



MISSOURI RIVER NEWS

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WELCOME TO THE NEW MoRAST NEWSLETTER:

MISSOURI RIVER NEWS

This is the first issue of the newsletter of the Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MoRAST). The association was created by joint resolution of seven Governors in the Missouri River Basin and the Mni Sose Intertribal Water Rights Coalition in July of 2006. It was subsequently incorporated in the State of Nebraska. More detail about MoRAST, its purpose, structure and programs can be found in this issue of the *Missouri River News*. We plan to publish the *News* approximately four times a year or more often as time and circumstances allow or require. We plan to primarily publish the

News as an electronic newsletter to take advantage of current technology and minimize costs, but a limited distribution can be made to those without email, upon request. A copy of the *Missouri River News* is also posted on the MoRAST web site at www.mo-rast.org/Newsletters/Newsletters.htm. The web site at www.mo-rast.org is still under development.

We hope to include articles of timely interest about the activities of MoRAST and other information of interest related to water and natural resources management in the Missouri River Basin.

MISSOURI RIVER ASSOCIATION OF STATES AND TRIBES ORGANIZED

After almost two years of diligent work by key state and tribal officials, and with the organizational support of the Missouri River Basin Association, the structure and function of a new, more broadly based organization was developed to represent the interests of the states and tribes in the Missouri River Basin. The initial outcome was the adoption of a joint resolution by the Mni Sose Intertribal Water Rights Coalition and the Governors of the States of Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas in the summer of 2006 that authorized the creation of the Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MoRAST) and setting forth its purpose. MoRAST was incorporated as a non-profit organization in the State of Nebraska in the fall of 2006.

The purpose of MoRAST is...

"To serve as a forum for the identification, discussion, and resolution of issues of concern to the basin states and tribes, including matters of interstate comity and matters of common concern that arise due to the actions and programs of the federal government, states, tribes, and other interests. This shall involve facilitating management of the natural resources of the Missouri River Basin including water resources, fish and wildlife, and consideration of the impacts to the economic, historical, cultural, and social resources among the basin states, tribes, and the federal government."

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One of the principle goals of MoRAST is to bring together the representatives of the Governors and to provide for direct participation by the American Indian Tribes in the Missouri River Basin. In the past, two separate organizations dealt with Missouri River issues for the states in the basin, the Missouri River Basin Association (MRBA) and the Missouri River Natural Resources Committee (MRNRC). The organizations often viewed river issues differently and sometimes sent conflicting recommendations to federal agencies, which sent mixed signals from the states.

MRBA has been recently dissolved and will be replaced by MoRAST, which will serve as the primary organization of the states and tribes at the policy level for Missouri River issues. MRNRC will continue as a separate organization, but will work in cooperation with MoRAST. It will continue to provide a mechanism to coordinate various important functions among the state biologists and

continue to sponsor the valuable annual Missouri River Natural Resources Conference. However, policy issues will be the purview of the board of directors of MoRAST. MRNRC, together with representative of the tribes, will also serve as the MoRAST standing Fish and Wildlife Committee. MoRAST also has standing committees to deal with water management and state/tribal issues and may also have joint committee meetings at times to deal with certain issues.

The Governors have appointed state officials to the initial board of directors of MoRAST. These are typically cabinet level or senior policy level officials from the various agencies, normally with one representing the water management agency and one the fish and wildlife agency for each state, except for Wyoming. The agency structure and names vary by state. The State of Wyoming has currently chosen to be represented by a single director, since it is not a "main stem" state. MoRAST also allows direct participation by the 28

American Indian Tribes in the basin through six voting members, or in an advisory capacity for the other tribes. In this manner, a reasonable balance is maintained on the board among the water management, fish and wildlife and tribal interests in the basin. The MoRAST bylaws have been adopted by the initial board of directors. They also allow federal agencies that operate in the basin to be invited to appoint an advisory member to participate with the MoRAST board in a non-voting capacity. The process to identify these participants is underway.

John Cooper of South Dakota currently serves Chairman, Mary Sexton of Montana as Vice Chairperson, Kirk Nelson of Nebraska as Treasurer and Tracy Streeter of Kansas as Secretary.

David L. Pope has been selected as the Executive Director for MoRAST. He recently opened an office at 825 South Kansas Avenue, Suite 500, Topeka, Kansas 66612 and can be reached at: david.pope@mo-rast.org or (785) 235-3247.

MRRIC PLANNING PROCESS MOVES FORWARD

The Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee is in the process of being formed through the effort of a number of stakeholders, state and tribal representatives, along with the assistance of a group of federal officials from agencies with functions related to the Missouri River, known as the Federal Working Group, and the U.S. Institute for Environmental Conflict Resolution. Ultimately, after a Situation Assessment was conducted through the Institute and a Framework for the organization of MRRIC was developed by the Federal Working Group, a Drafting Com-

mittee and Review Committee were appointed with broad representation in the basin.

Since the spring of 2007, these committees have been working to develop a CHARTER for MRRIC. With the assistance of co-chairs and a team of facilitators, the drafting committee has met essentially monthly and met with the review committee in Kansas City on October 17 and 18, 2007. A draft CHARTER has been released for public comments during the period of October 22 through November 21, 2007. They will take public

comments through the following web site and at a workshop in Omaha, Nebraska on November 8. The CHARTER is scheduled to be finalized late this year. This is a very important process, as the MRRIC CHARTER will guide the structure and membership of the committee and its role in recovery of the basin's endangered species and ecosystem. Considerable additional information about the MRRIC planning process, the committee members, meetings and schedule, minutes and draft CHARTER is available on a web site located at: <http://missouririver.ecr.gov/>.

DAVID POPE SELECTED AS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MORAST

Effective July 1, 2007, the board selected David L. Pope of Topeka, Kansas as the Executive Director of MoRAST. It also approved a work plan that for the next year.

David comes to the position with a long history of involvement in Missouri River issues and other water and natural resources related experience. In his former employment with the State of Kansas, he represented four different Governors on Missouri River issues, and served as President of the Missouri River Basin Association. As a result, he has been involved in many different issues related to the Missouri River.

Mr. Pope holds BS and MS degrees in Agricultural Engineering from Oklahoma State University, where he



specialized in irrigation and water resources engineering. He is a registered professional engineer.

He spent most of his professional career working for the Division of Water Resources, Kansas Department of Agriculture, where he served as Chief Engineer and Director for the last 24 years. In that capacity, he administered laws related to the conservation, management, use and control of water and watercourses, and

was extensively involved in interstate water matters through river compacts and other organizations. Prior to that, he working as Extension Irrigation Engineer with Kansas State University and as Manager of the Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District in Garden City, Kansas.

In 2007, David retired from state service and began providing consulting services related to water and natural resources, through Pope Consulting, LLC. His primary client is the Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MoRAST), where David serves as Executive Director. He provides administrative support for MoRAST and helps carry out its programs and the policies of the board of directors.

MORAST MEETS IN FORT PECK, MONTANA



The board of directors and others met in Fort Peck, Montana on August, 29-30, 2007. The first day included an extensive tour of Eastern Montana with stops at the proposed project on the Yellowstone River to modify the diversion dam near Intake, Montana to allow for fish passage. This will open up many miles of free flowing river, which is deemed important for the endangered Pallid Sturgeon, as well as other fish. The tour participants also got to see a

dredge at work on the Missouri River that allows irrigation pumps to access the river in an environmentally sensitive way. The business meeting was held on August 30th, and included administrative items, a legal and legislative update, an update on the status of the MRRIC planning process, and reports from the Corps of Engineers about current hydrological conditions, the upcoming AOP process and the degradation issue. A report on Montana's approach to settle Fed-

eral Reserved Water Rights was also included, along with a brief tour of the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks fish hatchery, where the meeting was held.

The next meeting of MoRAST will on December 11-12, 2007 in Pierre, South Dakota. See web site at www.mo-rast.org for meeting arrangements and draft agenda.. Contact the MoRAST office for more information.



ASSOCIATION OF STATES AND TRIBES

825 S. Kansas Avenue,
Suite 500
Topeka, KS 66612

Phone: 785.235.3247

Fax: 785.233.3104

david.pope@mo-rast.org

Visit us online at
www.mo-rast.org

The Missouri River Association of States and Tribes (MoRAST) is a regional interstate organization formed by joint resolution of the Governors of Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa and Kansas and the Mni Sose Intertribal Water Rights Coalition. It was formed to help resolve issues of concern to the basin states and tribes, to serve as a forum to foster communication and information exchange among the member states, tribes and various other governmental units, and to facilitate the management of the natural resources of the Missouri River Basin, including water resources, fish and wildlife while considering the impacts to the economic, historical, cultural, and social resources.

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 22-November 21	MRRIC Public Comment Period for Draft Charter	
November 8	MRRIC Public Workshop	Omaha, NE
November 28-29	MRRIC Planning Group Meeting	Denver, CO
December 11-12	MORAST Board of Directors	Pierre, SD
February 25	MORAST Board of Directors	Nebraska City, NE
February 26-28	MRNRC Conference and BiOP Forum	Nebraska City, NE