

Mississippi River Network: Headwaters to Gulf

Working to Protect the Land, Water and People
of the Mississippi River Basin



At 2,236 miles long, the Mississippi River runs through America's heartland, culture and economy. From its headwaters in northern Minnesota, across farms and prairies, through hundreds of small towns and some of our greatest cities, to the coastal wetlands of Louisiana, the River connects lives and livelihoods.

The **Mississippi River Network: Headwaters to Gulf** is dedicated to protecting and restoring this vital River for current use and future enjoyment. Through our coordinated efforts, we can make a difference for this precious resource.

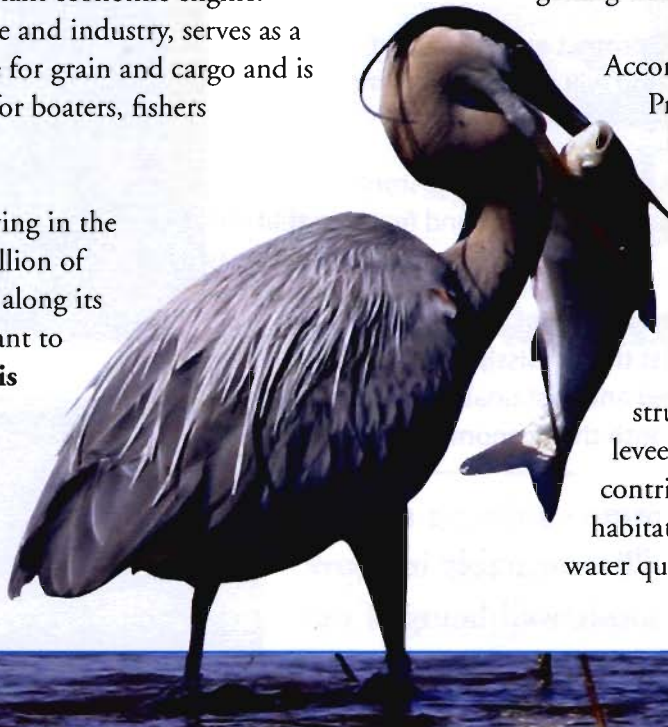
Big challenges for America's biggest watershed

As a vital migration corridor, the River is home to many hundreds of species of fish and wildlife. The River is also an important economic engine. It provides water for people and industry, serves as a major transportation route for grain and cargo and is a recreational destination for boaters, fishers and birders.

With 72 million people living in the 32 watershed states, 50 million of whom live in the 10 states along its banks, the River is important to all of us. **The Mississippi is America's River. It is ours to enjoy, care for and protect.**

Tragically, we have not taken proper care of this national treasure. Monitoring shows that the ecological health of the River is severely degraded and getting worse.

According to a recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study, about half of the tributaries in the Mississippi watershed are in poor condition and unsafe for drinking, swimming or recreational use. Agricultural, urban and industrial pollution, along with man-made structural changes to the River—like levees, locks and dams—have all contributed to a loss of natural habitat, diminished wildlife and poor water quality.



Mississippi River Network Members make a difference

In 2005, with the support of the McKnight Foundation, 34 leading non-profit organizations formed the **Mississippi River Network: Headwaters to Gulf**. The Network collaborates, shares resources and speaks with one, unified voice to protect the Mississippi River for the well-being of the land, water and people of one of the world's largest watersheds.

Individually, our member organizations and partners work on projects to protect the River—from headwaters to gulf. Our work spans a diverse spectrum of strategies and tactics, including land conservation through acquisition and easements, active restoration of functioning ecosystems and outreach and support for landowners and farmers to encourage conservation practices.

Mississippi River Network members **mobilize** their members and supporters to speak out in defense of the River and **advocate** at federal, state and local levels to garner support from elected officials for River restoration. Network members educate the public about the Mississippi River and actively connect them to this amazing resource through outreach materials, events, exhibits, interpretive centers and volunteer opportunities.

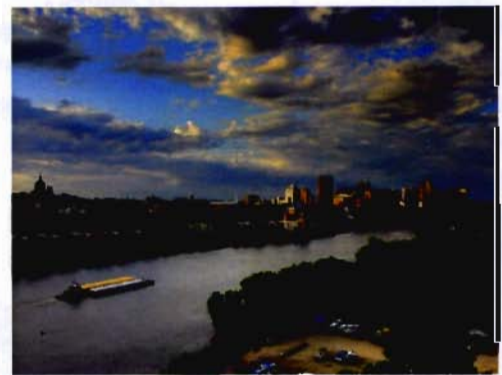
Together, network members are strategically working toward the following goals:

Preserve Land: We will restore, protect and reconnect environmentally sensitive lands and will use working lands sustainably on a continental scale.

Restore Water: We will reduce water pollution, restore the River as habitat and improve natural processes and features that can reduce flood damage.

Engage People: We will urge the people of the Mississippi River watershed and the nation to treat the Mississippi as a national treasure to be protected, restored and sustainably developed and as a resource that enriches both the economy and quality of life.

By the year 2020, our work will measurably improve the ecological health and economic well-being of our watershed, our River and all of the people and wildlife that these resources support.



The River can count on us



We must turn our national attention to restoring and protecting the health of the Mississippi River. Ensuring that the River and the Gulf coast can provide for future generations will require greater awareness at the local, regional and national levels, federal and state funding and policy reform.

As part of the Mississippi River Network's efforts to educate the public and decision-makers about the River and reconnect them to this national treasure, the network has launched an outreach and education campaign called *1 Mississippi*.

1 Mississippi is designed to reconnect people with the River, raise awareness about threats to the River and motivate people to take action to clean up and protect the River. This campaign uses tactics and messages based on public opinion research and network collaboration.

The message is simple: our great River is in trouble, but we *can* make it better for future generations. The campaign encourages concerned people to take ten specific actions and join the effort as a River Citizen. Whether in armchairs or wading boots, River Citizens

protect the River by speaking on its behalf and caring for it in simple ways that make a big difference.

1 Mississippi recruits River Citizens and spreads River information through several creative and effective pathways, including media attention, unique informational and promotional materials, a traveling exhibit at events along the River and a comprehensive website. The campaign engages River Citizens through an interactive website and in-person at events and volunteer opportunities.



www.1mississippi.net



With a growing community of informed, engaged and active River Citizens from all across the Mississippi River basin, the Mississippi River Network will make real progress toward achieving our Land, Water and People goals for the health and welfare of our precious River.



Mississippi River Network Members and Partners (June 2010)

American Land Conservancy
Marble Hill, MO

American Rivers
Washington, DC

Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana
Baton Rouge, LA

Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque
Dubuque, IA

Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
Memphis, TN

Environmental Defense Fund
Washington, DC

Friends of the Mississippi River
St. Paul, MN

Great River Greening
Saint Paul, MN

Green Lands, Blue Waters
Saint Paul, MN

Gulf Restoration Network
New Orleans, LA

Illinois Stewardship Alliance
Rochester, IL

Iowa Environmental Council
Des Moines, IA

Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation
Des Moines, IA

Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation
Elizabeth, IL

Mississippi National River and Recreation Area
St. Paul, MN

Mississippi River Corridor – Tennessee
Memphis, TN

Mississippi River Fund
Saint Paul, MN

Mississippi River Trail
Fayetteville, AR

National Audubon Society
Vicksburg, MS

National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium
Dubuque, IA

Prairie Rivers Network
Champaign, IL

River Action
Davenport, IA

Saint Paul Riverfront Corporation
Saint Paul, MN

The Conservation Fund
Duluth, MN

The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center
Godfrey, IL

The Wetlands Initiative
Hennepin, IL

Trailnet / Confluence Greenway
St. Louis, MO

Trust for Public Land
St. Paul, MN

Upper Mississippi River Blufflands Alliance
Des Moines, IA

West Wisconsin Land Trust
Menomonie, WI

Biodiversity Project, a nonprofit environmental communications organization, coordinates the *Mississippi River Network* and the *1 Mississippi campaign*.

For more information or to inquire about membership, contact the Mississippi River Program Manager at MRProgram@biodiverse.org or 773-496-4020.