

## **THE MISSOURI RIVER IS NO LONGER A RIVER...**

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*Abstract:* When the United States Congress enacted the Flood Control Act of 1944, it had no concept of the magnitude of environmental impacts such a dam system could, and would, have on the entire Missouri River ecosystem. Despite its stated purpose, flood control has not occurred. The author provides a brief description of river ecology and cites the ecological impacts to the tribal people residing near the river. The Cheyenne River Tribe, along with other tribes, has lost much of its best land, had to relocate hundreds of families, and has experienced loss of flora and fauna, and economic chaos. Dam construction changed the lives of many Indian families and communities that resided, or were located, along the river. The natural river ecosystem is gone and has been replaced with a treeless prairie that slides down into the reservoir. The river-bottom gallery forests have sheltered animals and people for countless generations and the tree figures prominently in tribal sacred narratives and ceremonies. Cottonwood tree populations show that the species is in severe decline due to major disruption of the natural river flooding process. Ecological consequences are manifesting themselves in novel ways via annual spring flooding of up-river bottom areas that have no history of frequent flooding. The author documents family narratives through description of the loss of their land, property, and way of life.