

Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition
Positive Steps toward Sediment Management in 2011

In June of 2001, a group of concerned people formed the Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition. Their sole objective: to see sediment management put to work so it will remedy sedimentation-caused problems in the Missouri River reservoirs. To date, the source of the problems - sediment - has not been addressed in a long-term, meaningful way. Federal, state, and local agencies lack the arsenal of needed information and funding to manage the system to its optimum health for today and the future. MSAC has made the public more aware of what sediment accumulation is, the problems it causes, and why Americans need to foster the Missouri River reservoir system for future generations. Without public support, congressional support for comprehensive sediment management is doubtful. MSAC also actively facilitates cooperation among federal agencies, which is a key to achieving sediment management.

2011

- MSAC continues to work with the United States Geological Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in formulating Phases 3 and 4 of a sediment assessment program developed with the cooperation of those agencies. MSAC facilitates and coordinates the exchange of information between agencies to better the chances of federal support to complete Phases 3 and 4. These phases 3 and 4 call for gathering additional data identified as lacking in previously completed Phase 2, to account for sediment inflow into the reservoirs. This information is crucial for designing solutions to the sediment problems.

- MSAC representatives met with South Dakota Governor Dennis Daugaard to explain MSAC's mission. MSAC maintains state support with the participation of Jason Glodt, staff member for the governor, filling one of eight slots as a Board of Director.

- MSAC received commitment of \$12,000 from the 319 Information and Education project administered by the South Dakota Discovery Center to fund a series of illustrations to be created by the Missouri River Institute of the University of South Dakota in Vermillion showing sediment progression in Lewis and Clark Lake. The illustrations will provide another educational tool showing what a reduction in sediment loads means to longevity of the reservoir. This is a matching grant that builds off MSAC's existing educational goals.

- MSAC set a goal of actively educating the public about ways to reduce sediment entry to the Missouri River reservoirs. MSAC has distributed one news release about a visit to a Nebraska rancher who utilizes holistic resource management. Several more are planned.

- MSAC reached nearly 300 people at the South Dakota State Fair by hosting an informational display and presenting its videos three times daily. MSAC designed a professional "trade show" display to be moved to several locations over the next several years. Information from the Missouri River Institute project will be utilized to update the display.

- MSAC makes presentations to an average of 10 groups or councils annually. This year those presentations included: the Lewis and Clark Board of Realtors, a public meeting in South Sioux City, a public meeting in Niobrara, Nebraska hosted by MSAC, Walleyes Unlimited and the first district of the South Dakota Farmers Union. District One members approved a resolution supporting sediment management, which is available at MSAC's Web site.

- MSAC presented a poster at the Missouri River Natural Resources Committee Conference at Nebraska City, Nebraska.
- MSAC has maintained and updated a new Web presence at www.msaonline.com. The public has access to the full text of the Phase 2 Sediment Assessment along with newsletters and current information. MSAC has just launched its Facebook page, a social media that is becoming more utilized by federal agencies.
- MSAC hosted its annual meeting in March and for the first time engaged a round-table discussion with John Remus, of the US Army Corps of Engineers, Cindy Steele, of the NRCS, Rayder Swanson, Knox County (Nebraska) Commissioner, and Howard Paul, MSAC Technical Coordinator. MSAC Board of Directors President Larry Weiss facilitated the discussion. The event was attended by two staff people of Nebraska Congressional members. Messages from several elected officials were publicized at the event.
- MSAC maintained support for flood victims and continued to educate the public about sediment. MSAC stressed that sediment did not cause flooding but that it did contribute to flooding.

Milestones 2001-2010

- Prior to MSAC becoming involved in the sediment issue, the US Army Corps of Engineers stated publicly that they did not consider sediment a problem, that it was a “situation” they had predicted when the dams were built and that it was progressing as predicted. In 2002, the Corps agreed with MSAC that sediment accumulation was a problem that needed to be addressed.
- NRCS offices in four states – Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota - completed Phases 1 and 2 of the Sediment Assessment with Congressional support. The USGS in cooperation with the NRCS and USACE has completed the work plan for Phases 3 and 4. MSAC acted as coordinator of those efforts.
- In 2008, MSAC released a 30-minute DVD narrated by outdoorsman Tony Dean. Dozens of copies of the DVD have been distributed to the public free. It has been presented many times to various groups. OaheTV of Pierre produced the piece. School teachers also are requesting to use the DVD.
- In 2007, OaheTV gathered aerial photography of the Missouri River and sediment for use by MSAC. The SD Wing of the Civil Air Patrol also made this project possible.
- MSAC has maintained membership contribution support at an annual rate of an estimated \$27,000 for the past several years. MSAC operates within an annual budget and attempts to gain grant funding. These attempts will continue to grow.

Creating public awareness is an ongoing process, especially as new information unfolds with developments on an ever-changing river. Stakeholder groups continue to grow as the issues surrounding river management get muddier. MSAC will continue to educate the public in new and meaningful ways to gain their attention in an information-saturated environment. MSAC strives for accuracy to build its credibility.

As the flood waters of 2011 recede, MSAC will work with federal, state and local governments and organizations to determine the effects of the flood on bank erosion and sediment deposition, and other associated problems. On Nov. 28, 2011, a photographer captured approximately 700 aerial images of the river between Pierre and the Vermillion area for MSAC. These photos will be available to the public.