

Monday, December 3

Twenty people attended a public listening meeting at the Richard A. Shoettger Conference Building in Columbia, Missouri. The Refuge received five written comments at the meeting that expressed various priorities for Refuge management. The comments are paraphrased in the following paragraphs:

One person advocated continued land acquisition. The individual is interested in flood control along with wildlife habitat, mainly focusing on a waterfowl refuge and hunting opportunities throughout the entire Refuge.

Another person wants to see the Refuge open to horseback riding, with a limitation of four riders per party.

One individual said that the focus should be on enhancing natural flood pulses to encroach upon the historic Missouri River floodplain. The writer said that the Service should work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to establish the present non-structural flood control benefits as well as calculating a future benefit under the 60,000 acres authorized. This individual believes that the economic and environmental benefits outweigh the traditional COE approaches to river control.

Two comment writers support reconnecting the river with the floodplain.

A comment urged the Refuge to perform active control of invasive plant species and, as part of controlling invasives, to restore native communities of plants.