

"I WOULD HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS COURSE TO EVERYONE WORKING ON DIFFICULT NATURAL RESOURCE ISSUES."

# COLLABORATIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE MISSOURI RIVER BASIN

July 20-25, 2003

South Sioux City, Nebraska

## A NEW WAY OF GETTING THINGS DONE

In July 2003, a group of 34 resource managers from across the Missouri River Basin gathered in South Sioux City, Nebraska for a week-long course on Collaborative Resource Management. Participants came from federal, tribal, and state governments, driving in from as far north as Montana and from as far south as Missouri.

What brought this myriad group together was a desire to discover a new way to approach the management of the Missouri River Basin's natural resources. As a backdrop for the week's activities (and as an indication of how litigious the situation has become), a federal judge was ruling on



The 34 participants represented seven federal agencies, seven tribes, and six states.

a case to set the river levels on the Missouri.

Participants left the course with the tools and enthusiasm to return to their agencies and to begin making changes to the

status quo. The inter-agency/inter-government nature of the course also allowed participants the unique opportunity to make connections as the foundation for future collaboration.

## BRING COLLABORATION TO YOUR ECOREGION

This five-day course on collaborative resource management can be held in your river basin or ecoregion! Please contact us to find out more.

Our website, which highlights the Missouri River course outline is a good place to start.

[www.snre.umich.edu/emi/collaboration/cc.htm](http://www.snre.umich.edu/emi/collaboration/cc.htm)

You can also contact Althea Dotzour at 734/615-6431.

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"I now better understand a collaborative process and how to start implementing one. I fully plan to stress a collaborative approach as the way to work in my organization."



Field trip to Ponca State Park, Nebraska

## WHAT IS THIS COURSE ALL ABOUT? (A BRIEF DESCRIPTION)

The collaborative resource management course takes participants through the stages of a collaborative process. From assessing whether the situation is right for collaboration to evaluating and managing adaptively, this course uses a series of case studies, exercises, and simulations to engage participants in learning about what makes collabora-



Trainer Todd Bryan facilitates a strategy clinic, which provided the opportunity to work toward solutions for specific Missouri River Basin issues.

tion work. This week-long course allows participants to learn from seven trainers, including conflict management and dispute resolution experts, on-the-ground managers, and researchers.

Participants have the opportunity to learn from each other and to discuss issues pertinent to the region. A series of “strategy clinics” are designed to give participants the opportunity to use course material and experience to troubleshoot current attempts at collaboration and to think about how to move forward.

The two field trips were a high point of the Missouri River course. Participants enjoyed a visit to Ponca State Park, Nebraska where collaborative efforts had resulted in a terrific education building and a beautifully restored prairie and shoreline. A visit to Gavins Point Dam, South Dakota and a boat trip on the river made discussions of river management tangible.



Course participants from the Bureau of Reclamation, WAPA, and the North Dakota Water Commission enjoy a case presentation.

A visioning exercise the final morning gathered images of the future and gave participants the opportunity to imagine ways that the information learned in the class can be implemented at home.



Barry Gold describes his experiences coordinating the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program.

## FEATURED CASE STUDIES

Case study presenters in this course included:

- David Troutt from the Nisqually River Council
- Angela Kantola from the Upper Colorado River Recovery Program
- Barry Gold from the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program

“Outstanding instructors. Did a good job conveying material, engaging participants and helping everyone learn from each other.”

## WHO ATTENDED THE MISSOURI RIVER COURSE?

Thirty-four people attended the Collaborative Resource Management course including representatives from:

### Federal Agencies

- Army Corps of Engineers
- Bureau of Reclamation
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Fish & Wildlife Service
- Geological Survey
- National Park Service
- Western Area Power Association

### Tribal Governments

- Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe
- Crow Nation
- Fort Peck Tribes
- Intertribal Council on Utility Policy
- Mni Sose Intertribal Water Rights Coalition
- Omaha Tribe of Nebraska
- Rosebud Tribe
- Three Affiliated Tribes
- Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska

### State Agencies

- Kansas Department of Agriculture
- Missouri Dept. of Conservation
- Missouri Dept. of Nat. Resources
- Nebraska Dept. of Nat. Resources
- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
- North Dakota State Water Commission
- South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks
- Wyoming State Engineer’s Office

# VISIONS FROM THE MISSOURI RIVER COURSE

On the last day of the Missouri River course, lead trainer Steven Yaffee worked with participants in a visioning exercise and discussion of "next steps" for the Basin. What was remarkable from this conversation was the level of agreement about perceptions of the situation facing decision makers in the Basin and an overall vision of the River and its desirable future management process.



After working together throughout the week, participants were able to articulate a shared vision of the Missouri River ecosystem.

While the course was not a policy dialogue designed to include representation from all affected groups, the participants included a broad range of federal, tribal and state agency officials. The fact that their perspectives demonstrated a significant amount of commonality suggests that there may be common ground on which to build a more effective process for managing natural resources in the Basin.

The following points outline these perspectives. Participants' vision for the future of the river and its management can be summarized as:

A healthy Missouri River ecosystem providing a foundation for healthy people and economies. Both can be achieved through a collaborative, system-wide restoration and management process that involves the full range of interests and agencies in creative and adaptive problem-solving. It should be well informed by science and law, and not unduly dictated by the courts or political forces.

## Shared Perspectives of Federal, Tribal and State Agency Participants

1. Change is needed. The current decision making system for managing the river and its ecosystem is not working effectively or efficiently.
2. A shared vision of a desirable future might not be that difficult to achieve. The diverse participants in the workshop shared a vision of a healthy river and ecosystem that provides the foundation for healthy people, cultures and economies.
3. To achieve this desired future condition of the river and its management, a different kind of decision making process is needed, drawing from the considerable experience with ecosystem management in other areas of the country yet crafted to reflect the unique qualities and context of the Missouri.
4. To achieve this vision of the river and its management process, opportunities need to be leveraged and momentum built in a number of complementary ways, including holding "kick-off" activities, starting with small successes, supporting training and capacity building, identifying political champions, and compiling scientific information from throughout the basin.
5. The broader context of resource management in the U.S. and in the Basin provide opportunities to advance toward this vision.



During an evening boat trip on the river, the group was treated to displays by the endangered least tern as experts described recovery efforts.

Based on the experiences of other river basins, from conflict can come transformation. The Missouri Basin appears to face a historic moment where a decision making framework suitable for 21<sup>st</sup> century resource management can be collaboratively developed. Strong leadership is needed from both formal leaders and committed individuals throughout the Basin to take advantage of this moment. Many of the participants in the Sioux City workshop expressed a strong sense of personal commitment to help contribute to this effort.



Participants received an extensive binder of materials to supplement the course.

"Use of case histories...is the best tool you can use to share how this works! The use of multiple presenters and multi-media helps. The faculty was very good as well. Great job!"

# COLLABORATIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COURSE A SUCCESS

The combination of trainers, topics, and exercises produced a rich and varied course that gave participants a broad understanding of the challenges and strategies of collaborative resource management.



Trainer Chris Moore from CDR Associates (right) talks with FWS participant Charlie Scott during a field trip at Ponca State Park.

Since completion of the course, several collaborative efforts have been started by course participants with the continuing support of course facilitators.

While change in the Basin will be difficult, it appears that this course educated and inspired participants to find ways to begin to make a difference.

To find out about how to bring this course to your ecoregion, contact Althea Dotzour at 734/615-6431.



Boat trip on the NPS Wild and Scenic stretch of the Missouri River

*"The course did a good job presenting a foundation, revealing concepts, introducing stakeholders, and preparing one to think about/work toward better sustainable solutions. Definitely would recommend course to others."*

## HOW WAS THIS COURSE FUNDED?

The Missouri River course was funded jointly by the Department of Interior Office of Collaborative Action and Dispute Resolution and the Environmental Protection Agency. Travel funds were provided by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Fish & Wildlife Service.

Future courses will also be funded collaboratively, making it possible for a broad array of resource managers to jointly learn the principles of collaborative resource management.



Lead trainer Steven Yaffee (far left) and course participants examine a map detailing collaborative restoration activities.

*"One of the primary benefits of this training was getting to know a wide variety of people interested in the Missouri River. This will be very useful in my work."*



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**Course website:** [www.snre.umich.edu/emi/collaboration/cc.htm](http://www.snre.umich.edu/emi/collaboration/cc.htm)