

Judge refuses to block river water release

by UPI

ST. LOUIS -- Missouri officials have lost a court fight in which they tried to block release of water from an upstream Missouri River dam to help an endangered sturgeon. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers releases the water twice in the spring from a dam near Yankton, S.D. The releases replace the infusion of water from melting snow. The aim is to ensure the spawning of the endangered pallid sturgeon. A federal judge ruled Tuesday that the release, scheduled to begin Wednesday, could go ahead, The New York Times reported. The judge rejected arguments by Missouri Attorney General Jay Nixon that the release could cause dangerous conditions downriver, where flooding and heavy rain have killed 17 people. The corps argued that the release of hundreds of thousands of gallons from the Gavins Point Dam will only raise the river level 6 inches in South Dakota and even less downstream. "The river is falling," said Paul Johnston, a corps spokesman. "We expect that it will stay in the river channel. It will not threaten any of the levees being repaired from 2007."

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