



August 9, 2016

Ms. Jo-Ellen Darcy
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
108 Army Pentagon
Washington DC 20310-0108

Dear Ms. Darcy:

Your letter of September 14, 2015, invited me to meet with Mr. Eric Hansen, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Management and Budget. On April 11, Brigadier General Spellmon, Mr. David Ponganis, and I met with Mr. Hansen and discussed the FY 2017 Budget for the Missouri River Recovery Program (MRRP). As a follow up to this visit, the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC) would like to provide some recommendations as you implement the budget for next fiscal year.

We fully support the decisions the MRRP has made in using the 2017 funds identified in the President's budget, and do not want to see any reductions or redirections in their planned Annual Work Plan.

We recommend you move forward with taking the necessary steps to support the travel of MRRIC members to 4 meetings/year. Based on an estimate of the number of members that would take advantage of this support, approximately \$150,000-200,000 per year would be needed, which includes added costs to the Corps to administer the program.

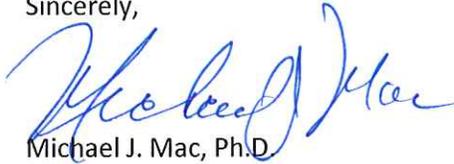
We would like to request, if the Corps is able to secure additional funds for the MRRP in FY 2017, that you prioritize several items the Committee has identified as important to continuing efforts to develop a scientifically defensible management plan. These include:

- A demonstration project designed to improve bird nesting habitat created by the 2011 flood;
- Full funding for pallid sturgeon research to continue to provide life history information critical to defining the most meaningful management actions that will lead to species recovery; and
- Additional funding for support of MRRIC to enable necessary discussion and appropriate coordination around finalization of the draft Adaptive Management Plan and EIS, and to enable the continuation of full discussion with our independent panels through all our FY 2017 meetings and teleconferences. Please note that MRRIC with the Corps have been working diligently to make the process as efficient as possible and to use the existing funds as effectively as possible.

We appreciate any efforts that can be made to enhance the MRRP FY 2017 budget and ensure that the Committee can continue its efforts in partnership with the Corps. While we understand federal budgets are being closely scrutinized, we feel program increases for FY 2018 will be necessary to assure effective implementation of the adaptive management plan we are currently developing.

Thank you for the opportunity to meet with your Deputy.

Sincerely,



Michael J. Mac, Ph.D.
Chair MRRIC

