



August 8, 2023

The Izaak Walton League of America appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Lower Missouri River Flood Risk and Resiliency Study. We commend the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, and the Kansas Water Office for collaborating on this critical effort following a string of devastating floods. Three record floods have occurred on the Missouri River in the last 30 years, in 1993, 2011, and 2019.

Scientists predict major flooding will happen again on the Missouri River. Without substantial actions and significant changes, people along the lower river will experience the similar damage and loss, which will put all American taxpayers on the hook once again.

The League agrees that we must “do something different.” We support the urgently needed steps to increase and improve the lower basin’s flood resiliency. We believe this can be accomplished with:

- Additional levee setbacks and modifications
- Buyouts of frequently flooded properties
- Reduction of more pinch points
- Changes to, and enforcement of, floodplain regulations and zoning ordinances

To improve lower basin flood resiliency, the League recommends the Corps complete the long-delayed Fish and Wildlife Mitigation Project for the Bank Stabilization and Navigation Project. Congress authorized purchasing 166,750 acres, from willing sellers, to restore a portion of the 522,000 acres of aquatic and terrestrial habitat lost to the construction and ongoing operation of the BSNP.

Over 100,000 acres still need to be acquired to fulfill this legal obligation. Mitigation can reduce the impacts of flooding by reconnecting portions of the river to its historic floodplain. This will help lower the river’s stage and velocity.

The League is encouraged to see that this study considered the effects of climate change. Major changes in the basin’s precipitation, temperature, and flows could result from changes to the climate across this vast basin. We urge management of the river be based on future stream and peak flows, and hydrology, not past precipitation, and hydrologic conditions.

Information from this study will be used to update the river’s stage frequency in a study that is being conducted over the next two years. The League supports expanded research into the impacts of land use change in the Missouri River basin on peak flows and we urge that research also include the future impacts of climate change.

The Izaak Walton League of America appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Lower Missouri River Flood Risk and Resiliency Study. We respectfully request to be kept informed on all future developments in this process. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul Lepisto".

Paul Lepisto

Regional Conservation Coordinator

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