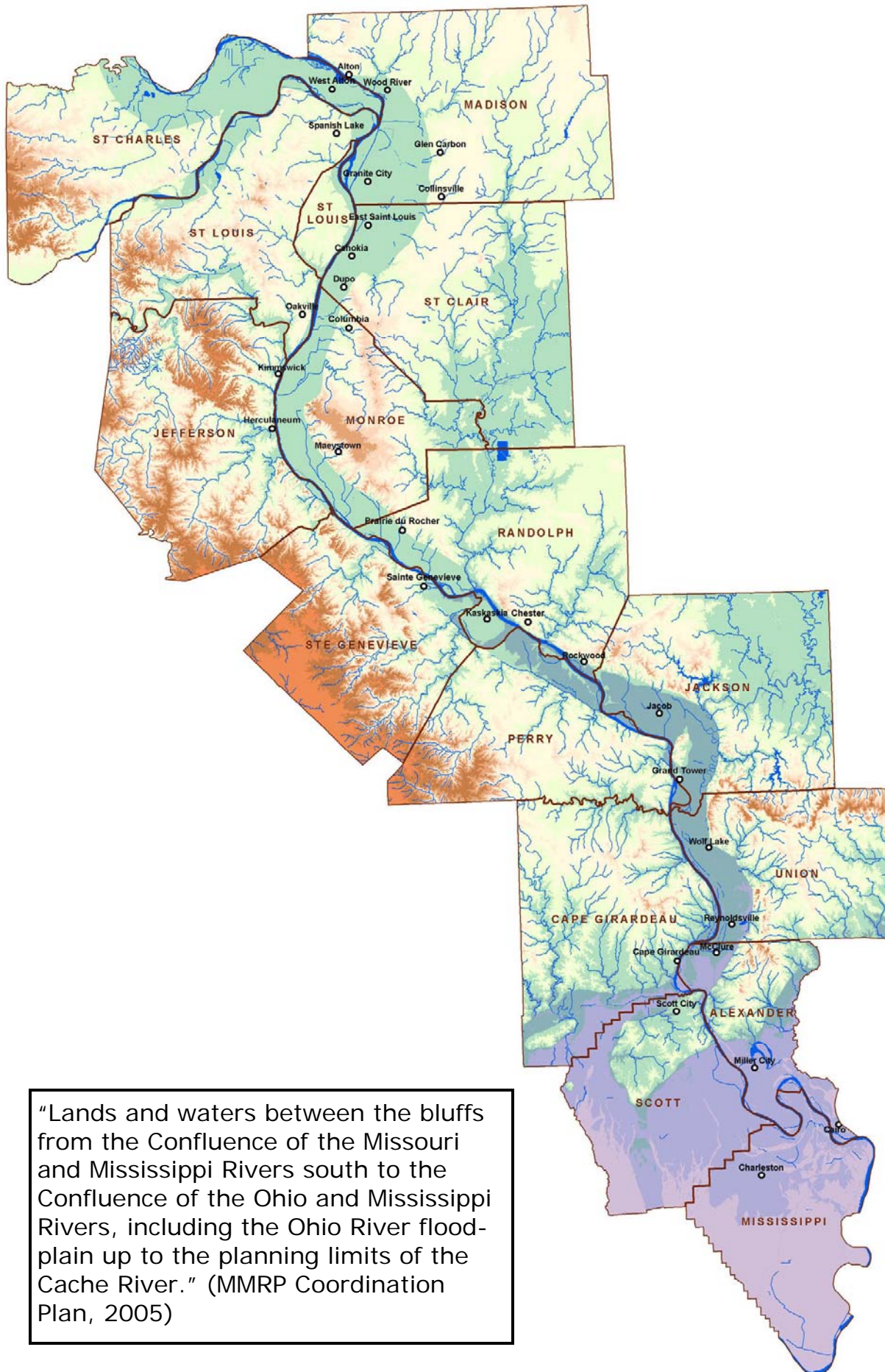


2008 MMRP Activities Briefing





“Lands and waters between the bluffs from the Confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers south to the Confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers, including the Ohio River flood-plain up to the planning limits of the Cache River.” (MMRP Coordination Plan, 2005)

Dear Guests,

Each year that I spend working with a diversity of concerned citizens, federal, state, and foundation partners, I'm reminded of the passion and concern that each express over the continued welfare of the Middle Mississippi River. Big river management issues are once again the focus and have been exacerbated with the duration and water levels along the entire Upper Mississippi and Missouri River corridors.

It is my honor, as Chairman, to welcome you to the Middle Mississippi River Partnerships' (MMRP) 2008 Activities Briefing. The MMRP, a consortium of more than 20 federal, state, not-for-profit, and foundation partners, have been working diligently to involve the public in refining our MMRP Coordination Plan, participating in Collaborative Planning involving new stakeholders, completing assessments of individual river segments (River Reaches) as well as sponsoring an assessment of Historical Vegetation and Land Types also known as Hydrogeomorphological modeling (HGM) along the 195 river miles from St. Louis, MO south to Cairo, IL.

The MMRP members look forward to collaborating with impacted communities and river enthusiasts to strategically find a balance between flood control, navigation, public use, while ensuring water quality and protecting pivotal habitats for native and endangered wildlife and plant species for future generations of Americans.

Sincerely,

Robert Cail

Chairman, MMRP

The Middle Mississippi River Partnership would like to thank the following foundations for their support over the past year, including assisting in sponsoring this Activities Briefing:

The Doris Duke Foundation
The McKnight Foundation
Southern Illinois Community Foundation



DORIS DUKE
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
FOR GOOD. FOREVER. FOR SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

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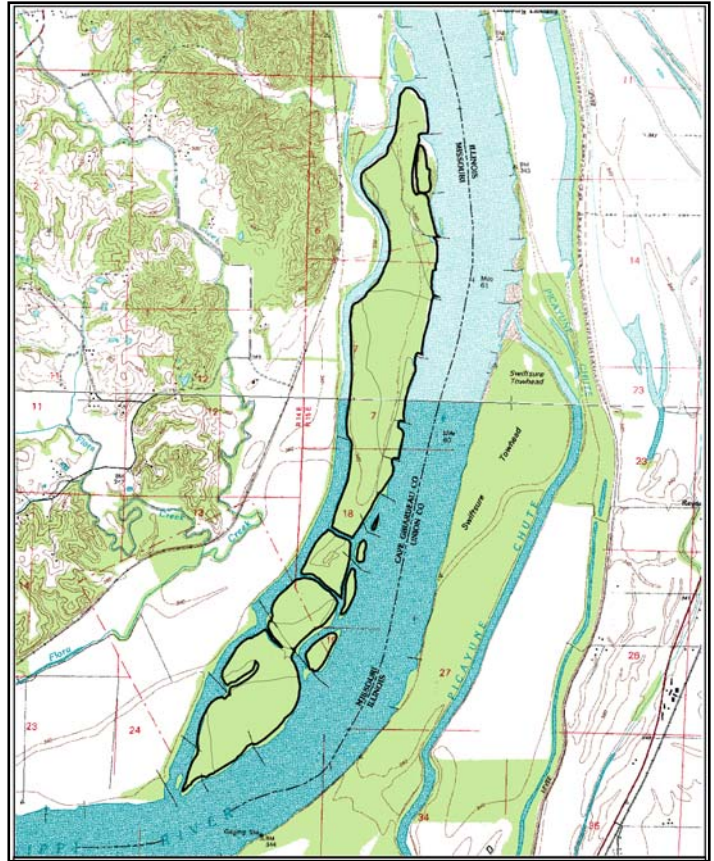
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MISSOURI PROJECTS

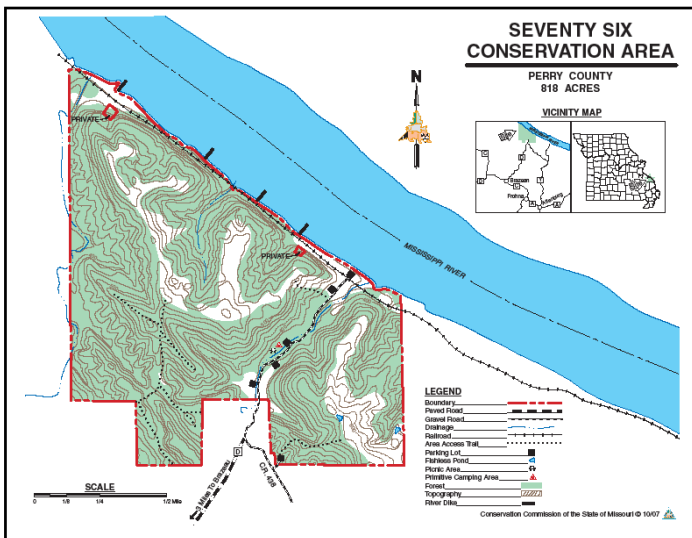
Windy Bar — A partnership effort between the American Land Conservancy (ALC), Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) resulted in the acquisition of 705 acres of critical island habitat, capping an 18-year effort by agencies and conservation groups to protect the area. The Windy Bar property and the adjacent Schenimann Chute represent a forested island/side channel complex on the middle Mississippi River. It is located five miles north of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and will be managed by the MDC.

Windy Bar is situated in the Cape Hills Conservation Opportunity Area of the Missouri Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Plan and was a high priority acquisition for the MDC. A project to enhance aquatic habitat diversity of the adjacent Schenimann Chute is planned for the future. The improved habitat diversity will enhance the capacity of Schenimann Chute to support and recruit native fish assemblages. The island and chute complex will also provide additional recreational opportunities in an area of limited public access.



Windy Bar (outlined) and Schenimann Chute Complex at Mississippi River Mile 62.5 to 56.5. The chute is on the land side of Windy Bar.

Cottonwood and willow forests, wetlands, sand bars, and riparian areas on the island provide exceptional fish and wildlife habitat. Windy Bar is frequently visited by bald eagles and is considered an important resource for the recovery of threatened and endangered species such as the Pallid Sturgeon, Least Tern, and Indiana Bat.



Seventy-Six Conservation Area — As many river users know, there are few public access points on the Mississippi River. The MDC desires to improve river access and has built a new public boat ramp at the Seventy-Six Conservation Area in Perry County, Missouri. The boat ramp is now complete, and includes a parking lot and public restrooms. The facility will eventually be disabled accessible and is now open for public use.

MIDDLE MISSISSIPPI RIVER COLLABORATIVE PLANNING STUDY

The Middle Mississippi River Partnership developed a Regional Coordination Plan in 2005 to identify the many resource issues and concerns in the corridor and help to focus the efforts of the various partners in addressing these priority issues. The plan not only addressed natural resource concerns but also regional needs like agricultural viability, balanced floodplain management, and a healthy and sustainable economy. The plan served as a focal point for program implementation and started the reach planning process to identify more specific opportunities related to attaining the goals outlined within the plan.

In 2006 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) began a 2-year collaborative planning effort on the Middle Mississippi River. The MMRP has worked very closely with the USACOE on this effort, which has provided the Partnership the opportunity to expand their planning efforts to involve more stakeholders and outside groups and to identify more specific goals, strategies and specific action items that could help address the issues identified in the 2005 Coordination Plan. The collaborative planning study consisted of three primary components:

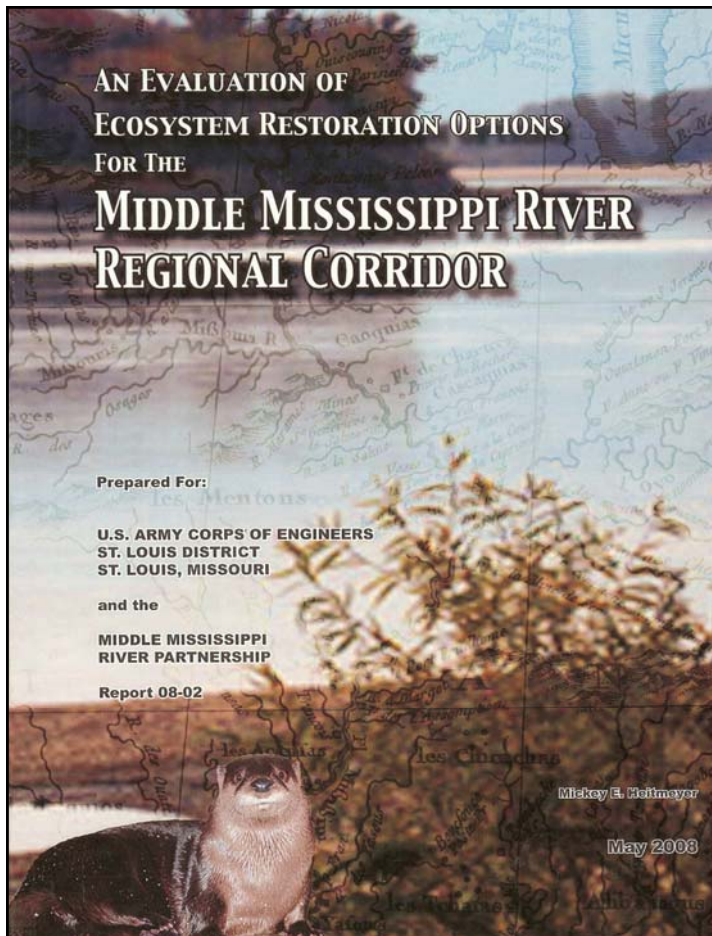
1. Update, extension, and refinement of the 2005 MMRP Coordination Plan
2. Development of a science-based planning tool for ecosystem restoration and natural resource management in the MMR corridor
3. Development of a series of individual Reach Assessments to identify local issues, opportunities, and needs

These three inter-related processes will assist the region, the MMRP, as well as other interested entities, in addressing the natural resource issues in the corridor by providing a strategic framework of resource issues, establishing goals and targets for long-term success, providing a scientific method of identifying areas for restoration, and listing specific priority areas and opportunities that are present in each reach of the corridor.

The Middle Mississippi River Partnership will use these documents and processes over the next five to ten years to help attain the goals identified in their Regional Plan. This collaborative planning effort would not have been possible without the assistance and program funding by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the past two years.



HYDROGEOMORPHIC ANALYSIS



In 2006, the St. Louis District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Middle Mississippi River Partnership initiated a cooperative planning project to develop landscape-level restoration plans for the Middle Mississippi River Regional Corridor (MMRRC) using hydrogeomorphic (HGM) analyses to identify ecosystem restoration options. This report, completed in May 2008, provides this HGM-based assessment with the following objectives: 1) identify the pre-European settlement ecosystem condition and ecological processes in the MMRRC; 2) evaluate differences between pre-European settlement and current conditions in the MMRRC with specific reference to alterations in hydrology, vegetation community structure and distribution, and resource availability to key fish and wildlife species; and 3) identify restoration and management approaches and ecological attributes needed to successfully restore specific habitats and conditions within the MMRRC.

Major historical vegetation communities/habitat types in the MMRRC included: 1) the main channel and islands of the Mississippi River and its tributaries, 2) river Chutes and Side Channels, 3) Bottomland Lakes, 4) Riverfront Forest, 5) Floodplain Forest, 6) Bottomland Hardwood Forest (BLH), 7) Slope Forest, 8) Bottomland Prairie, 9) Mesic Terrace Prairie, and 10) Savanna.

The distribution and area of the Presettlement communities in the MMRRC ecoregions were mapped using HGM matrix criteria and confirmed by a combination of historic maps, botanical accounts, General Land Office surveys, and reference sites of remnant native vegetation. The diversity of Presettlement communities was highest in the American Bottoms and lowest in the southern Thebes ecoregion. Moving from north to south in the MMRRC, prairie was abundant (29% of total mapped area excluding the Mississippi and tributary river channels, bars, and side channels/chutes) in the American Bottoms, but was present only on what is now Kaskaskia Island (1.8% of the Kaskaskia ecoregion), and did not occur in the Thebes ecoregion. Floodplain Forest increased from 19% in the American Bottoms to 53% in Kaskaskia and then declined to 10% at Thebes. In contrast, BLH was absent of the American Bottoms, but increased to 8% at Kaskaskia and 63% at Thebes. Riverfront Forest occupied 25% in the American Bottoms, but only 20% and 16% at Kaskaskia and Thebes, respectively. Bottomland Lakes occupied 6-8% of all ecoregions.

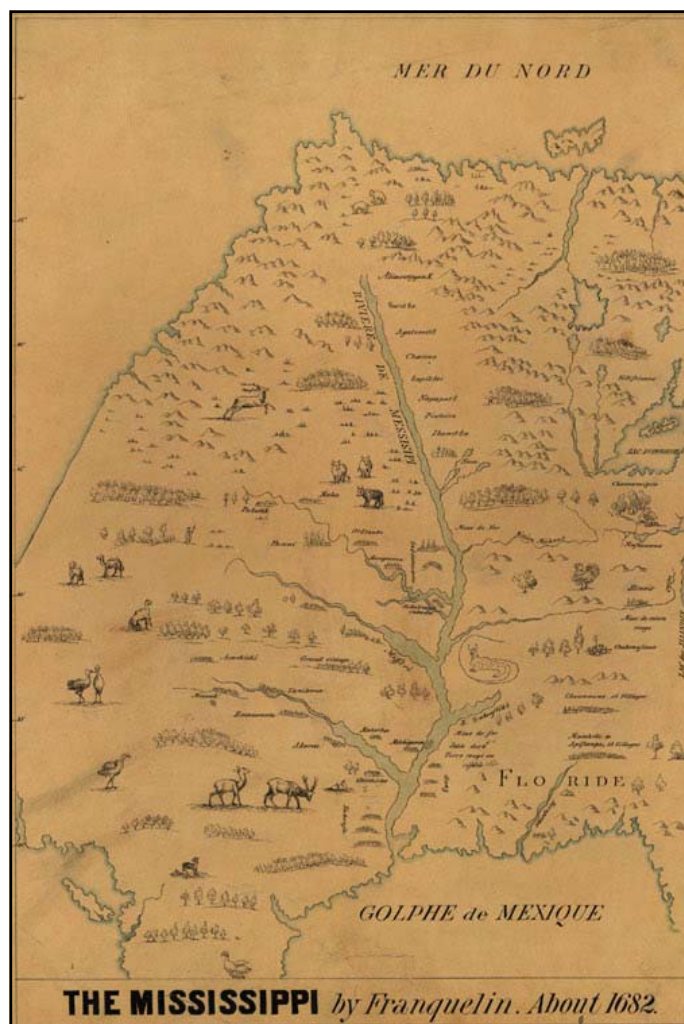
A productive strategy for ecosystem restoration within the MMRRC will be to proactively seek sites that offer potential for restoration of habitat complexes. It is recommended that the following items be incorporated into a comprehensive ecosystem restoration and conservation strategy for the MMRRC:

1. Restore at least some functional areas of the most destroyed habitat types, especially Bottomland and Mesic Prairie, Savanna, Bottomland Lake, and Floodplain Forest.
2. Expand remnant BLH patches and restore natural hydrological regimes that match natural dynamics of respective Low to High BLH communities.
3. Expand and diversify Riverfront Forest communities to create functional corridors along the Mississippi River and include some hard mast tree species on the highest ridges and natural levee elevations.
4. Reconnect select Side Channels and Chutes along the Mississippi River.
5. Create buffers of habitat complexes around floodplain wetlands, especially Bottomland Lakes, point bar swales, and backswamp depressions.
6. Identify possibilities for restoring hydraulic connectivity between MMRRC rivers and their floodplains, especially backwater flows into sloughs, swales, abandoned channels, and backswamp depressions.

Map of the Middle Mississippi River Regional Corridor produced by Franquelin in 1682.

Ultimately, restoring components of the historic MMRRC ecosystem will require many physical and biological strategies. Much information developed in this report will help inform strategies, but some uncertainties remain about specific techniques, hydrological variables, community responses, and larger-scale interactions of habitats and sites. Future restoration and management of ecosystems in the MMRRC can be done in an adaptive management framework where predictions about specific management or restoration actions can be made and then select biotic and abiotic parameters are monitored and evaluated to determine system responses and to suggest changes in management or strategies that are needed to achieve desired results.¹

View the complete collaborative planning study at: www.midmiss.org.



¹ Heitmeyer, M. E. 2008. An evaluation of ecosystem restoration options for the Middle Mississippi River Regional Corridor. Greenbrier Wetland Services Report 08-02, Advance, MO.

WETLANDS RESERVE PROGRAM

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program that offers landowners the means and the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property for a wide range of benefits to themselves and the community. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) manages the program, as well as provides technical and financial support to help landowners who participate in the WRP to realize those objectives.



Since 1994, Illinois NRCS has restored wetland functions and values to 17,524 acres in the Middle Mississippi River Project area through the WRP. NRCS acquired the rights to restore those wetland functions and values through the purchase of permanent conservation easements, from willing sellers, on 82 parcels ranging from 4 acres to 2,110 acres in size. The distribution of those projects spans each and every reach of the river from Cairo to the American Bottoms. Much of the initial program interest was in direct response to the "Great Flood of 1993", but then continued with increasing interest in recreation and tourism.

Wetland restoration can be an appropriate alternative on marginal cropland acres that tend to be higher risk in terms of production due to seasonal flooding or excessive wetness. Payments received from the sale of a WRP easement may supplement income from more productive acres, improving the "bottom line" for the entire farm operation. In other instances, easement payments may enable the acquisition of other more productive land or retire existing debt. In all cases, the landowner retains ownership of the land – they have the right to hunt, fish, and pursue other appropriate recreational uses compatible with the rights acquired by the WRP easement. Land managing partners such as the USDA Forest Service, USDI Fish & Wildlife Service and Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) have acquired the remainder fee interest from willing sellers on approximately one-half of the WRP lands in the corridor and have made them available for public recreational use, consistent with the protective rights initially acquired by the WRP easement.



The restoration of these lands was accomplished by reforestation on thousands of acres, both by planting native bottomland hardwoods and by allowing the natural regeneration of trees. In select areas, wet meadow plantings consisting of native grasses and forbs were established offering an added measure of diversity to the restoration.

ROCKWOOD ISLAND

Rockwood Island is a 2,506-acre island-side channel complex with tremendous potential for fish and wildlife habitat restoration, public recreation and education. Located along the main river road just south of Chester, Illinois the island is highly accessible and provides the opportunity to create a variety of visitor-serving facilities.

In late 2005 the American Land Conservancy utilized funding provided by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation to acquire 723 acres, from willing sellers, on Rockwood Island. This acquisition was enhanced in late 2006 with an additional 21 acres of in-holdings being purchased, again with funding provided by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. Both acquisitions were completed in partnership with the Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development, Inc. These 21 acres were key tracts which will allow the furtherance of restoration projects to occur between Ducks Unlimited and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. As a result of these transactions, more than 30% of the Rockwood Island complex is currently under permanent federal protection.

Ownership of these properties have been donated to the US Fish & Wildlife Service for inclusion in the Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge. Ducks Unlimited (DU) has been working with Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development, Inc., American Land Conservancy and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to develop a plan for restoring 100 acres of wetland and another 170 acres of bottomland forest. The estimated cost of implementing this plan is approximately \$422,000.



MMRNWR Headquarters; Rockwood, Illinois

In fall 2007, American Land Conservancy, in partnership with Ducks Unlimited and Living Lands and Waters, assisted in planting 700 trees on Rockwood Island. With nearly 70 volunteers, this was the beginning of an on-the-ground effort to restore the habitat on Rockwood Island. Living Lands and Waters supplied the trees and lunch for all of the participants involved in the planting.

MIDDLE MISSISSIPPI RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

Beaver Island — This 245-acre site protects one of the last remaining island/side-channel complexes on the middle Mississippi River, and the region's best breeding habitat for the endangered Pallid Sturgeon. The American Land Conservancy (ALC), in conjunction with Ducks Unlimited, acquired the property in 2002, utilizing funds from the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. The property was transferred to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) for long-term oversight and management in 2004. This site was the first public land addition to the Middle Mississippi River National Wildlife Refuge.



Kaskaskia Island — This is a 20,000-acre island/oxbow complex with nearly 13,500 acres of productive farmland protected by a federal levee, and 6,500 acres of remnant wetland and bottomland forest outside the levee. In 2001 the American Land Conservancy acquired 3,200 acres from the largest single landowner on the island. Acres that were protected by the federal levee (1/3) were resold for agricultural production, and the balance (2/3) was entered into permanent protection through the Wetlands Reserve Program. This property has been transferred to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for long-term oversight and management.

Crains Island — In 2006, the American Land Conservancy acquired 400 acres from the largest single landowner on Crains Island and conveyed the property to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in March 2007. The ALC acquired an additional 160 acre in-holding in May 2008 in hopes of building out the complex for habitat protection as well as providing additional public land for the region. The Crains Island project aims to protect approximately 569 acres of a remnant-braided riparian corridor habitat along the bank of the Mississippi River. The Crains Island Unit of the Middle Mississippi River National Fish and Wildlife Refuge is geographically located on the Missouri side of the Mississippi River across from Chester, IL. Historical meandering of the river has positioned this piece of Randolph County, Illinois onto the Missouri side of the river. The conveyance of the in-holding to the USFWS would allow tremendous potential for fish and wildlife habitat restoration, public recreation and education. It is highly accessible and provides the opportunity to create a variety of visitor serving facilities. It lies in close proximity to the Rockwood Island Unit, Wilkinson Island Unit, Kaskaskia Island Unit, and Beaver Island.

SHAWNEE NATIONAL FOREST

The USDA Forest Service has acquired approx. 3,000 acres of marginal farmlands in the floodplain of the Middle Mississippi River (MMR) since 1995, following the large floods of 1993 and 1995, in partnership with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service and the American Land Conservancy. These acquisitions are in Jackson, Union, and Alexander Counties in Illinois, and they continue today pending the availability of federal funding and partner contributions. In 2005, the Secretary of Agriculture established a new purchase unit for the Forest Service in the MMR floodplains in Illinois to allow for future acquisitions and restoration partnerships. All newly acquired lands by the Forest Service in the MMR partnership area, including those identified above, are used for recreation by the public, primarily for hunting, fishing, hiking, bird watching, and nature viewing and study. They also help to conserve soil and important wildlife habitats and improve water quality in the Mississippi River and its floodplain. The Forest Service currently manages approx. 20,000 acres of primarily bottomland forests and wetlands in the MMR floodplain.

In 2008, the Shawnee National Forest completed one hundred and fifty acres of reforestation of former, marginal cropland in partnership with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) in Alexander County. This was done on the 280 acre, WRP (Wetland Reserve Project) parcel (Colyer South) acquired by the Forest Service in fall 2007. However, extensive and long-lasting flooding within the floodplain areas protected by levees in spring and summer of 2008, following the planting efforts, may have resulted in the failure of this planting effort. The success of this project will be assessed once floodwaters totally recede in the project area.

Also in 2008, the Forest Service completed its partnership agreement with Ducks Unlimited, Inc. on the wetland restorations in the Big Muddy Wetland in Jackson County. Five wetlands were restored affecting 35 acres. This area was also reforested in spring of 2007 in partnership with NRCS. This 185 acre WRP property was donated to the Forest Service by Ducks Unlimited, with funding being provided by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation. The American Land Conservancy was a partner in the original acquisition of this property.

In 2008, the Forest Service created and filled a new position to work primarily on natural resource partnership projects in the MMR partnership area to improve the partnership projects and involvement of the Forest Service in the MMR corridor.

Current, on-going projects for the Forest Service and its partners also include working with the American Land Conservancy in the acquisition of a boat ramp and riverfront forest area on the Big Muddy River, approximately 0.75 miles from Mississippi River, that will allow public boating access to both rivers, working on a birding guide for public lands in the southern end of the MMR corridor in partnership with the Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory at Southern Illinois University, and continued restoration planning with both the American Land Conservancy and Ducks Unlimited for MMR floodplains in Jackson, Union, and Alexander counties near the Big Muddy River and the Cape Bend Fish and Wildlife area.

Partnership Vision

A network of diverse and sustainable natural resources on public and private lands in the Middle Mississippi River corridor that adequately supports wildlife habitat and provides conservation benefits consistent with a variety of other uses.

Partnership Mission

The MMR Partnership is a collaboration of federal and state agencies and not-for-profit organizations working to restore and enhance the natural resources of the corridor through public and private resource management, compatible economic development, private lands conservation, and education and outreach to the citizens of the region.

Guiding Principles of the Partnership

- Implementation efforts will be based on planning and grassroots coalition building that includes local citizens and all levels of government.
- Private property rights must be recognized in implementing conservation projects and in offering solutions to natural resource issues. Voluntary participation by landowners is the key for implementing conservation projects that will meet resource needs.
- All actions must appropriately reflect scientific and economic data, as well as possess practical applications for natural resource enhancement.
- Any acquisition of land for conservation purposes will be through voluntary methods and involve only willing sellers.
- Actions should be focused on the protection, restoration, and enhancement of high quality natural resources that have the greatest potential for recovery.

Partnership members agree to:

- Strive for continuous improvement and assure the quality of projects and assistance will be maintained at the highest standard.
- Promote mutual respect, support, trust, and honesty in providing assistance on conservation efforts.
- Share in the leadership, ownership, credit, and responsibility relating to conservation accomplishments.
- Consider social and economic concerns and issues in conservation projects and activities.
- Recognize that agencies and organizations have different missions and goals and that participation levels may vary.

Middle Mississippi River Partnership Member Agencies and Organizations

The [USDA Forest Service](#) mission is to achieve quality land management under the sustained multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of present and future generations. The Forest Service manages public lands in national forests and grasslands; is the world's largest forestry research organization; and provides technical and financial assistance to state and private forestry agencies.

In the National Forest System, the Forest Service manages 191 million acres in 175 national forests or grasslands. The Forest Service has the responsibility for the administration of lands in the Shawnee National Forest and recognizes the advantages of cooperating with other agencies and organizations engaged in similar activities on other lands along the middle Mississippi River.

The [US Fish and Wildlife Service](#) administers the National Wildlife Refuge System with a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans. This system includes the Middle Mississippi River NWR. The Service also conducts other conservation programs through its Ecological Service, Fisheries and Law Enforcement branches within the partnership area.

Through this partnership, the Service seeks to further the conservation of wetlands, aquatic resources, wildlife and fish habitat and contribute to a cooperative effort for the economically and environmentally responsible management of floodplain lands within the river corridor.

The [Conservation Fund](#) forges partnerships to conserve America's legacy of land and water resources, through land acquisitions, community initiatives and leadership training. In partnership with the Forest Service, The Conservation Fund has helped preserve more than 112,363 acres in 53 projects in 20 states.

The [Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region \(UMR/GLR\) Joint Venture](#) is interested in the delivery of conservation efforts for all bird species within the Joint Venture landscape. The UMR/GLR Joint Venture Management Board is committed to serve as the all-bird conservation coordinating body in this region.

Located within a short drive of the Middle Mississippi River and the Shawnee National Forest, [Southern Illinois University Carbondale \(SIUC\)](#) has earned international acclaim as the second largest comprehensive university in Illinois. Founded in 1869, SIUC maintains more than 190 academic programs that lead to associate, baccalaureate, masters, specialists, doctoral, and professional degrees. Programs in fisheries, wildlife, forestry, botany, zoology, environmental policy, and economic development are particularly relevant to the Middle Mississippi River, and SIUC researchers in these programs and others are actively engaged in research from bluff to bluff, as well as along the entire reach of the river proper.

[Ducks Unlimited, Incorporated](#) is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to conserve, restore and manage wetlands and associated habitats for North American waterfowl, wildlife and people. Ducks Unlimited will work with the signatories to further the mission and goals of the Middle Mississippi River Partnership, especially those that coincide with DU's mission.

The [Illinois Department of Natural Resources](#) has a mission to manage, sustain, and protect Illinois' natural resources for present and future generations. The Department is interested in acquiring land to meet the public's open space and resource protection needs. Establishing and maintaining partnerships provides the opportunity to enhance resource protection and resource-compatible recreation opportunities. In the MMR area, the Department currently manages several important public land sites. Providing habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife species is a primary goal of areas such as Horseshoe Lake and Union County Conservation Areas. Involvement in this partnership will improve our ability to meet habitat and fish and wildlife resource goals on a larger scale. The increase level of cooperation that this partnership provides will allow us to direct our efforts in a manner that will maximize resource benefits.

The [Illinois Forestry Development Council](#) strives to identify and evaluate the social, economic, and scientific values and magnitude of both the rural and urban settings of forestry resources, and the related forestry industry of Illinois, to determine the needs and support for forestry education programs, and to determine soil and water conservation benefits and wildlife habitat enhancement opportunities that can be promoted through approved forestry management plans. The Partnership will provide an opportunity for the Council to further define the magnitude, nature, and extent of this natural resource and determine the needs to conserve and enhance forest resources along the corridor.

The [Nature Conservancy's](#) mission is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. To that end, the Conservancy uses a science-based approach to identify sites for protection and develops customized strategies to ensure the long-term survival of native life and natural communities. TNC has identified the Middle Mississippi River and its associated floodplain as a priority for protection and desires to explore and pursue cooperative opportunities with other partners for the purpose of restoring and protecting the biodiversity associated with this system.

A primary goal of the [U.S. Geological Survey](#) is to provide information on physical, chemical, biological, and geological processes needed to make informed decision about managing natural systems. This is accomplished by data collection, long-term assessments, ecosystem analysis, and development of tools to predict the effect of human actions on natural systems. The Middle Mississippi River system provides a broad array of environmental and economic benefits. The Survey has ongoing programs to collect data and conduct research on the Middle Mississippi River regarding land use, hydrology, water quality, and biota. We recognize and support the need for cooperation among agencies toward the mutual goal of developing more effective management strategies for this important river system.

The [American Land Conservancy](#) is a national private non-profit organization dedicated to

the preservation of land and water as enduring public resources, to protect and enhance our nation's natural, ecological, historical, recreational, and scenic heritage. ALC works with communities, private landowners, local land trusts, and public lands agencies to create effective conservation solutions for threatened land and water resources. Using innovative approaches to protect land in cost-efficient ways, ALC has the ability to move quickly on projects of consequence.

The [Missouri Department of Conservation's](#) mission is to protect and manage the fish, forest, and wildlife resources of the state; to serve the public and facilitate their participation in resource management activities; and to provide opportunity for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about fish, forest, and wildlife resources. The Department seeks to work cooperatively with natural resource agencies and organizations to enhance management and conservation of wetlands and other fish and wildlife habitat and aquatic resources within the Middle Mississippi River.

The [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) in both Illinois and Missouri provides leadership in a partnership effort to help people conserve, maintain, and improve our natural resources and environment. NRCS serves as USDA's technical arm in the conservation of soil, water, and all natural resources on private lands. NRCS works with partners and one-on-one with landowners to deliver voluntary, incentive-based conservation programs designed to protect natural resources while maintaining productivity on working lands. NRCS programs target agricultural lands, wetlands, and wildlife habitat. We value diversity in our people and in our land. With technical professionals in nearly every county, NRCS is able to work directly with private landowners and partners to diagnose resource problems and develop science-based solutions. The Partnership goals are consistent with NRCS mission goals and we welcome the opportunity to expand our conservation partnership activities.

The [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#) has multiple missions on the Middle Mississippi River. Along with the traditional missions of navigation and flood damage reduction; environmental stewardship and habitat restoration are key missions. This agreement will further Corps efforts by establishing a framework to share information and, in close partnership with the members, to actively participate in restoration and improvement activities through various Corps authorities. The St. Louis District has professionals with expertise in hydrology, engineering, wildlife biology, fisheries, soils, surveys and GIS based mapping permitting technical, science-based input into stewardship on the Middle Mississippi River.

[Wildlife Forever](#) works to conserve America's wildlife heritage through preservation of habitat, conservation education, and scientific management of fish and wildlife. Working with government agencies, private organizations, landowners and local conservation groups, Wildlife Forever has benefited a broad diversity of fish and wildlife species throughout the United States. Recognizing the rich and unique attributes of the Middle Mississippi River ecosystem, Wildlife Forever seeks to cooperate with partner organizations in conserving and expanding critical habitats along the river corridor.

The [Illinois Society of American Foresters](#) is the Illinois Chapter of the national scientific and educational organization representing the forestry profession in the United States.

The mission of the SAF is to advance the science, education, technology, and practice of forestry; to enhance the competency of its members; to establish professional excellence; and to use the knowledge, skills, and conservation ethic of the profession to ensure the continued health and use of forest ecosystems and the present and future availability of forest resources to benefit society.

The [Missouri Department of Natural Resources \(MDNR\)](#) is a state agency in Missouri charged with protecting, preserving and enhancing Missouri's natural, cultural and energy resources. The department works to ensure clean air, land and water by cleaning up pollution from the past and addressing pollution problems of today and identifying potential pollution issues of the future. The department works with citizens, including landowners, local governments, small businesses and industry, to protect Missouri's environment. It enforces environmental rules and regulations related to air and water pollution; hazardous and solid waste; land reclamation; soil and water conservation and safe public drinking water. The department also interprets the states geological and hydrological setting and assesses the character and availability of Missouri's water, energy and mineral resources, ensures the safety of dams and determines land boundaries. MDNR can participate in and contribute to the goals of the Middle Mississippi River partnership in all of the above areas of responsibility and program management.

The [Southern Illinois Community Foundation \(SICF\)](#) is a not-for-profit public foundation serving the southernmost seventeen counties of Illinois. Its mission is to serve the southern Illinois Community through philanthropy by providing leadership in meeting charitable needs of our changing communities, and to be a responsible steward to its donors and of its endowments. They are a donor service that connects people who care with causes that matter and support the strengthening of regional non-profits and the building of endowments to serve worthy projects in our regional communities. SICF can participate in and contribute to the goals of the Middle Mississippi River partnership in all of the above areas of service and support.

The [Southwestern Illinois Resource Conservation & Development \(RC&D\), Inc.](#) is a not-for-profit corporation established to address regional natural resource concerns and to improve the quality of life in southwestern Illinois. The mission of the RC&D is to develop and support partnerships, create programs and implement projects that encourage the conservation of our environmental resources. Southwestern Illinois RC&D, Inc. also coordinates with other RC&D areas to encourage more regional implementation of projects, such as the MMRP.

The mission of the [US Environmental Protection Agency](#) is to protect human health and the environment. EPA works on a watershed basis to improve water quality and maintain and enhance ecosystems. Working with partners, EPA has a goal to achieve a net increase of 400,000 acres of wetland with additional focus on biological and functional measures. EPA will work for national gains in wetland acreage by implementing an innovative and partner based wetlands and stream corridor restoration program. The agency will assist its federal, state, and tribal partners in building capacity to implement more effective wetland programs, including those that protect wetlands and waters not covered by the Clean Water Act.

Middle Mississippi River Partnership

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PARTNER PROGRAMS

Agency	Program	Type	Description	Cost Share	Website
American Land Conservancy	Conservation Easement	Conservation Easement	Agreement that limits uses of land to preserve its conservation values	N/A	www.alcnet.org/projects/overview/mississippi
	Land Acquisition Program	Land Acquisition	Works with landowners who wish to sell or donate their exceptional land for conservation by finding a public agency or conservation buyer to own and manage the land permanently	N/A	www.alcnet.org/projects/overview/mississippi
Ducks Unlimited	Demonstration/Technical Assistance Projects	Technical Assistance	Projects for which DU provides on-site biological guidance or demonstrations to benefit waterfowl/wetlands management	N/A	
	Matching Aid to Restore State Habitat (MARSH) Projects	Grant & Cost Share	MARSH projects use a portion of DU grassroots funds leveraged with matching funds from other organizations to enhance and restore habitat within each state	50%	
	Conservation Projects	Technical Assistance	Conservation projects include wetland enhancements, grass-land restoration, private land easements, etc. that are not a part of the MARSH program	N/A	
	Missouri Bootheel Partners Program	Technical Assistance	Technical and financial assistance to landowners interested in improving waterfowl status and wetlands quality on their lands in Southeastern Missouri	N/A	
	Section 319 Grants	Grant & Cost Share	Grant funds for activities including technical assistance, financial assistance, education, training, demonstration projects, and monitoring to assess the success of specific nonpoint source implementation projects	40%	www.epa.gov/OWOW/NPS/cwact
Forest Service	Forest Legacy Program	Conservation Easement	Helps states develop and carry out their forest conservation plans and uses easements to protect private forest lands	25%	www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/foa/fsp
	Forest Stewardship Program	Technical Assistance	Primary focus is development of comprehensive, multi-resource management plans that provide landowners with information needed to manage their forests for a variety of products and services	N/A	www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/foa/fsp
IDNR	Land Acquisition Program	Land Acquisition	Discusses acquisition of land to meet federal conservation goals while remaining consistent with all federal agency missions	N/A	www.fs.fed.us/land/staff/LWCF/nfl_land_acq_plan/
	Partnership Cost Share Programs	Technical Assistance	Website provides information on sources of funding for various conservation and ecosystem projects	N/A	www.partnershipresourcecenter.org/resources/funding/index.php
	State and Private Forestry	Technical Assistance	Program brings forest management assistance and expertise to a diversity of landowners, including small woodlot, tribal, state, and federal through cost-effective, non-regulatory partnerships	N/A	www.fs.fed.us/spf/coop/programs/foa/fsp
	Conservation Ecosystems Program 2000	Grant & Cost Share	Fund created to allow for cost sharing a variety of ecosystem restoration efforts in Illinois	30%	http://dnr.state.il.us/OREP/c2000
	Illinois Forestry Assistance Program	Grant & Cost Share	Provides technical assistance to NIPF landowners to manage their forests for multiple resources. In addition, cost-share assistance is available for landowners to implement forest stewardship practices	25%	http://dnr.state.il.us/conservation/forestry/programs
	Illinois Nature Preserves Commission	Conservation Easement	Allows landowners to include nature preserve dedication, land and water reserve registration or enrollment as an Illinois natural heritage landmark	N/A	http://dnr.state.il.us/INPC

PARTNER PROGRAMS

	Special Wildlife Funds Grant Program	Grant & Cost Share	Four programs funded by Illinois sportsmen through purchase of Habitat Stamps and Migratory Waterfowl Stamps. Illinois Habitat Fund, State Pheasant Fund, State Furbearer and Migratory Waterfowl Stamp Fund. Together they are designed to protect, acquire, enhance or manage wildlife habitat and to support limited research and educational programs to further advance this mission	N/A	http://dnr.state.il.us/grants/Special_Funds/WildGrant	
MDC	Community Stewardship Grant Program	Grant	Provide support for open space management, wildlife habitat improvement, community land stewardship and to engage urban residents in community conservation through volunteer efforts to improve open space in the St. Louis Metro Area.	N/A	http://www.mdc.mo.gov/areas/stlouis/stew_grant.htm	
	Landowner Assistance Program	Technical Assistance and Cost Share	Technical and financial assistance to private landowners desiring to improve their land for fish, forest and wildlife.	Variable by practice	http://mdc.mo.gov/landownr/helpimprove.htm	
	Tree Resource Improvement and Maintenance	Grant	Assistance to Missouri communities, schools and not-for-profit for tree planting and maintenance of their urban forests. Through this program, funds are available for communities to inventory, remove high-risk trees, train workers, prune and plant trees.	N/A	http://www.mdc.mo.gov/forest/urban/TRIM/	
	Forest Management Assistance	Technical Assistance	Advisory and management services to help private landowners manage their forest lands. Includes assistance in developing and carrying out a management plan for the property.	N/A	http://mdc.mo.gov/forest/products/mgmtasst.htm	
	Conservation Field Trip Grants	Grant	Support to educators interested in taking students on field trips related to fish, wildlife and natural habitats.	N/A	www.mdc.mo.gov/teacher/grants/	
	Outdoor Classroom Grant	Grant	Support to schools interested in developing or enhancing an outdoor learning site, either on school grounds or nearby.	N/A	www.mdc.mo.gov/teacher/grants/	
	Community Assistance Program	Cost Share	USFWS and state support to communities interested in providing recreational fishing facilities.	25%		
	United Sportsmen's League Wildlife Conservation Grant	Grant	Support to Missouri FFA chapters interested in planning an on-site wildlife habitat project or exploring a collaborative effort with a local landowner.	N/A	www.mdc.mo.gov/teacher/grants/	
	NRCS	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program	Conservation Easement	Voluntary land retirement program that helps agricultural producers protect environmentally sensitive land, decrease erosion, restore wildlife habitat, and safeguard ground and surface water	0%	www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=cop&topic=cep
		Conservation Reserve Program	Conservation Easement	Technical and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers to address soils, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands in an environmentally beneficial and cost-effective manner	50%	www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/crp
Conservation Securities Program		Grant & Cost Share	Voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on Tribal and private working lands	N/A	www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/CSP	
Conservation Technical Assistance Program		Technical Assistance	Provides the technical capability, including direct conservation planning, design, and implementation assistance, that helps people plan and apply conservation on the land	N/A	www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cta	

PARTNER PROGRAMS

Environmental Quality Incentives Program	Grant & Cost Share	Voluntary conservation program for farmers and ranchers that promotes agricultural production and environmental quality as compatible national goals. EQIP offers financial and technical help to assist eligible participants install or implement structural and management practices on eligible agricultural land	25%	www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EQIP
Emergency Watershed Protection	Conservation Easement	Undertake emergency measures, including the purchase of floodplain easements, for runoff retardation and soil erosion prevention to safeguard lives and property from floods, drought, and the products of erosion on any watershed whenever fire, flood or any other natural occurrence is causing or has caused a sudden impairment of the watershed	25%	www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/EWP
Farmable Wetlands Program	Conservation Easement	Voluntary program to restore up to 500,000 acres of farmable wetlands and associated buffers by improving the land's hydrology and vegetation	50%	www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=cop&r&topic=fwp
Farm and Ranchland Protection Program	Conservation Easement	Provides matching funds to help purchase development rights to keep productive farm and ranchland in agricultural uses. Working through existing programs, USDA partners with state, tribal, or local governments and non-governmental organizations to acquire conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners	50%	www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/frpp
Grassland Reserves Program	Conservation Easement	Helps landowners restore and protect grassland, rangeland, pastureland, shrubland, and certain other lands and provides assistance for rehabilitating grasslands. The program will conserve vulnerable grasslands from conversion to cropland or other uses and conserve valuable grasslands by helping maintain viable ranching operations	10%	www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/grp
Plant Materials Program	Technical Assistance	Website that offers a variety of technical assistance options and materials	N/A	http://plant-materials.nrcs.usda.gov
Resource Conservation & Development	Technical Assistance	Purpose of RC&D program is to encourage and improve the capability of volunteer local elected officials and civic leaders in designated RC&D areas to plan and carry our projects for resource conservation and community development	N/A	www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/rcd
State Acres for Wildlife	Conservation Easement	Producers create habitat that is beneficial to the target high-priority wildlife species. This may involve planting trees, grasses, forbs, or other species that help restore or improve wildlife habitat. Specific SAFE conservation practices are set forth in each state's SAFE project	50%	www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/newsReleases?area=newstoom&subject=land=&topic=pf&newstype=pfact=&sheet&type=detail&item=pf_20080119_conservation_en-safe08

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	Wetland Reserves Program	Conservation Easement	Provides technical and financial support to help landowners with their wetland restoration efforts. The NRCS goal is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values, along with optimum wildlife habitat, on every acre enrolled in the program. This program offers landowners an opportunity to establish long-term conservation and wildlife practices and protection	25%	www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/WRP
	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program	Grant & Cost Share	Voluntary program for people who want to develop and improve wildlife habitat primarily on private land. Through WHIP, NRCS provides both technical assistance and up to 75% cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat. WHIP agreements between NRCS and the participant generally last from 5-10 years from the date the agreement is signed	25%	www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/WHIP
SIU	Department of Forestry	Education		N/A	www.siu.edu/~forestry
	Cooperative Wildlife Research Lab	Education		N/A	www.siu.edu/~wildlife
The Conservation Fund	Land Conservation	Grant & Cost Share	Assists government agencies and nonprofit organization to acquire and conserve land across the country - permanently protecting wildlife habitat, recreation areas, and open space		www.conservationfund.org
	Sustainable Programs	Grant & Cost Share	Marketing-based solutions for challenging environmental issues - from integrating conservation and development to protecting natural resources to demonstrating innovative research and technology		
	Leadership Training	Grant & Cost Share	Through courses, workshops and seminars, this program provides technical assistance, financial resources and formal training		
The Nature Conservancy	Conservation Buyer Program	Conservation Easement	Land is bought in critical conservation areas and appropriate conservation easements and designed for the land to protect natural features then the land is resold to individuals dedicated to the conservation of the land and supportive of the protective conservation easement	N/A	www.nature.org/aboutus/howwe/work/conservation/buyer/help/art11639
	Conservation Easements	Conservation Easement	Offers conservation easements for landowners wishing to participate	N/A	www.nature.org/aboutus/howwe/work/conservation/methods/private/lands/conservation/easements/about/allabout.html?src=search
Union County SWCD	Land Purchase Program	Land Acquisition		N/A	
	Educational Center	Education		N/A	
USACE	Avoid & Minimize	Grant & Cost Share	Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration in the St. Louis District to compensate for increased traffic due to Lock & Dam 26 Expansion	0%	
	Awareness Programming	Education		N/A	
	Biological Opinion	Grant & Cost Share	Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration targeted towards the recovery of the Pallid Sturgeon population	0%	
	Congressionally Approved Projects	Grant & Cost Share	Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration	35%	
	Environmental Education Programs	Education		N/A	
	Environmental Management Program	Grant & Cost Share	Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration in the Upper Mississippi River System	35%	

PARTNER PROGRAMS

Great Rivers Museum	Education					www.mvs.usace.army.mil/Rivers/museum
NESP	Grant & Cost Share		Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration in the Upper Mississippi River System			N/A
Rivers Project Office	Education					www.mvs.usace.army.mil/rivers
Section 204	Grant & Cost Share		In conjunction with dredging projects, allow for the dredged material to be used for habitat creation & restoration			25%
Section 206	Grant & Cost Share		Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration			35%
Section 207	Grant & Cost Share		In conjunction with dredging projects, allow for the dredged material to be used for habitat creation & restoration			25%
Section 514	Grant & Cost Share		Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration in the Missouri and Middle Mississippi rivers and floodplains with a compressed schedule compared to other authorities			35%
Section 1135	Grant & Cost Share		The modification of a USACE project that is degrading the environment or repairs degradation of the environment caused by a USACE project			25%
Water Resources Programming	Education					N/A
Landowner Incentive Program	Grant & Cost Share		A partnership grant program to assist private landowners in working to conserve and restore the habitat of endangered species and other at-risk plants and animals			www.doi.gov/initiatives/land-owner_incentive_program
NAWCA Grants	Grant & Cost Share		Stimulates public-private partnerships to protect, restore, and manage wetland habitats for a diversity of migratory birds and other wildlife. It provides federal cost-share funding to support the North American Waterfowl Management Plan and is a non-regulatory, incentive-based, voluntary wildlife conservation program			www.ducks.org/Conservation/GovernmentAffairs/1616/NAWCAHome
Partners for Fish & Wildlife	Grant & Cost Share		Provides technical and financial assistance to provide landowners and tribes who are willing to work with USFWS and other partners on a voluntary basis to help meet the habitat needs of our Federal Trust Species			http://ecos.fws.gov/partners/viewContent.do?viewPage=home
MMR Decision Support System	Technical Assistance		Provides a framework to assist decision makers regarding natural resource issues in the Middle Mississippi River floodplain. Designed to provide users with a spatially explicit tool for tasks such as inventorying existing knowledge, developing models to investigate the potential effects of management decisions, generating hypotheses to advance scientific understanding and developing scientifically defensible studies and monitoring			www.umesc.usgs.gov/management/dss/mid_miss_dss

Middle Mississippi River Partnership
2008 Activities Briefing
American Legion Hall; Chester, Illinois

AGENDA
August 12, 2008

11:30	Registration	
12:00	Lunch	Sponsored by: Southern Illinois Community Foundation
12:30	Anne McEnany Fundors Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities	"The River Partnership of Community Foundations: Overview and Ideas for Working Together"
1:00	Robert Cail , MMRP Chairman US Fish & Wildlife Service	Welcome and Introductions
1:10	Steve Black Southwestern Illinois RC&D Brian Johnson US Army Corps of Engineers	MMRP Planning Initiatives
1:30	Dr. Mickey Heitmeyer Greenbrier Wetland Services	Historical Vegetation and Land Types in the Middle Mississippi River corridor
1:50	Jenny Frazier American Land Conservancy	Key Project Activities
2:10	Janet Sternburg Missouri Dept. of Conservation	Key Programs
2:35	Eric Schenck Ducks Unlimited Todd Strole The Nature Conservancy	Future Program Needs; Benefits
3:00	Adjourn	