSAC POSITION

- These Dams are a National Resource, and must be recognized as such.
- Sediment is a problem now, and that problem can only get worse unless it is addressed.
- These dams must be analyzed on a life cycle basis instead of a design life basis.
- A design life analysis envisions decommissioning the dams at the end of their design life period. Life cycle analysis envisions doing what is necessary to extend the life of the dam as far into the future as possible.
- The technology exists to alleviate this problem. It is not a technical issue, it is a political issue. Congress must act to start and continue the correction process.
- The current criteria for computation of a benefit / cost ratio analysis must be modified or, preferably, eliminated altogether.
- The dams and reservoirs are too valuable to lose to sediment. They must be preserved.

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