

Dated: December 3, 1999.

David B. Shaver,

Chief, Geologic Resources Division, Natural Resource Program Center.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

Department of the Army, Corps of Engineers

Record of Decision, Missouri National Recreational River (59-Mile District)

SUMMARY: Pursuant to regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality (40 CFR 1505.2) and implementing procedures of the National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) for the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (40 U.S.C. 1501 et seq.), the NPS and COE have prepared this Record of Decision for the general management plan and final environmental impact statement (GMP/FEIS), Missouri National Recreational River (59-Mile District), Nebraska and South Dakota. This Record of Decision describes the recreational river management alternatives considered, mitigating measures adopted to avoid or minimize environmental impacts, and the reasoning behind the decisions reached.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION: Superintendent, Missouri National Recreational River, P.O. Box 591, O'Neill, Nebraska 68763, 402-336-3970; or Chief, Environmental and Economics Section, Planning Branch, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 215 North 17th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68102, 402-221-4575.

Background Information:

Public Law 95-625 of November 10, 1978, amended section 3(a) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 by designating a fifty-nine mile reach of the Missouri River between the Gavins Point Dam, Nebraska-South Dakota, and Ponca State Park, Nebraska, as a recreational river in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. The amending legislation declared that this segment would be administered by the secretary of the interior, acting through the National Park Service. Accordingly, the segment is considered a unit of the national park system. The Act also directed the secretary of the interior to enter into a written cooperative

agreement with the secretary of the army, acting through the Corps of Engineers, for construction and maintenance of bank stabilization work and appropriate recreational development. The NPS and COE jointly produced the GMP/FEIS, updating previous management plans and memoranda written respectively in 1980 by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service (HCRS) and Corps of Engineers but only partially implemented.

Decisions for Management and Boundary

The preferred alternative for the Missouri National Recreational River (59-Mile District) is identified in the GMP/FEIS as Alternative 2. The preferred alternative provides for the maintenance and restoration of biologic values within the reach and has the greatest potential to protect and enhance the values for which the river was designated, consistent with the general intent of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. It also provides for management activities that emphasize the history and culture of the river and its surroundings. In this preferred alternative, as well as in other alternatives, the NPS and COE will manage the area through a cooperative agreement, with the NPS generally administering land-related resources and the COE generally managing water-related resources. The agencies will work together where responsibilities overlap.

Among specific actions, the preferred alternative encourages the maintenance of the rural scene while allowing development in ways emphasizing the river's natural attributes. Land in fee or less-than-fee title might be acquired to provide new river accesses or for critical habitat preservation, but generally county zoning would be encouraged as the principal landscape protection measure.

Although new visitor use facilities are not specifically included in Alternative 2, the Resource and Education Center proposed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission is consistent with the goals for the recreational river. Scenic drives, overlooks, and river trails could be also be developed or enhanced as opportunities allowed, and the safety and appearance of extant access facilities would be enhanced.

Habitat protection, enhancement, and restoration would be encouraged, with the NPS, COE, and other partners cooperating in inventory and monitoring of river-related resources and enhancement of biologic and cultural values. Floodplains and adjacent wetlands would be protected to

the greatest extent possible, and endangered and threatened species would continue to be protected in all areas under federal or state jurisdiction.

Additional riverbank stabilization authorized in the enabling legislation will be undertaken as needed so long as all actions are in full conformance with appropriate and required environmental compliance laws, and a federal interest is established and funds are allocated for such construction.

The boundary for the 59-Mile MNRR is described as commencing at the downstream end of the Gavins Point Dam excavated discharge channel (downstream boundary of the Lewis and Clark Project), 59 miles downstream to, and inclusive of, Ponca State Park, and including the river, its islands, and adjacent banks and hills reasonably encompassing the natural and cultural resources of the unit. This boundary is a revision from the 1978 determination by including areas of active erosion and several large archaeological or cultural sites, among them an archaeological site north of St. Helena, Nebraska, and the Spirit Mound north of Vermillion, South Dakota, the latter particularly added to facilitate the preservation of that nationally significant Lewis and Clark landmark. The identified boundary excludes portions of Clay County Park some distance from the river, and certain distant croplands. The total acreage inside the revised boundary is about 17,734.

Mitigating Measures

Alternative 2 proposes limited developments such as boat and canoe accesses and trails consistent with the objectives of the unit. The Alternative also would include additional bank stabilization consistent with congressional authorization. Site-specific environmental compliance would be done when and if such construction occurred. Some increased use, some continued conversion of agricultural land to residential and other private development, and land purchases by the government may have adverse impacts on county government. Preservation of the river environs in a more natural state may be viewed as a beneficial effect of such impacts.

Other Management Alternatives Considered

Two other management alternatives were considered. The no-action alternative (Alternative 1) would have continued actions prescribed in HCRS's 1980 GMP and COE's 1980 General Design Memorandum and would have generally perpetuated existing land use conditions with minimal oversight and

condoned continued reactive rather than proactive federal involvement in all matters of visitor use and development, resource management, and interpretation. Alternative 1 served chiefly as a baseline for comparing the Preferred Alternative and Alternative 3. Alternative 3, the so-called recreation emphasis alternative, would have shifted focus to recreational enhancements and development at the potential occasional expense of resource enhancement and management. Most management actions prescribed therein were also present in alternative 2, but the recreational interests were more heavily weighted.

The boundary in Alternative 1 would have remained the same as described in the 1978 legislation. The boundaries for Alternatives 2 and 3 were identical. Both boundaries include important examples of the river's outstandingly remarkable values.

Public Review

More than 1,000 copies of the Draft GMP/EIS were mailed to federal, state, tribal, and local officials, organizations, and individuals in October 1998, commencing a 60-day public comment period that closed December 16, 1998. Between November 12 and December 10 public meetings were held in Hartington, Ponca, and Newcastle, Nebraska; and Vermillion and Yankton, South Dakota. The Missouri River Bank Stabilization Association was briefed on November 23, Nebraska Game and Parks officials on November 24, the Cedar County Commission on December 8, and Nebraska and South Dakota Congressional staff on December 9.

A total of 836 written comments were received during the public review period, including 779 identical cards from the Sierra Club. A majority of the comments came from Nebraska and South Dakota and suggested attention be given to increased recreational opportunities within the unit, increased protection of the Missouri River's natural landscape, that additional river banks be stabilized, that the "local voice" be heeded in management actions, and expressed concern over perceived loss of landowner rights. Responses to these and other questions were provided in the final EIS.

In October 1999 the Final GMP/EIS was printed and distributed to more than 170 federal, state, tribal, and local officials, public repositories in the project area, and to individuals providing written comments. A thirty-day review period closed on November 15, 1999. In the document the NPS and COE affirmed a preferred alternative and boundary. During the closing review

two responses were received, including one from a correspondent whose letter received during the sixty-day public review period was not printed in the final GMP/EIS as it pertained wholly to issues on a separate Missouri River reach; and from Representative Doug Bereuter of Nebraska's First Congressional District, who particularly sought clarification on the matter of cost sharing in project management. While cost sharing is a legislative requirement in most COE projects, and while the NPS endorses the cost share concept because it engenders broad support for projects, NPS does not mandate cost sharing for its projects.

Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Alternatives two and three for management of the Missouri National Recreational River were considered equally acceptable from an environmental standpoint. The Preferred Alternative is selected because it is considered the most effective alternative for protecting river values and maintaining existing economic uses along the river consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the 1978 amending act. The selected alternative is not expected to have any significant effects on natural or cultural values within the designated boundaries. The selected Boundary is preferable environmentally, and is chosen for that reason.

Dated: December 17, 1999.

William W. Schenk,

Regional Director, Midwest Region, National Park Service.

Dated: December 17, 1999.

Mark E. Tillotson,

Colonel, Corps of Engineers, District Engineer.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

Agenda for the February 2, 2000 Public Meeting of the Advisory Commission for the San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park

Public Meeting; Fort Mason Building F (Firehouse), 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

10:00 a.m.

Welcome—Neil Chaitin, Chairman
Opening Remarks—Neil Chaitin,
Chairman

Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

10:15 a.m.

Update—Haslett Warehouse, William Thomas, Superintendent

10:30 a.m.

STAFF REPORTS

Ships, Wayne Boykin
Operations, Marc Hayman
Collections, Tom Mulhern
National Maritime Museum
Association, Kathy Lohan

11:30 a.m.

Public Comments and Questions

11:45 a.m.

Election of Officers

12:00 p.m.

Agenda items/Date for next meeting

William Thomas,

Superintendent.

[FR Doc. 99-33507 Filed 12-23-99; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program

AGENCY: Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement.

ACTION: Notice of availability of funds for the Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program.

SUMMARY: The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSM) of the U.S. Department of the Interior is announcing its intent to solicit applications from eligible, not-for-profit candidates for funding under the Watershed Cooperative Agreement Program to undertake local acid mine drainage reclamation projects.

DATES: Applications for the cooperative agreements should be submitted to the appropriate individual listed under **ADDRESSES AND FURTHER INFORMATION** starting December 27, 1999.

Applications will be accepted until June 1, 2000, or until all available funds have been awarded, whichever is sooner.

ADDRESSES AND FURTHER INFORMATION:

Requests for an application package, which includes further information on the program, the application forms and evaluation criteria, should be directed to the appropriate Appalachian Clean Streams Coordinator: *Alabama:* Jeannie O'Dell, Birmingham Field Office, 135 Gemini Circle, Suite 215, Homewood, AL 35209, Telephone 205-290-7282, ext. 21; *Illinois:* Ken Foit, Indianapolis Field Office, Minton-Capehart Federal Building, 575 N. Pennsylvania Street, Room 392, Indianapolis, IN 46204, Telephone 317-226-6166 ext 230; *Indiana:* Michael Kalagian, Indianapolis Field Office, Minton-Capehart Federal Building, 575 N. Pennsylvania Street, Room 392, Indianapolis, IN 46204,