



February 14, 2022

US Army Corps of Engineers
Omaha District Office
Attn: Natural Resources Section
1616 Capitol Avenue
Omaha, NE 68102

Re: USACE Fort Peck Dam Master Plan Scoping Period comments

To Whom It May Concern:

The Missouri River Conservation Districts Council (MRCDC) is a coalition of the fifteen conservation districts along the Missouri River in Montana. Spanning 725 miles of River corridor from its headwaters in Gallatin County to Richland County at the North Dakota border, MRCDC seeks to be the united voice for conservation of the Missouri River, its tributaries, and its associated uplands. Montana is the first state in the entire 10-state Missouri River basin to organize and fund a grassroots entity focused solely on the Missouri River basin.

Fort Peck Reservoir is a very important asset to Montana, especially the adjoining and downstream communities of the Reservoir. We have three main topics we are proposing to be included within the Fort Peck Management Plan.

One of our concerns is noxious and invasive weed management. As stated on the Montana Department of Agriculture website, "Noxious weeds have a destructive impact on Montana's landscape by displacing native plant species, increasing soil erosion, and decreasing wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities." Controlling invasive and noxious weeds where USACE has jurisdiction is important in the effort of controlling them around and downstream of Fort Peck Reservoir.

Another concern we have is being sure to have a plan in place that provides funding for spillway fixes in the event they are damaged, especially damages that may occur due to the Test Flows. If there is a predetermined process in place for acquiring funds, fixes to the spillway will occur that much sooner.

Our last concern we have is managing the water level in the Reservoir to provide for adequate water during irrigation season. One of the seven authorized purposes of the Missouri River system is irrigation, so including it in the Master Plan as part of water management makes sense. Why is it not included? The water flow released by the Dam that is used for irrigation is a lifeline to the farming and ranching communities along the Missouri River and beyond. It is important to have enough water in the Reservoir to be released during the irrigation season.

The Missouri River Conservation Districts Council thanks you for taking our comments into consideration in the scoping process of updating USACE Fort Peck Dam Master Plan. We plan to stay involved throughout the NEPA process. If you have any follow up questions for us, please let us know.

Sincerely,



Laura Kiehl, Chairman
Missouri River Conservation Districts Council

cc:

Senator John Tester
Senator Steve Daines
Representative Matt Rosendale
Governor Greg Gianforte