

America's Watershed Initiative

2014 Summit

Galt House

Louisville, KY

1 October 2014



Introduction to the Mississippi River Watershed Report Card

- Overview
 - Why a report card?
 - What are we grading?
 - The process of generating a report card
 - The report card: what it is and what it isn't

Why a report card?

- Starting in 2009, USACE and TNC partnered with Meridian Institute to conduct focus groups and interviews in the watershed
- A key goal of engagement was/is to keep a diversity of interests at the table
- AWI was proposed at the America's Inner Coast Summit in St. Louis (2010) with a goal of uniting the watershed

Why a report card?

- There was consensus (in surveys by Meridian and among summit participants) that the system could not support the needs of all stakeholders if they continued to work in isolation
- There was, and is, a clear need for effective & coordinated governance of watershed resources
- Also clear that effective governance would have to follow the science – decisions must be data-driven

Why a report card?

- Examples already existed for how to compile and assess large scale environmental data
 - The Oceans project of the Pew Charitable Trust
 - The Puget Sound Dashboard of Vital Signs
 - The Chesapeake Bay Report Card
- America's Great Watershed Initiative Summit in 2012
 - AWI officially launched
 - A Report Card for the Mississippi River watershed was discussed
 - **Stakeholders** set the goals for the watershed (what to monitor and measure)
 - AWI is not the people on stage, it's YOU

What are we grading?

- A report card should measure what we value
- AGWI 2012 Summit identified six values as goals for the watershed:
 - to serve as the nation's most valuable river **Transportation** corridor
 - to maintain an abundant, clean **Water Supply**
 - to provide reliable **Flood Control** and risk reduction
 - to support the local, state, and national **Economy**
 - to support and enhance healthy, productive **Ecosystems**
 - to provide opportunities for world-class **Recreation**

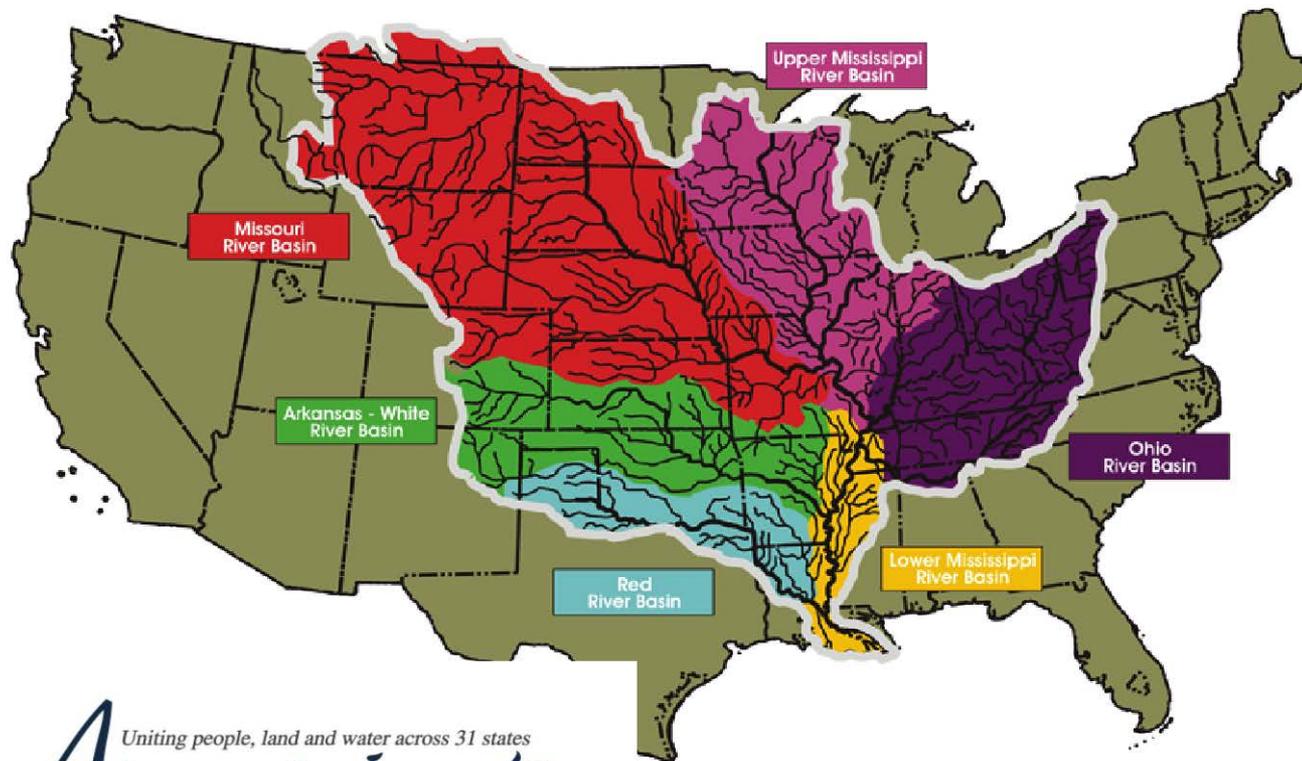


The Process

- Process is critical – the report card could not be generated by a few interested people
- Participation was, and is, actively sought
 - multiple workshops – not dominated by one basin
 - seeking diverse partners – not dominated by one sector
 - informed input – basin leaders and experts engaged
- The process is intended to yield a ***tool*** to move us toward effective and cooperative governance

Geographic Diversity

America's Watershed Initiative



Uniting people, land and water across 31 states
America's
WATERSHED Initiative

Within the Mississippi River Watershed boundaries there are 31 states and 41% of the land mass of the contiguous 48 states.

Diversity of Interests & Issues



The Product

- The report card is NOT the goal, it is an important tool that will help get to the goal of sustainable management of this amazing resource
- Today's version is a work in progress
 - some data are reliable and analyses are robust
 - some data may not be sufficient for what we want to measure
 - some analytical methods and/or methods for assigning grades still need improvement

The Product

- Today's version continues the conversation started in 2009
- Grades have known meanings, but deep assessment is nuanced – we need your help in telling a clear, accurate and compelling story
- We are close to doing something historic. Let's finish what we have started!

Thank You!

- Report Card Sponsors
- Faculty and Staff of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
- Harald (Jordy) Jordahl and Barbara Allison
- The 2014 AWI Summit Sponsors
- You!

