



THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

April 24, 2017

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Omaha District
ATTN: CENWO-PM-AC
1616 Capitol Avenue
Omaha, NE 68102

The undersigned chapters and divisions of the Izaak Walton League of America (League) appreciate this opportunity to provide comments on the Missouri River Recovery Management Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement (MRRMP-DEIS). We also endorse the detailed comments submitted separately by the Izaak Walton League of America.

The League is a conservation organization founded in 1922. Today, we have over 42,000 members and 230 chapters nationwide. Nearly 13,000 of our members live within the Missouri River basin states and recreate on or along the river.

The river is home to a tremendous variety of fish and wildlife. It provides world class recreational opportunities and is an important quality of life component for residents of the basin and the tens of thousands of visitors who enjoy many outdoor activities. The Missouri is also a critically important engine for the local, regional, and national economies. Activities on and along the river support many businesses and manufacturers. The Missouri River is the source of drinking water to millions of people.

Over the past 150 years, a host of man-made alterations have greatly changed the Missouri River. The river was transformed from a wide, shallow, slow moving river, to one dominated by channelization on the lower third and impounded by six large reservoirs in the upper basin. The river also suffers from loss of flood plain connectivity due to the Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project (BSNP) and a series of levees. These changes have contributed to a drastic decline in the overall health of the river.

With respect to the draft plan, we do not support adoption of any the proposed alternatives - and the League strongly opposes Alternative 3. We urge the Corps to formulate a new alternative in the final EIS that incorporates recovery actions that will:

- Reconnect the river to its floodplain
- Restore wetlands
- Provide quality habitat for self-sustaining populations of fish and wildlife
- Incorporate BSNP Mitigation in all recovery actions
- Utilize natural processes for habitat restoration whenever possible

We believe these actions will also provide additional benefits, such as improved water quality, flood risk reduction, and increased recreational opportunities.

We wholeheartedly support increased monitoring and research on the river and for habitat recovery projects. We support aspects of the proposed Adaptive Management Plan that allow for any needed modification of recovery actions. We also back robust future funding for all of these efforts.

We believe the range of the proposed alternatives is extremely narrow. While all the proposed alternatives contain management actions designed to recover pallid sturgeon, piping plovers, and least terns the

proposed alternatives do not go far enough to restore the river and its aquatic and terrestrial habitat. We urge the Corps to select recovery actions that will also benefit the wide variety of other Missouri River fish and wildlife species.

For decades the Missouri River has not been allowed to be itself. The man-made changes have, for the most part, kept the river in a straightjacket. The League urges inclusion of recovery actions that allow the river to resume a more natural state, in selected areas such as on state and federally owned lands and on land acquired from willing sellers , and let it heal itself.

We want to see actions that restore wetlands and backwater areas to reconnect the river to its floodplain. We also favor additional top width widening projects such as Deer Island to create slow, shallow water habitat. We strongly support the inclusion of the Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project Mitigation in the recovery process. We also want to see the removal of man-made pinch points on the lower river. This can be done with more levee setbacks, reducing flood risk and lowering the river's stage, especially during high flow events.

We favor actions that provide the best opportunities for recovery of the pallid sturgeon, piping plover, and least tern, as well as leading to self-sustaining populations of other native fish and wildlife. We support actions that bring back aspects of the natural river and the historic Missouri River flows. We believe these efforts will be good for the health of the river, the listed species, native fish and wildlife, and all the people of the basin.

We also request that we are kept fully apprised of all future updates, meetings, hearings, and comment opportunities on the MRRMP as this process moves forward. The chapters and divisions truly appreciate the effort of the authors on the MRRMP-DEIS. We also thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Recovery of the Missouri River won't be easy and it will take time. However, we believe that once a recovery plan is selected and communicated to people in the basin, the recovery effort can be successful.

Sincerely,

Jack Johnson
President
Iowa Division IWLA

Lurlie Campbell
President
Nebraska Division IWLA

Kelly Kistner
President
South Dakota Division

The Izaak Walton League of America's state Divisions in Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota are comprised of 67 chapters and over 10,000 members. The chapters signing on to this letter include:

Iowa

Ames
Boone Valley-Webster City
Davenport
Ding Darling-Des Moines
East Fork-Algona
Floyd County-Charles City
Indian Creek-Nevada
Linn County-Cedar Rapids
Maquoketa Valley-Maquoketa
Oakdale-Renwick
Red Cedar-Vinton
Sabula
Warren County-Indianola
Woodbury County-Salix

Anamosa
Chicaqua-Washington
Des Moines
Dragoon Trail-Elkhart
Emerson Hough-Newton
Green Bay-Fort Madison
Iowa County-Victor
Louisa County-Wapello
Marshall County-Marshalltown
Ottumwa
Rice Lake-Lake Mills
Three Rivers-Waverly
Waterloo
Worth County-Kensett

B.F. Carroll-Bloomfield
Clinton County-Clinton
Dickinson County-Spirit Lake
Dubuque
Emmet County-Estherville
Grundy-Tama-Reinbeck
Keokuk County-Sigourney
Mahaska County-Oskaloosa
Muscatine
Powershiek County-Grinnell
Rock Creek-Newton
Wapsi Valley-De Witt
West Central-Denison

Nebraska

Arapahoe
Freemont
Lancaster
Ravenna Loup Valley-St Michael
Thayer County-Deshler

Columbus
Grand Island
Lincoln
Seward County-Seward
Wayne

Crete
Jesse Benton-Freemont
Platte Valley-Grand Island
Southwest-Imperial

South Dakota

Beadle County-Huron
Deuel County-Toronto
McCook Lake
Sioux Falls

Bon Homme County-Springfield
Kampeska-Watertown
Rapid City
Sunshine-Pierre

Day County-Webster
Madison
Rosebud-Winner
Yankton Area-Yankton