

12 December, 2011

Paul DeMorgan
Senior Mediator
RESOLVE

Dear Paul:

I am writing in response to your request for clarification about the recommendations made in the ISAP Charge 1 Report to MRRIC. The questions were:

1. There are 7 formal recommendations; what should the SAM SPA Task Group make of the statements in the report that start with “should”, “must”, or “need to” throughout the document – should they be considered ‘recommendations’ or rather clarifications?
2. Is there a sequence or prioritization to the seven recommendations?

The ISAP distilled from the many findings within the report what were considered to be core recommendations. These were findings that we felt needed high priority at a programmatic level or else the overall recovery program would likely remain moribund. There were other opinions on more specific issues or questions that could be considered recommendations or findings for those specific issues. However, the ISAP did not consider those recommendations as thoroughly, nor did we consider all angles and aspects of those issues. If the agencies or MRRIC chose to ignore these specific statements (i.e., “should”, “need to” etc), it would not be as detrimental to the overall program as if the agencies or MRRIC ignored the stated 7 recommendations. Perhaps the best way to think about it would be that if the ISAP were in some regulatory or oversight role over the MRRIC or agencies, the 7 stated recommendations might be considered ‘non-negotiable.’

Regarding the order of prioritization, it is important to note that in reality, all of the recommendations are bundled together and must be done simultaneously. We have attempted to give some sense of how they might be tackled in clusters or sequences, noting that partial completion of the 7 could be as problematic or detrimental as not completing any of the 7 recommendations.

FIRST SEQUENCE:

1. An effects analysis should be developed that incorporates new knowledge that has accrued since the 2003 Amended Biological Opinion.
2. Conceptual ecological models should be developed for each of the three listed species and these models should articulate the pathways from management actions to species performance.
3. Other managed flow programs and adaptive management plans should be evaluated as guiding models for the lower Missouri River recovery program.

SECOND SEQUENCE

4. An adaptive management plan should be developed that anticipates implementation of combined management actions and mechanical habitat construction below Gavins Point Dam, and this plan should be used to guide future management actions, monitoring research, and assessment activities.
5. Monitoring programs along the lower Missouri River should be re-designed so as to determine if expected outcomes are attributable to specific management actions.
6. The agencies should identify decision criteria (trigger points) that will lead to continuing a management action or selecting a different management action. A formal process should be designed and implemented to regularly compare incoming monitoring results with the decision criteria.

THIRD SEQUENCE

7. Baseflow restoration should be evaluated as a potential management action.

If you have any other questions or clarifications that arise, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Martin W. Doyle', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Martin W Doyle, PhD
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