

Draft Resolution

*Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA)
Annual Meeting, Omaha, Nebraska
July 13-15, 2003*

**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF A MISSOURI RIVER
ENHANCEMENT and MONITORING PROGRAM**

WHEREAS: The National Academy of Sciences¹ in 2002 concluded that degradation of the natural Missouri River ecosystem is clearly evident and is continuing to the point of jeopardizing its fundamental natural processes and subsequently the loss of increasingly valued ecosystem goods and services; and

WHEREAS: The Missouri River spans seven states over a distance of 2,300 miles and currently consists of seven large reservoirs covering approximately one-third of the river, a number of unchannelized reaches equal to about one-third of the river's length, and a lower channelized reach below Sioux City, Iowa equal to one-third of its length; and

WHEREAS: The Missouri River, originally valued as a national treasure and transportation route, was subsequently modified for multiple uses including flood control, hydro-power generation, municipal and industrial water supply, irrigation, recreation, and navigation; the cumulative effect of which has allowed encroachment onto the flood plain and its erosion zone and the institutionalization of repetitive taxpayer bailouts ranging from hundreds of millions to billions due to frequent flooding, especially in the channelized reach; and

WHEREAS: Some of the original uses and values for which the river was modified have not appreciably materialized and since the values of the American people have now shifted toward sustaining healthy and more natural riverine systems and recognition of such ecosystem goods and services as becoming more of a recreational destination with associated economic benefits to local communities; and

WHEREAS: Alteration of the Missouri River form and function has profoundly impacted essential habitat for many riverine species, resulting in three species being federally listed as endangered or threatened (least tern, piping plover, and pallid sturgeon) and numerous other species of native fish (sturgeon chub, sicklefin chub, flathead chub, silver chub, speckled chub, plains minnow, western silvery minnow, blue sucker, and lake sturgeon) which could potentially become listed because their life cycle needs are not being adequately met in the system they inhabit; and

WHEREAS: The Corps of Engineers, other federal and state natural resource agencies, water quality management agencies, and the general public have all expressed the need for scientifically collected, system-wide, long-term, biological, physical, and chemical information

to identify, evaluate, prioritize, and implement cost-effective restoration and management actions that would benefit the entire river ecosystem; and

WHEREAS: The Missouri River Basin Association requested that the Missouri River Natural Resources Committee develop a system-wide monitoring and assessment program for the Missouri River to provide long-term scientific information required for measuring system responses to adaptive management actions as well as the natural variability of the river for future river management decisions; and

WHEREAS: The Missouri River Natural Resources Committee, working with the United States Geological Survey-Biological Resources Division, developed a comprehensive monitoring and assessment program for the river in cooperation with 11 state and 6 federal agencies with fish and wildlife, water quality, water supply, flood control and power generation responsibilities for the Missouri River; and

WHEREAS: Federal legislation in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate has been introduced, there is a strong need to assist passage of this legislation in order to assist basin states and their federal partners fulfill responsibilities in managing public trust fish and wildlife resources and the ecosystem supporting them, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the **Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies** assembled on July 13-15, 2003 in Omaha, Nebraska, unanimously support passage of Congressional legislation authorizing and funding a *Missouri River Enhancement and Monitoring Program; and*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies recognizes that sufficient information from a number of disciplines is needed to ensure that decision makers at all levels and the public have the information required to restore and protect the ecological integrity and functioning of the Missouri River ecosystem; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be forwarded to the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA) for endorsement, and subsequently distributed to appropriate members of the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate, Missouri Basin Governors, and other interested conservation organizations and individuals.

¹ *The Missouri River Ecosystem, Exploring the Prospects for Recovery. 2002. Committee on Missouri River Ecosystem Science, Water Science and Technology Board, Division on Earth and Life Studies, National Research Council, National Academy Press, Washington, D.C.*