



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: August 28, 2003

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Corps to use water from Kansas reservoirs

OMAHA – In mid-September, the Army Corps of Engineers will begin using water from reservoirs in Kansas to support commercial navigation on the Missouri River and to conserve water in the river's three largest reservoirs in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota.

As the Corps maintains steady releases from Gavins Point Dam in compliance with an order from the U.S. District Court of Minnesota to comply with the Fish and Wildlife Service's 2000 Biological Opinion, Missouri River levels continue to fall as drought-stricken tributary streams decline. Minimum navigation flows are not currently being provided from Nebraska City, Neb., to the Mississippi River.

Congressional authorization for the construction of Milford, Perry and Tuttle Creek dams provides that water from them will be used to support flows on the Missouri, thus conserving water in the large Missouri River reservoirs. This can happen when these big reservoirs are low and when tributary stream contributions below Gavins Point Dam are down. The main stem reservoirs are currently near all-time low levels due to four years of drought.

Releases from the Kansas reservoirs are limited to a maximum of 4,000 cubic feet per second (cfs). That would not be enough to raise current Missouri River levels to the minimum service level from Kansas City to the Mississippi River.

“Since calling upon the Kansas reservoirs now wouldn't be enough to meet our targets, we'll hold off until mid-September when the court-ordered restrictions are lifted and the releases can be effectively used to conserve water in the main stem projects,” said Brig. Gen. William Grisoli, Northwestern Division Engineer. The current release rate of 25,000 cfs is expected to rise to 30,000 cfs on Sept. 1. The increase will take about 10 days to reach the Mississippi.

The Corps will follow the water control plans for the three Kansas River basin reservoirs that call for the use of three feet of water out of each of them before Oct. 1 and another three feet after Oct. 1. Varying amounts of water have been used 9 times in the last 23 years.