News Release

US Army Corps of Engineers
Northwestern Division
Public Affairs Office

12565 West Center Road
Omaha, Nebraska 68144-3869

Phone: (402) 697-2552
Fax: (402) 697-2554

Contact: Paul Johnston
(402) 697-2552
Larry Cieslik
(402) 697-2675
Date: Dec. 8, 2003

Water Management Monthly News Release

OMAHA – Water stored in the six Missouri River reservoirs continues to decline as drought conditions persist across much of the basin. As a result, winter releases from Gavins Point Dam will be set below normal levels.

"November's runoff above Sioux City, Iowa, was only 53 percent of normal, the eighth lowest in 106 years of record keeping," said Brig. Gen. William Grisoli, Northwestern Division Engineer. "We are forecasting this year's runoff at 17.2 million acre-feet (MAF)," he said. Normal is 25.2 MAF.

"Main stem reservoir storage set a new record low during October," said General. Grisoli. The previous record low of 40.8 million acre feet (MAF) was set in January 1991. System storage ended November at 38.9 MAF. The amount of water currently in the reservoirs is nearly 17 MAF below average.

Gavins Point releases were cut from 28,500 cubic feet per second (cfs) in mid-November, signaling the end of the navigation season. They reached 12,000 cfs on Nov. 22. "We'll try to maintain that rate this winter as part of continued drought conservation measures," said Grisoli. "We will increase releases if severe cold weather creates ice build-ups on the river, just as we have the last three winters," he said. Moderate temperatures could allow releases to be set lower than 12,000 cfs without causing water supply problems to municipal and powerplant intakes. Gavins Point releases averaged 13,700 and 13,300 cfs last January and February, respectively.

As of Dec. 2, the mountain snowpack was 86 percent of normal in the reach above Fort Peck and 80 percent in the reach from Fort Peck to Garrison.

Lewis and Clark Lake is currently at elevation 1207.6 feet msl. It will be held near that elevation through the winter.

Fort Randall releases averaged 20,300 cfs in November. In December, they will range from 10,000 to 11,000 cfs as needed to maintain Lewis and Clark Lake near its desired elevation. Lake Francis Case ended the month at 1339.8 feet msl. It will begin to refill in December, ending the month near elevation 1343 feet msl.

Lake Oahe dropped more than one foot during November, ending the month at elevation 1576.7 feet msl. The reservoir is below its previous record low of 1580.7 feet msl set in November 1989. It will rise nearly one foot in December, ending the month 23 feet below normal. The reservoir is 6 feet lower than last year at this time.

Garrison releases averaged 11,700 cfs during November. Releases are being held near 13,000 cfs so the Fort Yates intake can be modified to ensure a reliable water supply. Flows will be gradually increased to 20,000 cfs later this month for winter electricity production and to balance the storage in the upper three reservoirs. Lake Sakakawea fell one foot in November to 1819.1 feet msl. It will drop nearly two feet in December, ending 19 feet below normal. The lake is nearly 2 feet lower than last year at this time.

Fort Peck releases averaged 5,700 cfs in November. They were gradually increased to 9,000 cfs last week for winter electricity production and to balance the storage in the upper three reservoirs. The reservoir fell below its record low of 2208.7 feet msl on Nov. 27. The previous record was set in April 1991. The lake dropped one foot in November, ending the month at elevation 2208.3 feet msl. It will fall nearly two feet in December, 26 feet below normal. Last year at this time it was 8 feet higher.

The six main stem powerplants generated 483 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in November, 55 percent of normal. The forecast for 2003 energy production is 7.6 billion kWh compared to a normal of 10 billion kWh.

-- 30 --

Daily and forecasted reservoir and river information is available on the water management section of the Northwestern Division homepage at www.nwd.usace.army.mil.

MISSOURI RIVER MAIN STEM RESERVOIR DATA

	Pool Elevation (ft msl)		Water in Storage - 1,000 acre-feet		
	On Nov 30	Change in Nov	On Nov 30	% of 1967-2002 Average	Change in Nov
Fort Peck	2208.3	-1.0	10,294	68	-150
Garrison	1819.1	-1.0	13,046	71	-255
Oahe	1576.7	-1.5	11,033	64	-344
Big Bend	1421.0	-0.8	1,741	101	+38
Fort Randall	1339.9	-5.5	2,430	103	-354
Gavins Point	1207.6	0	401	93	0
			38,945	70	-1,065

WATER RELEASES AND ENERGY GENERATION FOR NOVEMBER

	Average Release in 1,000 cfs	Releases in 1,000 af	Generation in 1,000 MWh
Fort Peck	5.7	338	49
Garrison	11.7	699	93
Oahe	15.5	924	118
Big Bend	13.9	829	52
Fort Randall	20.3	1205	112
Gavins Point	22.4	1331	60
			483