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L&C stakeholders to meet Sept. 21 in Niobrara

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(YANKTON-SD) -- Stakeholders concerned about the future of Lewis and Clark Lake are encouraged to take part in a meeting scheduled for Friday, Sept. 21 in Niobrara, Neb., at the Ponca Tribal Headquarters, 2523 Woodbine Street. The session, organized by the Missouri Sedimentation Action Coalition, begins at 10 a.m. and will conclude at approximately noon. The primary goal of this meeting is to learn more about developing a sediment management plan for the lake with the US Army Corps of Engineers.

The event is free and open to the public.

Scheduled to present information are Paul Boyd, USACE hydraulic engineer – Omaha District, who will discuss Section 1179(a) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2016 and update attendees on recent sedimentation research at the lake. Also, Brad Thompson, of the USACE Omaha District's planning branch, will provide information about cost share agreements with the USACE.

Section 1179a directs the USACE to carry out a pilot program for the development and implementation of sediment management plans for reservoirs in the Upper Missouri River Basin, including the watershed above Sioux City, Iowa.

Nearly 60 participants took part in the July 20th stakeholder workshop in Yankton. The event was organized by MSAC. Since the meeting, MSAC has made repeated contact with stakeholders and elected officials and continues to welcome additional stakeholders into the process.

"Support has been growing among stakeholders around the lake to work together to develop a sediment management for Lewis and Clark Lake. People do not want to see the lake completely filled in with sediment which is the course we are currently on," said Sandy Stockholm, MSAC executive director.

Right now the lake is an estimated 30 to 35 percent full with sediment and is projected to be 50 percent full by the year 2045, she said adding that the steps needed to put Section 1179 into motion are coming together. The intent of the Sept. 21st meeting will be learning more from the USACE on this new process and what to expect in coming months. The study costs to develop a sediment management plan would be shared at a 50 percent federal and 50 percent non-federal or local sponsor(s) contribution.

The general public is invited to the Sept. 21 meeting. A full agenda will be available at MSAC's website: www.msaonline.com approximately 5 days before the event. For more information, call 605-661-1594. A registration link is also provided at the website for planning purposes. The MSAC Board of Directors will meet following the stakeholder meeting at approximately 1:15 p.m. The public is also invited to participate.

According to MSAC, a sediment management plan could lay the groundwork for the action needed to sustain Lewis and Clark Lake along with providing an outline for short term relief. Section 1179(a) calls for providing opportunities for project beneficiaries and other stakeholders to participate in sediment management decisions.

“A plan is needed to approach these complex sedimentation problems. This isn’t just another study. It’s a plan for action. We are all well aware of the tremendous amount of time and resources invested in studying sedimentation at Lewis and Clark Lake, which makes the attainability of a sediment management plan more feasible federally and locally,” Stockholm said.

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