



Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

177th Quarterly Meeting

February 24, 2026

Virtual

Agenda with
Background and Supporting Materials

Agenda
February 24, 2026

Time	Topic	Page	Presenter
9:00 a.m.	Call to Order and Introductions		Wade Strickland, Wisconsin DNR <i>UMRBA Board Chair</i>
9:10	Approval of Minutes of November 18, 2025 Meeting	A1-10	
9:20	Executive Director's Report	B1-17	Kirsten Wallace, UMRBA
9:30	Interbasin Diversion Consultation Annual Reporting	C1-5	UMRBA Board Members
9:40	Federal Ecosystem Program Planning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program ▪ Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program 	D1-10	Marshall Plumley, USACE
10:10	Future of FEMA: Potential Implications for Interstate Flood Planning on the Upper Mississippi River System	E1-15	Meg Galloway, Association of State Floodplain Managers and Chuck Chaitovitz, U.S. Chamber of Commerce
10:40	Mississippi River Watershed Partnership	F1-16	Kim Lutz, America's Watershed Initiative
11:10	Break		
11:20	State Policy Options for Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Mississippi River Watershed	G1-15	Kim Tyrell and Tom Klein, National Conference of State Legislators
11:45	Administrative Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Election of Officers ▪ Future Meeting Schedule 	H1-8	Wade Strickland, Wisconsin DNR
12:00 noon	Adjourn		

Upper Mississippi River Quarterly Meetings

Attachment A

Minutes

Page Number	Document Title
A-1 to A-10	Draft Minutes of the November 18, 2025 UMRBA Quarterly Meeting

**Draft Minutes of the
176th Quarterly Meeting of the
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association**

**November 18, 2025
Virtual**

Wade Strickland called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. on November 18, 2025.

Participants were as follows:

UMRBA Representatives and Alternates

Rick Pohlman	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Jake Hansen	Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Kirk Hansen	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Grant Wilson	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Matt Vitello	Missouri Department of Conservation
Chris Wieberg	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Erin Fanning	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Chris Klenklen	Missouri Department of Agriculture
Levi Woods	Missouri Department of Transportation
Wade Strickland	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Federal UMRBA Liaisons:

Brian Chewning	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Travis Black	U.S. Department of Transportation, MARAD
Sabrina Chandler	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
JC Nelson	U.S. Geological Survey, Midcontinent Region

Others In Attendance:

Chad Craycraft	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Terra McParland	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
John Seitz	Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Ken Lubinski	Illinois Water Resources Center
Ryan Hupfler	Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Caleb Whitehouse	Iowa Department of Transportation
Liz Scherber	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Neil Rude	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Ken Henderson	Missouri Department of Agriculture

Dru Buntin	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Erin Fanning	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Billy Hackett	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Chrystel Hillier	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Colby Thrash	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Michael Weller	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Noah Cadwell	Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Sam Clary	Missouri Department of Conservation
Molly Sobotka	Missouri Department of Conservation
Vanessa Perry	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Sammi Boyd	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Partrick Kelly	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Chris Olds	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Kat McCain	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Headquarters
Kelly Keefe	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Thatch Shepard	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Jim Cole	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Samantha Thompson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Kat McCain	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVD
Karl Jansen	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Jill Bathke	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVP
Brad Houzenga	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Marshall Plumley	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Davi Michl	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVR
Shawn Sullivan	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Greg Kohler	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Brian Johnson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Joze Lopez	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Shane Simmons	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MVS
Steve Winter	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, UMR Refuges
Matt Mangan	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Ecological Services
Jon Amberg	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Jim Fischer	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Jeff Houser	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
John Delaney	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Jennifer Dieck	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
Andrew Strassman	U.S. Geological Survey, UMESC
David Pratt	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Jared Schmalstieg	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Amy Shields	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 7
Madeleine Castle	Senator Josh Hawley Office
Kim Lutz	America's Watershed Initiative
Brent Newman	Audubon
Alicia Vasto	Audubon
Alexandra Campbell-Ferrari	Center for Water Security and Cooperation

Nancy Guyton	Friends of the Mississippi River
Ken Lubinski	Illinois Water Resources Center
Angela Grett	Ingram Marine Group
Barry Draskowski	Izaak Walton League
Mike Klingner	Klingner and Associates
Susan Russell Freeman	League of Women Voters, Upper Mississippi River Region
Karl Jefferson	LiUNA
Madeline Heim	Milwaukee Journal Sentinel
Colin Wellenkamp	Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative
Nicole Kach	National Waterways Conference
Nancy Guyton	Neighbors of the Mississippi
Kelly McGinnis	One Mississippi
Jill Crafton	Riley-Purgatory-Bluff Creek Watershed District
Christine Favilla	Sierra Club, Illinois Chapter
Andrew Stephenson	The Nature Conservancy
Aaron Field	Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Melissa Kenney	University of Minnesota
Kirsten Wallace	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Brian Stenquist	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Mark Ellis	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Tyler Leske	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Henry Hansen	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Natalie Lenzen	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Sadie Neuman	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Laura Talbert	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
Josh Wolf	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

Minutes

Grant Wilson moved and Rick Pohlman seconded a motion to approve the draft minutes of the August 5, 2025 meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Director's Report

Kirsten Wallace pointed to the Executive Director's report in the agenda packet for a summary of the Association's work efforts since the August 2025 meeting.

Wallace reported the following Association personnel changes:

- Lauren Salvato, Ken Peterson, and Sam Hund departed UMRBA. The latter two departures were a result of limited reimbursable funds to support UMRBA's hazardous spills planning.
- Sadie Nueman was appointed to serve as Acting Water Quantity Program Director.
- Josh Wolf was appointed to serve as Acting Water Quality Program Director.

Wallace thanked Nueman and Wolf for stepping into new roles and performing so well.

Wallace also expressed appreciation to Mark Ellis for assuming project coordinator for the Exchange Network Grant as well as for his supervision of the geospatial program team, particularly when funding has been limited and unknown.

Wallace elaborated on meetings with leaders of the Department of the Interior, USFWS, USGS, USEPA, and USACE. Wallace acknowledged, and expressed appreciation for, the participation of members of the Agricultural Nutrient Policy Council in meetings with USEPA and the Department of the Interior; the latter being in support of the UMRR long term resource monitoring.

UMRBA continues to coordinate a one-year project to implement the fixed site monitoring component of its UMR Interstate Water Quality Monitoring Plan. Monthly sampling began October 2025, continuing as planned through the federal government shutdown. Wallace applauded the work of Wolf and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the state agency personnel to coordinate their abilities to maintain their abilities to implement their roles in the monitoring. This includes continuing to operate laboratories. In particular, Wallace pointed out that the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency volunteered to conduct the sampling that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency would not be able to perform during the shutdown.

Wallace pointed to the UMRBA financial statements for July 2025 through September 2025 as provided on pages B-6 to B-14 of the agenda packet. Chris Wieberg moved and Rick Pohlman seconded the motion to accept the Association's budget report and balance sheet as included in the agenda packet. The motion was approved unanimously.

Water Availability

UMRBA Water Availability Project

Sadie Neuman reported on the status and future plans for implementing a hydrologic flow analysis for the Upper Mississippi River Basin, including project team members, project objectives, and anticipated project timeline.

The project objectives are to:

1. Estimate the existing hydrologic flows from the HUC-6 basin watersheds into the Upper Mississippi River System navigation channel
2. Explore how diversions and consumptive uses might affect the hydrologic flows from the basin watersheds into the Upper Mississippi River System navigation channel
3. Determine the thresholds of discharge in various reaches at which negative impacts may occur to the Upper Mississippi River System navigation channel (including duration and frequency of occurrence)
4. Scope follow-on research goals for assessing the implications of limited water availability for river products and services beyond the Upper Mississippi River System navigation channel
5. Convene interstate conversations among Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin technical experts and agency leaders to:
 - Evaluate the research findings
 - Related the research findings to management and policy decision making

- Recommend principles and policies for cooperative and effectively managing water resources of the Upper Mississippi River Basin

The University of Minnesota is a partner in this project, developing the models and information in project objectives one, two, and three. Neuman reviewed initial results provided by the University of Minnesota and provided a high level summary of the observations and input received from the technical project team members with respect to the initial results.

Proposal for Mississippi River Interstate Compact

Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative

Colin Wellenkamp reported on the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative's (MRCTI's) efforts to a) support Congress' efforts to pass legislation developing a disaster mitigation fund and b) compel the Mississippi River border states to enter into a interstate water compact.

Center for Water Security and Cooperation

Alexandra Campbell-Ferrari provided an overview of the Center for Water Security and Cooperation (CWSC) and its efforts to develop a multi-state water compact for the Mississippi River border states. Campbell-Ferrari shared the CWSC's efforts to build a network of local and Tribal leaders who share a commitment to watershed-level collaboration, named the Mighty Mississippi Leaders Network. Campbell-Ferrari suggested that this Network will help persuade state Governor offices to issue an executive order or other means for engaging in interstate water security agreements.

Pointing to the geographic scope of the 10 states bordering the Mississippi River, Chris Wieberg underscored the importance of flows from the Missouri River Basin and encouraged efforts to expand the geographic scope.

Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program

Brad Houzenga announced that Marshall Plumley will serve as the Program Manager for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) for the foreseeable future while also maintaining the role of Program Manager for the Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) Program.

L&D 25 1,200-Foot Chamber Project

Jose Lopez provided a status update of the NESP project to construct a second, 1,200-foot chamber at L&D 25. Lopez described the phases of construction, the status in implementing those phases, and outlooks for program implementation per fiscal year quarter.

A new lock wall was completed in March 2024. Fabrication of bulkheads is progressing on schedule. The St. Louis District plans to award a contract for lock foundation and site prep likely in spring 2026, but no later than September 2026. The last phase of the project is the construction of the main lock. The District is employing its final reviews of the design prior to initiating the solicitation phase. The Corps has approved the project's acquisition plan, which is contingent on the St. Louis District receiving an allocation of \$250 million in FY 2027.

In response to a question from Christine Favaiilla, Lopez confirmed that USACE completed the environmental compliance documents for the L&D 25 project, including purchasing mitigation credits related to the direct impacts of the project construction.

Floodplain Reach Ecosystem Planning

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Report

Jill Bathke described the NESP reach planning as a collaborative approach for envisioning and outlining a road map for where NESP projects and adaptive management will be planned and completed. NESP reach planning will offer watershed needs and goals that will inform the priorities.

Bathke reported that the Corps convened multiple meetings and workshops in each of the four floodplain reaches. The workshops were held in-person and involved nearly 30 federal and state agencies, local governments, and non-governmental organizations. Through the workshops, partners identified discrete locations for consideration as priority restoration areas, which are currently being reviewed, refined, summarized, and analyzed. The Corps is currently reach plans, which are anticipated to be shared with partners for review.

Bathke reported on the results of a Mississippi River and Illinois River Experience Tool, which is a survey mechanism to receive stakeholder input about the problems in the river and their views on how investment could improve the river's ecological health. So far, there have been 182 submissions of input to the Tool. The intention is to use the information from the submissions to inform NESP science efforts and project planning.

In response to a question from Wade Strickland, Bathke will use the input received through the Mississippi River and Illinois River Experience Tool in the development of NESP Floodplain Reach Plans and in scoping individual projects as well as future reach plans.

Public Engagement Workshops

Brent Newman provided an overview of a series of three public engagement workshops hosted by Audubon in summer 2025 regarding the NESP floodplain reach ecological planning. A primary purpose was to provide affected communities an opportunity to inform reach planning and future investments in their respective communities. In particular, Audubon's objectives for the public engagement sessions were to:

1. Widen the net for public input into NESP reach planning
2. Gain a sense of local communities' knowledge and aspirations regarding NESP and other USACE programs on the Upper Mississippi River System
3. Offer several different "avenues of interest" for residents who would like to stay engaged and learn more about NESP reach planning and operations and issues generally affecting management of the Upper Mississippi River System
4. Share the NESP River Experiences Tool

Each meeting used the same set of guided discussion prompts, including questions related to participants' interest in the Mississippi River, what they believe is working well, what they would want to protect about the Mississippi River, and actions they believe would improve the Mississippi River.

Newman said the engagement sessions received strong interest from the public, with participants generally underscoring the value of the opportunity and requesting more opportunities in the future. Newman summarized common input related to fish and wildlife habitat, flooding, navigation, recreation, and people and communities. A few highlights include species and habitat diversity, sedimentation, invasive species, high frequent areas of flooding (bottlenecks), beneficial reuse of dredged material, and public engagement and education.

Newman acknowledged the contributions and resources of other partner non-governmental organizations in convening the sessions and state and federal agencies, including UMRBA, for their time in informing the agenda and participating in the public engagement sessions.

UMRBA Advocacy

Kirsten Wallace reported that UMRBA is planning to advocate for \$350 million in FY 2027 appropriations for NESP, including \$250 million for the 1,200-foot lock at L&D 25 and \$100 million for ecosystem integrity improvements.

Flood Risk Reduction and Resilience Planning

Lower Missouri River Flood Risk Reduction and Resiliency Study

System Plan

Missouri DNR personnel Erin Fanning, Billy Hackett, Chrystal Hillier, Colby Thrash, and Michael Weller provided a progress update on the Lower Missouri River Flood Risk Reduction and Resiliency Study (LOMO Study).

Erin Fanning recalled the origins and purpose of the LOMO Study. In response to the 2019 flood event, through Executive Order, Missouri Governor Mike Parson established the Flood Recovery Advisory Working Group, which issued the following recommendations:

1. States should have a leadership role in implementing improvements to flood protection infrastructure and management of major river systems
2. Flood protection programs should prioritize long term and systemic solutions
3. Flood recovery programs should offer timely, common-sense solutions
4. Investment in flood and navigation infrastructure
5. The State of Missouri should develop flood recovery strategies

Fanning said state and Congressional leadership quickly responded to the recommendations by securing a new authority for the LOMO Study. The purpose of the study is to create a vision for a more resilient future on the Lower Missouri River with a focus on flood risk management and evaluate reach and system

specific alternatives and provide recommendations of future spin-off studies and proposed implementation approaches.

Fanning announced that the LOMO Study partners have drafted the Lower Missouri River Flood Risk and Resiliency Comprehensive Study. The study partners anticipate releasing the draft report in the near future with a request for input and a series of public meetings. Missouri DNR is planning to coordinate with its state Congressional delegation to secure authorities in WRDA 2026 related to the spin-off studies.

Spin-Off Studies

Fanning explained that four spin-off studies began prior to having completed the system plan, providing in-depth analyses to formulate local, problem-specific solutions. Missouri DNR has served as the non-federal sponsor, coordinating potential implementation sponsors and leveraging state funds, technical expertise, and communications and logistical capacity.

Fanning underscored that success only occurs if consensus is built among impacted stakeholders. Early, extensive, frequent, and intentional stakeholder engagement with impacted stakeholders is necessary to achieve solutions. The process for stakeholder engagement must involve a feedback loop with positive intention. Engagement should begin without a plan but with clarity for what is possible and not feasible in the project process and scope.

The Missouri DNR personnel team provided information about challenges, lessons, and project details related to spin-off studies at Jefferson City, Brunswick, Holt County, and Atchison County.

Michael Weller listed a set of implementation challenges experienced through the LOMO study process and policy recommendations to improve or address the challenges, as follows:

Challenges:

1. Feasibility studies result in unimplementable or unaffordable projects
2. USACE has a tendency to scope larger projects than communities can implement
3. A sufficiently high benefit-to-cost ratio is difficult to achieve in rural areas
4. Costs are high for federal levees
5. Projects need local support to be implemented
6. One person's flood risk improvement in another person's induced flood impact

Policy recommendations:

1. Develop a new continuing authorities program (CAP) specifically for levee setbacks not associated with flood damage repairs
2. Create a program to help potential sponsors with repair, replacement, and rehabilitation costs
3. Allow P.L. 84-99 to repair levees better than they were
4. Enable USACE to make flood resiliency improvements to non-federal levees in the P.L. 84-99 program without making the entirety a federal levee

5. Make it standard practice to include comprehensive benefits in benefit-to-cost ratio calculations

Chris Wieberg acknowledged the significant amount of staff personnel invested in the LOMO study and recognized that similar levels of effort would be required in the Upper Mississippi River System Flood Risk Reduction and Resiliency Study. Wieberg stated his assessment that the investment is worthwhile given the positive outcomes associated with the system plan and spin-off studies.

Upper Mississippi River System Study: Long Term Hydrologic Projections and Engaging Hard-to-Reach Communities

Melissa Kenney said that, in an effort to support regional resilience through projects focused on community involvement, NOAA funded pilot projects in seven regions across the country. In the Upper Mississippi River Basin, NOAA partnered with the University of Minnesota and UMRBA to estimate hydrologic risk of future floods and droughts and resilience opportunities for at-risk communities in the Upper Mississippi River Basin. Project components included hydrologic modeling, stakeholder engagement, community conversations, and community-led approaches to address flood risk and enhance flood resilience.

Kenney provided an overview of the modeling process and an example of the analysis of results. The University of Minnesota is preparing to submit the data and an associated paper with more comprehensive analyses for publication in spring 2026. Kenney concluded that this study should form the basis of future work and more detailed site-scale investigations, using more climate projections with different downscaling methods and higher spatial resolution.

Kenney explained that, as part of the project, the project research combines usability, visualization, and equity to improve decision support products, including products supporting hard-to-reach communities.

The University of Minnesota created a visualization of the information supply chain framework and developed actionable recommendations for reaching hard-to-reach communities, as follows:

1. Hazard and weather services should co-design warnings and preparedness messages with communities, deliver them through trusted insiders, and embed outreach in familiar settings such as schools, churches, shelters, and workplaces
2. Hazard and weather services should design technology systems that are co-created with users, integrated into daily workflows, and complemented by offline support to ensure access for all
3. Hazard and weather services should establish multi-sector coalitions that pool expertise, resources, and credibility to coordinate hazard communication and resource distribution
4. Hazard and weather services should design communication strategies that proactively include socially vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups by tailoring content, addressing layered barriers, and embedding services in accessible spaces
5. Hazard and weather services should decentralize communication and preparedness by delivering resources directly into neighborhoods, workplaces, and community hubs
6. Hazard and weather services should design communication strategies that explicitly address social and economic conditions that shape the ability to act on warnings

Administrative Matters

Future Meeting Schedule

February 2026 to be held virtually

- UMRBA Quarterly Meeting – February 24
- UMRB Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – February 25

May 2026 to be held in the Twin Cities Metro Area

- UMRBA Quarterly Meeting – May 19
- UMRB Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – May 20

August 2026 in St. Louis Metro Area

- UMRBA Quarterly Meeting – August 4
- UMRB Coordinating Committee quarterly meeting – August 5

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

Upper Mississippi River Quarterly Meetings

Attachment B

Executive Director's Report

Page Number	Document Title
B-1 to B-5	Executive Director's Quarterly Report
B-6 to B-8	Gulf Hypoxia Program Coalition FY 2027 Support Letter (12/2/2025)
B-9 to B-10	UMRBA WRDA 2026 PPA Reform Request Letter (1/12/2026)
B-11 to B-12	UMRBA FY 2026 Work Plan Priorities Letter (2/3/2026)
B-13	Treasurer's Quarterly Statement (2/6/2026)
B-14 to B-16	FY 2026 Profit and Loss Statement (2/9/2026)
B-17 to B-18	Balance Sheet (2/9/2026)



Executive Director's Report February 2026

Administration

UMRBA Nondiscrimination Policies and Procedures

UMRBA has created policies and documents for ensuring that UMRBA's programs and policies fully comply with federal government nondiscrimination laws. UMRBA has also created routine practices for public engagement and communication, as provided in the draft UMRBA Public Participation Plan and Standard Operating Procedures for UMRBA Quarterly Meetings and Other Public Meetings. On January 8, 2026, UMRBA disseminated an email to its broadest distribution list seeking input on these new documents by March 6, 2026. UMRBA is also asking for input on a Language Accessibility Plan and an Accessibility Plan for Hearing, Visual, Speech, and Other Physical Disabilities.

UMRBA published on its website a new Nondiscrimination Notice and Grievance Procedures. The policies and procedures are available on UMRBA's website at <https://umrba.org/nondiscrimination-notice>.

Advocacy

Gulf Hypoxia Program

On December 2, 2025, UMRBA joined 63 organizations, representing agricultural, navigation, and conservation organizations, across the Mississippi River Basin, in a letter to Congress requesting FY 2027 funding for the Gulf Hypoxia Program. The letter is provided on pages B-6 to B-8 of the agenda packet.

With funding through the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Gulf Hypoxia Program supports collaborations among state governments, tribal governments, and agricultural, municipal, conservation, and other stakeholders in their collective, voluntary efforts to reduce nutrient runoff from nonpoint sources in ways that also have many supplemental national benefits such as waterways transportation reliability, water storage, and habitat.

USACE Project Partnership Agreements

On January 12, 2026, UMRBA submitted to Congress a letting requesting to reform the liability terms of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) project partnership agreements (PPAs). UMRBA is requesting that Congress direct the reform through authorization language in WRDA 2026. The letter is provided on pages B-9 to B-10 of the agenda packet.

The key impediments under the existing terms are the requirements that the non-federal sponsor to assume 1) complete liability for constructed projects (except for when fault or negligence is proven) and 2) operations, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation (OMRR&R) in perpetuity.

FY 2026 USACE Work Plan Priorities

Following the enactment of the FY 2026 energy and water spending measure, on February 3, 2026, UMRBA submitted a letter to the ASA(CW) requesting allocations through the discretionary appropriations. The letter is provided on pages B-11 to B-12 of the agenda packet.

In the letter, UMRBA respectfully requested continued investment in the Upper Mississippi River System Flow Frequency Study and a new study start for the Upper Mississippi River System Flood Risk Reduction and Resiliency Study as well as any additional funding to advance projects under the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP). UMRBA also applauded the President's inclusion of \$52 million for the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program in the FY 2026 budget request that was supported by Congress and provided in the FY 2026 appropriations measure.

Commercial Navigation

National Waterways Foundation

Kirsten Wallace serves as a Trustee of the National Waterways Foundation, and participated in its December 8, 2025 meeting in Nashville and February 3, 2026 meeting in Washington, D.C. In addition to routine business, the Foundation discussed ongoing projects related to workforce development, modal comparisons, and state-specific economic value of river transportation, as well as future research opportunities.

On December 17, 2024, the Foundation published a study that it commissioned evaluating employment by inland waterways operators. A video and brochure that highlight the advantages of working in the inland waterways industry were also developed in conjunction with the study and will be provided to school guidance counselors around the country. The report, video, and brochure are available here:

- Report: <https://www.nationalwaterwaysfoundation.org/file/78/Inland%20Waterways%20Workforce%20Study%20Final%20Report.pdf>
- Video: <https://www.nationalwaterwaysfoundation.org/news-and-updates/news/article/2025/07/employment-opportunities-within-the-inland-waterways-industry>
- Brochure: <https://www.nationalwaterwaysfoundation.org/file/80/Employment%20in%20the%20Inland%20Waterways%20FINAL%20brochure.pdf>

Waterways Council, Inc.

The Waterways Council held its Annual Waterways Symposium on December 8-9, 2025 in Nashville and its Capitol Hill Fly-In on February 3-4, 2024 in Washington, D.C. The agendas included Waterways Council's priorities and accomplishments and political and financial briefings.

Ecosystem Health

Policy and Programmatic Interagency Coordination

UMRR Coordinating Committee Meeting

The UMRR Coordinating Committee met virtually on November 19, 2025. The agenda involved programmatic briefings regarding accomplishments and progress related to habitat rehabilitation and enhancement projects (HREPs), long term resource monitoring, and communications. Following the enactment of the FY 2025 Continuing Resolution Authority, in which the Corps construction program was nearly reduced by half, the Administration allocated \$13.5 million to UMRR, requiring it to halt most programmatic work and prioritizing active HREP construction contracts and LTRM base

monitoring. UMRR Program Manager described the implications to the program's implementation in FY 2025 as well as the uncertainty facing the program during the FY 2026 continuing resolution authority, which is requiring the program to assume full-year appropriations at the FY 2025 enacted level – i.e., following the “least of” rule.

NESP Coordinating Committee Meetings

The Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP) Coordinating Committee convened a quarterly meeting on December 10, 2025. The meeting was held virtually. The quarterly meeting included reports on routine program management as well as focused briefings on reach-based planning and ecosystem and navigation project implementation. In addition to this public-facing session, the Committee also convenes monthly meetings to advance programmatic priorities. Recent discussions have focused mostly on reach planning.

Programmatic Strategic Planning

UMRR Long Term Resource Monitoring Planning

As explained earlier, UMRR federal and state agencies were faced with significant uncertainty as they approached decision timelines related to implementing long term resource monitoring in 2026. UMRBA convened and facilitated the UMRR partnership's evaluation of the fiscal context and agency's personnel management needs and deliberations about how to implement long term resource monitoring in 2026 as a partnership. The UMRR Coordinating Committee met on December 11, 2025, December 17, 2025, and January 12, 2026. Throughout the last quarter, the UMRR Coordinating Committee members, agency leaders, and LTRM field station leaders coordinated extensively on an ongoing basis to align their respective monitoring approaches into a programmatic strategy.

Hazardous Spills Emergency Management

Oil Pollution Act (OPA) Planning and Mapping

UMRBA incorporated updates to the Inland Sensitivity Atlas (ISA) for Minnesota and Wisconsin into the regional database as well as updates received from the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) for Indiana, Ohio, and bordering counties in Kentucky. The new data was delivered to USEPA on February 9, 2026.

UMRBA staff participated in monthly Mapping Group meetings on December 1, 2025 and February 2, 2026. The monthly meeting for January 2026 was canceled.

UMRBA supported spill response planning in the Minneapolis/St. Paul Sub-area, including by updating the contact information associated with the Sub-area contingency plan. On February 2, 2026, staff took part in a planning call for a functional exercise simulating a fuel release to the St. Croix River, tentatively scheduled for May 11-12, 2025.

Upper Mississippi River Hazardous Spills Coordination Group (UMR Spills Group)

UMRBA staff hosted the UMR Spills Group virtual fall meeting on December 18, 2025. Topics included impacts of the fall 2025 federal government shutdown, a recap of 2025 planning work, recent spills, and potential 2026 work. Participants expressed interest in developing response plans for UMR Pools 17-18 and the lower Minnesota River.

The group plans to hold its spring meeting on April 21, 2026. The location has not yet been chosen.

Water Quality

Interstate Water Quality Monitoring Program

UMRBA is coordinating a one-year project to implement the fixed site monitoring component of its UMR Interstate Water Quality Monitoring Plan. Monthly sampling began in October 2025. UMRBA is convening regular planning sessions among the state agency staff involved in implementing the fixed site monitoring.

USEPA Region 5 Water Quality Managers' Meeting

The USEPA Region 5 Water Quality Managers' Meeting was held December 2-4, 2025 in Chicago, Illinois. The annual meeting allows managers the opportunity to collaborate, share progress from the 2025 year, and recommend regional-level initiatives. Select topics discussed were state- and Region 5-specific programmatic updates, monitoring initiative proposals, and the water quality-related research and monitoring efforts of data centers.

Hypoxia Task Force Coordinating Committee

UMRBA staff participated in meetings of the Hypoxia Task Force, convened by USEPA on February 5, 2026 in Washington, D.C. USEPA facilitated discussion regarding various the progress, products, and future direction of the Hypoxia Taks Force Coordinating Committee as well as the values realized from the Gulf Hypoxia Program.

In conjunction, UMRBA participated in meetings of the Hypoxia Task Force Coordinating Committee and SERA-46 on February 4, 2026.

Integrated River Projects

Water Resources Database Development

Per resources from the USEPA Exchange Network grant, UMRBA continues to develop a water resources database to house water quantity and water quality data that will support interstate collaboration efforts. The two central purposes of the project are to build the infrastructure needed to house UMRBA's water resource datasets and to increase the Association's future capacity for supporting interstate data collection and data sharing efforts. UMRBA staff are currently working with the contractor to build out the database as well as a web-based app to support the states' input of water quality monitoring data.

Communications and Partnership Collaboration

Meetings, Events, and Partnership Collaborations

UMRBA staff participated in national and regional collaborations through the following forums:

- NatCap TEEMs (Natural Capital Project: Earth-Economy Modelers) Research Center Watershed Democracy Dialogue meeting on December 3, 2025
- Minnesota DNR Roundtable on December 9, 2026 in Brooklyn Center, Minnesota

- University of Illinois Urbana–Champaign Stakeholder Working Group meeting on January 16, 2026 in Urbana, Illinois through a hybrid forum regarding the development of the Climate–Event Framework For Analysis of Macro–Environmental Systems (C–FrAMES)
- Agricultural Nutrient Policy Council Phosphorus Pools and Fluxes Research Updates and Roundtable Discussion on Friday, February 6 in Washington, D.C.

Financial and Administrative Report

UMRBA Financial Report

Attached as page B-13 is UMRBA Treasurer Jason Tidemann’s statement regarding his review of UMRBA’s financial statement for the period of October 1, 2025 to December 31, 2025.

Attached as pages B-14 to B-18 are UMRBA’s 2026 budget report and balance sheet. As of February 9, 2026, ordinary income for FY 2026 totaled \$857,197.96 and expenses totaled \$812,299.36 for net ordinary income of \$44,898.60. As of this date, UMRBA’s cash assets totaled \$161,795.80.

December 2, 2025

The Honorable Susan Collins, Chair
The Honorable Patty Murray, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Appropriations Committee
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510-6025

The Honorable Tom Cole, Chair
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro, Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Appropriations Committee
H-307, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chair
The Honorable Jeff Merkley, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
S-125, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510-6025

The Honorable Mike Simpson, Chair
The Honorable Chellie Pingree, Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair and Ranking Member:

The undersigned organizations collectively represent a broad array of state governments and agricultural, navigation, and conservation interests, aligned in support of the Gulf Hypoxia Program, the Hypoxia Task Force partnership, and the states' nutrient reduction strategies. Together, we are writing to respectfully request ample funding in FY 2027 for the Gulf Hypoxia Program.

The Gulf Hypoxia Program advances the implementation of nutrient reduction solutions, including the construction of conservation projects, monitoring, and additional strategic planning. The state nutrient reduction strategies are used to inform the allocation of investments. Because of the extensive involvement of farmers, municipalities, conservation interests, and scientists, we are pleased to convey our shared position that the state nutrient reduction strategies provide the optimal approaches for allocating the Gulf Hypoxia Program resources in the best interests of the nation.

The undersigned organizations believe that the state nutrient reduction strategies are designed to improve the health, function, and viability of the Mississippi River basin's waterbodies. While important strides in conservation practices and point and nonpoint source loading reductions have been achieved over the past two decades, attaining the goals we have collectively set for reducing nutrient loading through the Gulf Hypoxia Action Plan will require acceleration of its implementation.

The Gulf Hypoxia Program supports collaborations among state governments, tribal governments, and agricultural, municipal, conservation, and other stakeholders, including through the Hypoxia Task Force. Together, the undersigned organizations believe that the Hypoxia Task Force's state-federal infrastructure allows for multi-disciplinary collaborations to generate comprehensive approaches for reducing nutrient runoff from nonpoint sources in ways that also have many supplemental national benefits such as waterways transportation reliability, water storage, and habitat.

We thank you for your consideration of our request and hope that you will support the Gulf Hypoxia Program as a priority in the FY 2027 interior appropriation measure.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Drainage Management Commission
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Farmland Trust
American Society of Agronomy
American Soybean Association
America's Watershed Initiative
Applied Ecological Institute, Inc.
Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Clean Wisconsin
Crop Science Society of America
Ducks Unlimited
Environmental Defenders of McHenry County
Freshwater Society
Friends of the Fox River
Friends of the Mississippi River
Green Lands Blue Waters
Heartland Co-Op
Illinois Environmental Council
Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association
Illinois Soybean Growers
Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Indiana Sportsmen's Roundtable
Iowa Environmental Council
Iowa Farm Bureau Federation
Iowa Wildlife Federation
Izaak Walton League of America
Izaak Walton League of America – Bill Cook Chapter (Stevens Point, WI)
Izaak Walton League of America – Chapter 1 (Chicago, IL)
Izaak Walton League of America – Chapter 85 (Havana, IL)
Izaak Walton League of America – Des Plaines Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America – Geneseo Chapter
Izaak Walton League of America – Illinois Division
Izaak Walton League of America – Indiana Division
Izaak Walton League of America – Iowa Division
Izaak Walton League of America – Minnesota Division
Izaak Walton League of America – Nebraska Division
Izaak Walton League of America – Ohio Division
Izaak Walton League of America – Wisconsin Division
Louisiana Hypoxia Working Group
Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation
Minnesota Agricultural Water Resource Center
Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
National Association of Conservation Districts
National Corn Growers Association
National Milk Producers Federation
National Pork Producers Council

National Wildlife Foundation
Ohio AgriBusiness Association
Ohio Corn and Wheat Growers Association
Ohio Pork Council
One Mississippi
Prairie State Conservation Coalition
River Action
Soil and Water Conservation Society
Soil Science Society of America
The Fertilizer Institute
The Nature Conservancy
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
The Water Collaborative of Greater New Orleans
Trout Unlimited
Tulane ByWater Institute
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
United Egg Producers

cc: The Honorable Russell Vought, Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Lee Zeldin, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

January 12, 2026

The Honorable Sam Graves, Chair
The Honorable Rick Larsen, Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6256

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito, Chair
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Environment and Public Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6175

The Honorable Mike Collins, Chair
The Honorable Frederica Wilson, Ranking Member
U.S. House of Representatives
Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-6256

The Honorable Kevin Cramer, Chair
The Honorable Angela Alsobrooks, Ranking Member
U.S. Senate
Environment and Public Works Committee
Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-6175

Dear Representatives Graves, Larsen, Collins, and Wilson and Senators Moore Capito, Whitehouse, Cramer, and Alsobrooks:

We are very pleased to understand that you are beginning to formulate the 2026 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). As Congress develops its priorities for the authorizing legislation, I am writing to respectfully request the inclusion of a provision to reform the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) project partnership agreements (PPAs).

UMRBA is the Governor-established forum for interstate water resource planning and management on the Upper Mississippi River System, representing its member states of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin. Formed in 1981, UMRBA represents its member states' common water resource interests and works collaboratively with Upper Mississippi federal and state agencies as well as other non-federal partners. In advancing our shared commitment to multi-use management, the states and USACE work collaboratively to develop solutions through sound water resource projects. In addition, local communities and nonprofit organizations also serve as key partners in sponsoring water resource solutions constructed by USACE. However, implementing the solutions that involve the states or other non-federal entities serving as cost-share sponsors is impeded, or is dramatically slowed, by the terms required in the cost-share project partnership agreements (PPAs).

The key impediments include the terms requiring the non-federal sponsor to assume complete liability for constructed projects (except for when fault or negligence is proven) and operations, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation (OMRR&R) in perpetuity. These terms are simply not reasonable and are not acceptable to many states, local communities, and nonprofit organizations. At a fundamental level, the current PPA terms conflict with many states' constitutions and tort law.

Specifically, UMRBA respectfully requests the following provisions be included in WRDA 2026:

- 1) *Indemnification* – Replace the hold and save clause with a more equitable, shared approach to liability that does not extend beyond the liabilities that already exist under applicable constitutions and laws.

USACE requires that non-federal sponsors indemnify the federal government for all damages except for fault or negligence. Indemnifying a third party (including the federal government) is in direct conflict with many states' constitutions and laws. It requires the non-federal party to promise financial resources for an indeterminate liability that might occur at an unknown time, at an unknown cost, and for an unknown reason. Many state constitutions preclude agencies from obligating funds without an encumbrance against an appropriation and do not allow for incurring any indebtedness of any nature on behalf of the state until an appropriation for it has been made by the legislature. In addition, indemnification requires a state to assume liability beyond the extent to which many states' tort law permits. Non-federal sponsors are required to execute the PPAs with the liability clause early in the planning stage and before the designs are complete. USACE takes full control of the land, design of the project, and agreements with the construction contractors. USACE is also the only point-of-contact to the construction contractors. This results in a completely one-sided approach to project design, implementation, and assumption of risk that favors the federal government.

- 2) *Operations, Maintenance, Repair, Replacement, and Rehabilitation* – Establish a defined cap on operations, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation (OMRR&R) obligations.

Currently, USACE legally obligates non-federal sponsors to undefined and unbounded operations, maintenance, repair, replacement, and rehabilitation (OMRR&R) obligations for the water resource project. This policy essentially creates a permanent federal hold on non-federal property. USACE requires the non-federal sponsor to *forever* maintain the project features as prescribed in the project O&M manuals. That is unreasonable, particularly in dynamic coastal and riverine systems.

Historically, USACE has required OMRR&R obligations for 50 years to match the expected life of a constructed project. USACE changed this policy in 2012 and now requires non-federal sponsors to perform OMRR&R obligations in perpetuity. This shift has resulted in the loss of interested cost-share partners and unnecessarily stymies non-federal investments in national water interests.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 651-224-2880 or kwallace@umrba.org if you have questions or would like to discuss UMRBA's position in further detail.

Sincerely,

Kirsten Wallace
Executive Director
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

cc: Upper Mississippi River Delegation

February 3, 2026

Mr. Adam Telle
Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works)
108 Army Pentagon
Room 3E446
Washington, D.C. 20310-0108

Dear Secretary Telle:

As the Administration develops its funding allocations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with the discretionary monies provided through the FY 2026 energy and water appropriations measure, I am writing on behalf of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA) to respectfully request the following priorities related to USACE's programs and projects on the Upper Mississippi River System:

— \$1 million for the Upper Mississippi River System Flow Frequency Study

In FY 2026, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will complete the hydraulic routing model and associated flow and climate assessments, employ the analyses, and develop a report of the findings. Flood risk assessments and forecasting capabilities are necessary to reduce damages and loss of life associated with increasingly frequent and major flood events in the Upper Mississippi River. Accurate and accessible information will improve our ability to develop a systemic flood plan and improve management capabilities.

— \$1 million for the Upper Mississippi River System Flood Risk Reduction and Resiliency Study

In FY 2026, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the five Upper Mississippi River states, and UMRBA will develop a scope and schedule for implementing the Upper Mississippi River System Flood Risk Reduction and Resiliency Study, and design and begin employing a public participation and engagement strategy.

— Available funds for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP)

In FY 2026, NESP has built capacity to implement ecosystem projects as well as implement forest stewardship activities and stands ready to efficiently and effectively execute available funds for ecosystem restoration.

UMRBA is pleased that the FY 2026 energy and waters appropriations measure sustains the President's budget request of \$52 million for the Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR) Program as well as funding for the operations and maintenance of the Upper Mississippi River System's 9-foot navigation channel.

UMRR increases the quantity and quality of habitat on the Upper Mississippi River System through habitat rehabilitation and enhancement projects, and UMRR enhances systems-level knowledge of the Upper

Page 2
February 3, 2026

Mississippi River System by assessing the status and trends of the river ecosystem through long term resource monitoring.

By way of background, UMRBA is the Governor-established forum for interstate water resource planning and management on the Upper Mississippi River System, representing its member states of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin. Formed in 1981, UMRBA represents its member states' common water resource interests and works collaboratively with Upper Mississippi federal and state agencies as well as other non-federal partners. UMRBA and USACE as well as other federal agency partners enjoy a long history and strong partnership in our shared commitment to multi-use management of the Upper Mississippi River System.

We appreciate your consideration of this request. Please contact me at 651-224-2880 or kwallace@umrba.org to arrange an opportunity to discuss our request in more detail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "K. Wallace", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kirsten Wallace
Executive Director
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

cc: Upper Mississippi River Congressional Delegation
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Headquarters

Natalie Lenzen, UMRBA

From: Tidemann, Jason (DNR) <jason.tidemann@state.mn.us>
Sent: Friday, February 6, 2026 3:00 PM
To: Natalie Lenzen, UMRBA
Subject: RE: UMRBA Oct 1 - Dec 31 Treasurer Report

Hello,

As Treasurer, I have reviewed the monthly financial statements for the period 10/1/25-12/31/25. Activity reported on the Balance Sheet, Profit/Loss Budget Overview, Check Register, Visa statements and Open Invoices Report provide a reasonable and consistent representation of the monthly financial activity for the referenced period.

Jason Tidemann

From: Natalie Lenzen, UMRBA <nlenzen@umrba.org>
Sent: Thursday, February 5, 2026 2:38 PM
To: Tidemann, Jason (DNR) <jason.tidemann@state.mn.us>
Subject: UMRBA Oct 1 - Dec 31 Treasurer Report

This message may be from an external email source.

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Jason –

I would like to request your statement of review of our October 2025 through December 2025 financials for the Treasurer’s report in the February 24, 2026 UMRBA Board meeting packet.

Please let me know if you have any questions or need any further information.

Thank you,
Natalie

Natalie Lenzen
Operations Manager | Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA)
7900 West 78th Street, Suite 380, Edina, MN 55439
651-224-2880 (*main office*) | 763-349-2049 (*direct*)
Find us online at www.umrba.org or [Facebook](#)

Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

FY 2026 Profit & Loss Budget Overview

July 2025 - June 2026

	TOTAL		
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET
Revenue			
4000 State Dues			
Illinois Dues	70,350.00	70,350.00	0.00
Iowa Dues	52,762.50	70,350.00	-17,587.50
Minnesota Dues	52,762.50	70,350.00	-17,587.50
Missouri Dues	62,611.50	70,350.00	-7,738.50
Wisconsin Dues	70,350.00	70,350.00	0.00
WQ Assessment	68,040.00	113,400.00	-45,360.00
Total 4000 State Dues	376,876.50	465,150.00	-88,273.50
4100 Contracts and Grants			
Exchange Network Grant (IL)	31,322.61	210,000.00	-178,677.39
Interstate Monitoring (Mult)	39,089.96	55,000.00	-15,910.04
Interstate WQ Pilot	9,837.92		9,837.92
UMN CIROH	110,827.38	230,000.00	-119,172.62
USACE (NESP)	96,888.76	72,000.00	24,888.76
USACE (UMRR)	20,322.05	210,000.00	-189,677.95
USEPA (HTF)	69,599.96	133,000.00	-63,400.04
USEPA (OPA)	100,992.76	250,000.00	-149,007.24
Total 4100 Contracts and Grants	478,881.40	1,160,000.00	-681,118.60
4200 Interest Income			
Short Term Interest			
Short Term (Brokerage Account)		20,000.00	-20,000.00
Short Term (CD)	794.98	1,500.00	-705.02
Short Term (Checking)	511.22	4,500.00	-3,988.78
Short Term (Sweep)	19.19	500.00	-480.81
Total Short Term Interest	1,325.39	26,500.00	-25,174.61
Total 4200 Interest Income	1,325.39	26,500.00	-25,174.61
4300 Other Income			
Meeting Meals Income	114.67		114.67
Total 4300 Other Income	114.67		114.67
Total Revenue	\$857,197.96	\$1,651,650.00	\$ -794,452.04
GROSS PROFIT	\$857,197.96	\$1,651,650.00	\$ -794,452.04
Expenditures			
5001 Payroll Expenses			
Benefits	-9,983.93		-9,983.93
ICHRA	10,334.23		10,334.23
Salary	575,361.41	1,037,571.11	-462,209.70
SocSec Company	-3,309.67		-3,309.67
Taxes	47,586.05	81,954.19	-34,368.14
Total 5001 Payroll Expenses	619,988.09	1,119,525.30	-499,537.21
5002 Benefits Administration	1,530.00	1,958.00	-428.00
5100 Space Rental			

Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

FY 2026 Profit & Loss Budget Overview

July 2025 - June 2026

	TOTAL		
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET
Office Rental	44,525.42	70,000.00	-25,474.58
Total 5100 Space Rental	44,525.42	70,000.00	-25,474.58
5101 Legal and Financial			
Bank Charges		25.00	-25.00
Insurance	7,973.26	8,000.00	-26.74
Legal and Tax Services		3,000.00	-3,000.00
Total 5101 Legal and Financial	7,973.26	11,025.00	-3,051.74
5102 Telephone/Communications	8,894.98	12,000.00	-3,105.02
5103 Communications/Publications	36,688.00	20,000.00	16,688.00
5104 Equipment			
Equipment (Maint./Rental)	1,661.51	3,000.00	-1,338.49
Total 5104 Equipment	1,661.51	3,000.00	-1,338.49
5105 Supplies	1,769.92	5,500.00	-3,730.08
5106 Postage	78.00	100.00	-22.00
5107 Other Services	4,500.00	7,500.00	-3,000.00
5200 Meeting Expenses	3,905.35	12,000.00	-8,094.65
5201 Travel	8,264.23	40,000.00	-31,735.77
5202 State Travel Reimbursement			
Illinois	227.36	5,000.00	-4,772.64
Iowa		5,000.00	-5,000.00
Minnesota		5,000.00	-5,000.00
Missouri		5,000.00	-5,000.00
State WQ Travel		3,500.00	-3,500.00
Wisconsin		5,000.00	-5,000.00
Total 5202 State Travel Reimbursement	227.36	28,500.00	-28,272.64
5300 OPA Expenses			
Equipment (Maint./Rental) OPA	500.00	1,000.00	-500.00
Equipment OPA		500.00	-500.00
Other OPA	450.00	1,000.00	-550.00
Travel OPA	196.63		196.63
Total 5300 OPA Expenses	1,146.63	2,500.00	-1,353.37
5304 USEPA Gulf Hypoxia			
Contractual	4,500.00	5,300.00	-800.00
Supplies		1,050.00	-1,050.00
Travel	6,904.35	2,500.00	4,404.35
Total 5304 USEPA Gulf Hypoxia	11,404.35	8,850.00	2,554.35
5305 USACE NESP			
Other NESP	9,150.00	12,000.00	-2,850.00
Travel	3,702.65	2,500.00	1,202.65
Total 5305 USACE NESP	12,852.65	14,500.00	-1,647.35
5306 CIROH UMRS			
Contractual	21,129.10	74,000.00	-52,870.90

Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

FY 2026 Profit & Loss Budget Overview

July 2025 - June 2026

	TOTAL		
	ACTUAL	BUDGET	OVER BUDGET
Other CIROH		3,500.00	-3,500.00
Supplies		740.00	-740.00
Travel	5,829.98	400.00	5,429.98
Total 5306 CIROH UMRS	26,959.08	78,640.00	-51,680.92
5307 Exchange Network			
Contractual	7,560.00	145,000.00	-137,440.00
Supplies		250.00	-250.00
Travel	173.52	1,000.00	-826.48
Total 5307 Exchange Network	7,733.52	146,250.00	-138,516.48
5308 Interstate WQ Monitoring			
Communications	1,650.00		1,650.00
Other	703.14		703.14
Shipping	8,905.49		8,905.49
Supplies	938.38		938.38
Total 5308 Interstate WQ Monitoring	12,197.01		12,197.01
Total Expenditures	\$812,299.36	\$1,581,848.30	\$ -769,548.94
NET OPERATING REVENUE	\$44,898.60	\$69,801.70	\$ -24,903.10
NET REVENUE	\$44,898.60	\$69,801.70	\$ -24,903.10

Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

Balance Sheet

As of February 9, 2026

	TOTAL
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Bank Accounts	
Checking HT 2732	161,795.80
Investment	
Brokerage Account	309,558.23
CD_2 HT	53,334.14
Sweep HT 5401	-5.20
Total Investment	362,887.17
Total Bank Accounts	\$524,682.97
Accounts Receivable	
Contract/grants	0.00
Invoiced/Billable	111,304.79
Total Contract/grants	111,304.79
Total Accounts Receivable	\$111,304.79
Other Current Assets	
Payroll Refunds	1.33
Prepaid Expense	8.00
Office Rental Prepaid Expense	-3,876.01
Total Prepaid Expense	-3,868.01
Total Other Current Assets	\$ -3,866.68
Total Current Assets	\$632,121.08
Fixed Assets	
604(b) Equipment	3,683.12
Accum. Deprec. 604(b)	-1,520.51
Accum. Deprec. OPA	-22,941.95
Accum. Deprec. STC	-3,885.00
Accum. Deprec. UMRBA	-33,424.52
Accum. Deprec. WQ	-1,290.00
OPA Equipment	27,744.64
STC Equipment	4,332.67
UMRBA Equipment	94,681.64
WQ Equipment	1,290.00
Total Fixed Assets	\$68,670.09
TOTAL ASSETS	\$700,791.17

Upper Mississippi River Basin Association

Balance Sheet

As of February 9, 2026

	TOTAL
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Credit Cards	
Visa Chase 5294	1,733.34
Total Credit Cards	\$1,733.34
Other Current Liabilities	
Deferred MO DoC (WLM) Revenue	4,206.05
Office Expense Liabilities	0.00
Travel Expense	1,619.60
Total Office Expense Liabilities	1,619.60
Payroll Liabilities	0.00
Accrued Vacation	80,869.17
Accrued Vacation FICA	6,186.50
Federal Withholding	189.00
Medicare	
Medicare Company	39.17
Medicare Employee	39.17
Total Medicare	78.34
MN Income Tax	1,206.17
MN Paid Family and Medical Leave SUI	653.46
MN Unemployment Taxes	778.80
Social Security	
SocSec Company	167.50
SocSec Employee	167.50
Total Social Security	335.00
SUTA (Minnesota UC)	325.51
Workforce Enhancement Fee	334.97
Total Payroll Liabilities	90,956.92
Total Other Current Liabilities	\$96,782.57
Total Current Liabilities	\$98,515.91
Total Liabilities	\$98,515.91
Equity	
Retained Earnings	557,412.39
Net Revenue	44,862.87
Total Equity	\$602,275.26
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	\$700,791.17

Upper Mississippi River Quarterly Meetings

Attachment C

Annual Consultation on Interbasin Diversion Requests

Page Number	Document Title
C-1	Background
C-2 to C-5	Upper Mississippi River Basin Charter (October 2, 1989)

Annual Consultation on Interbasin Diversion Requests Background

In October 1989 the five basin Governors signed "The Upper Mississippi River Basin Charter" which sets forth a notification and consultation process for any new or increased water diversion out of the basin that will exceed an average of 5 million gallons per day during any 30 day period. (See Charter on pp. C-2 to C-5.) Item 6 of the Notification and Consultation Guidelines states that "at each annual meeting of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association each state shall report on its involvement with diversion requests."

Since 1991, UMRBA's Annual Meetings have provided an opportunity for the States to fulfill their notification responsibilities under the Charter. For the past 31 years, none of the States have reported any diversion requests. Despite the fact that there has been no activity under the terms of the charter, a letter has typically been sent to each of the Governors indicating that fact.

At UMRBA's 2023 Annual Meeting on February 28, each UMRBA Board member should be prepared to report on any diversion requests within the last 12 months that would fall within the confines of the Charter.

THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN CHARTER

PRINCIPLES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN WATER RESOURCES AND NOTIFICATION AND CONSULTATION PROCESS GUIDELINES

FINDINGS

The Governors of the signatory Upper Mississippi River Basin States jointly find and declare that:

The water resources of the Upper Mississippi River Basin are precious natural resources. The Basin's water uses include municipal, industrial, and agricultural water supply; navigation; hydroelectric power and energy production; recreation; mining; and the maintenance of fish and wildlife habitat. The Basin States have a duty to protect, conserve, develop, and manage the water resources of the Basin.

The water resources of the Upper Mississippi River Basin comprise a valuable regional and national resource. The Upper Mississippi river system is a multi-purpose system with two Congressional mandates; it is managed both for commercial navigation and as a national wildlife refuge. The States in partnership with the federal government of the United States share a continuing and abiding responsibility to maintain and enhance all aspects of this multipurpose system. Without careful and prudent management, future diversions of the water resources of the Upper Mississippi River Basin may have significant adverse impacts on the environment, economy, and welfare of the region.

Management of the water resources of the Upper Mississippi River Basin is subject to the jurisdiction, rights, and responsibilities of each Basin State. Effective management of the water resources of the Basin requires the Basin States to exercise their jurisdiction, rights, and responsibilities in the interest of all of the people of the region through a continuing spirit of comity and mutual cooperation.

A preferred means to achieve effective management of the water resources of the Upper Mississippi River Basin is through the joint pursuit of unified and cooperative principles and policies mutually agreed upon and adhered to by the States of the Upper Mississippi River Basin.

PURPOSE

The purposes of this charter are to conserve the levels and flows of the water resources; to protect the environmental ecosystem; to secure present development; to provide a foundation for future investment and development; and to assure all significant benefits and impacts are considered before a decision is made.

PRINCIPLES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN WATER RESOURCES

In order to achieve the purposes of this Charter, the Governors of the signatory Upper Mississippi River Basin States agree, subject to the laws of each state, that:

Principle I Integrity of the Upper Mississippi River Basin

The water resources of the Upper Mississippi River Basin shall be managed for the wise use, benefit, and enjoyment of all citizens of the Basin. The planning and management of the water resources of the Upper Mississippi River Basin shall recognize that the water resources of the Upper Mississippi River Basin transcend political boundaries within the Basin and should be conserved and provided for beneficial uses including navigation, recreation, municipal and industrial water supply, irrigation, hydroelectric power and energy production, water quality, mining, maintenance of fish and wildlife habitat, aquatic ecosystem, and other instream and withdrawal uses.

Principle II Notification and Consultation

The signatory states agree that it is the intent of the states that interbasin diversion of water resources will not be supported if individually or cumulatively they would have significant adverse impact on instream flows, in-basin uses, and the basin ecosystem.

Any state having knowledge of a proposal for a new or increased diversion of water which will exceed 5 million gallons per day average in any 30 day period from the waters of the Upper Mississippi River Basin to another basin shall notify and offer to consult with all signatory states in order to allow all signatory states to express their concerns, identify their interests, develop where possible mutually acceptable agreements, or take such other actions as they may find appropriate.

Principle III Cooperation Among States

The Governors agree to pursue such additional agreements as may be necessary to promote greater cooperation with respect to any new or increased interbasin diversions of Mississippi River Basin waters.

Principle IV Reservation of States Rights

The signatory States mutually recognize the rights and standings of each other to represent and protect the rights of their respective jurisdictions. Each State reserves and retains all rights and authority to seek, in any state, federal, or other appropriate court or forum, adjudication or protection of their respective rights.

NOTIFICATION AND CONSULTATION PROCESS GUIDELINES

1) State Appointments

- Each signatory state shall designate a contact person for the state's involvement in the notification and consultation process.
- The Upper Mississippi River Basin Association shall compile and maintain a mailing list.

2) Notification

- Notice shall be given to all signatory states of an anticipated diversion which exceeds 5 million gallons per day average in any 30 day period.
- The notice shall include at a minimum:
 - a) name, location, and sending and receiving waterbodies or basins
 - b) list of applicable permits
 - c) purpose of water use
 - d) method of measurement
 - e) request for comments

3) Comments/Objections

Comments or objections from the signatory states:

- a) shall be submitted by the Governor or his representative within 45 days
- b) should be based on hydrologic, economic, or environmental concerns
- c) may include a request for a consultation meeting

4) Consultation

- The originating state shall schedule and conduct a consultation meeting when a letter of objection has been received and a consultation meeting requested.
- The originating state shall provide a minimum 30 day notice of the meeting to the Governors or their representatives.
- The originating state shall be responsible for preparation of the agenda, chairing of the meeting, and preparation of notes of the meeting.
- The consultation meeting shall include opportunities for description of the proposed diversion, presentation of basin states positions, and discussion.

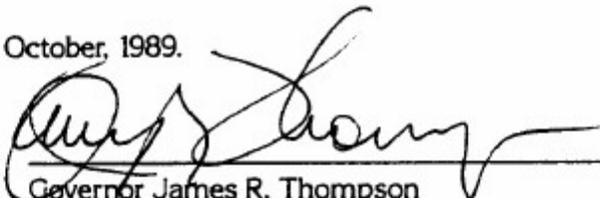
5) Decision

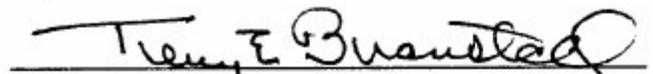
- If no objections are received, the originating state shall make its decision on the proposed withdrawal and inform the signatory states.
- If objections are received, whether or not a consultation meeting is convened, the originating state shall:
 - a) distribute to signatory states a summary of the consultation discussion and comments and a draft response to the diversion request.
 - b) allow 30 days for comments from the signatory states.
 - c) consider comments received.
 - d) distribute the final disposition of the diversion request to all signatory states within 15 days after the final decision has been made.

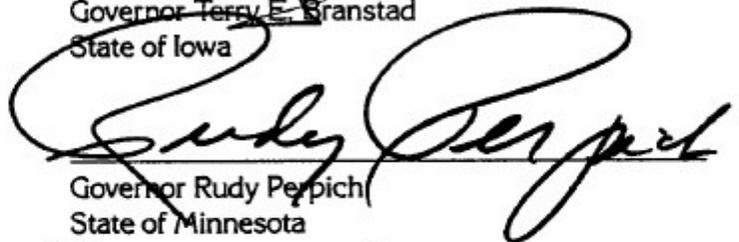
6) Annual Review

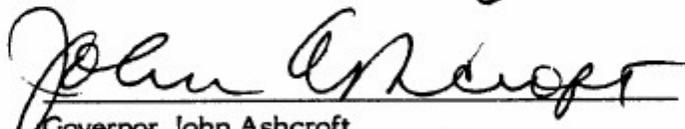
At each annual meeting of the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association each state shall report on its involvement with diversion requests.

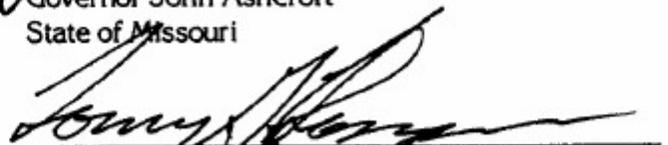
Signed at Milwaukee, Wisconsin this 2nd day of October, 1989.


Governor James R. Thompson
State of Illinois


Governor Terry E. Branstad
State of Iowa


Governor Rudy Perpich
State of Minnesota


Governor John Ashcroft
State of Missouri


Governor Tommy Thompson
State of Wisconsin

Upper Mississippi River Quarterly Meetings

Attachment D

Federal Ecosystem Program Planning

Page Number	Document Title
D-1 to D-8	Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program Implementation Overview (1-2026)
D-9 to D-10	Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program FY 2027 Advocacy Handout (1-2026)



Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program

Implementation Snapshot 2025 - 2027



**Upper Mississippi
River Restoration**

Long Term Resource Monitoring of the Upper Mississippi River System

The Upper Mississippi River System is changing for a variety of reasons, mostly because of **changing hydrology** and **invasive species**.

Changing hydrology affects habitat quality and food sources for fish and wildlife.

We know these changes are occurring because of the **Long Term Resource Monitoring (LTRM)** in the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program. The data collected for 35 years at six field stations has **produced many insights that would be otherwise unobtainable**.

Lake City Field Station

Monitored by the state of Minnesota. This station's findings illuminate how investing in nutrient reduction leads to a healthier ecosystem.

La Crosse Field Station

Monitored by the state of Wisconsin. Findings from this field station show the value of UMRR's habitat projects, particularly island and backwater restoration.

Bellevue Field Station

Monitored by the state of Iowa. This station found that the Maquoketa River, which flows into Pool 13, contributes the most sediment out of the tributaries studied. This has led to a decline in aquatic plant diversity and abundance.

Havana Field Station

Monitored by the state of Illinois. The establishment of invasive carp in the La Grange Reach has led to a decrease in recreationally valued native fish populations at this field station.

Great Rivers Field Station

Monitored by the state of Illinois. Water levels at Pool 26 have been managed to expand the areas where native emergent plants can grow. The plants then help to limit sediment movement and enhance water clarity.

Open River Field Station

Monitored by the state of Missouri. In contrast to the Havana field station, recreationally valued native fish populations are stable in the Open River Reach despite the presence of invasive carp.

The six field stations collect data on **water quality, forests, aquatic vegetation, fish**, and other variables to measure the river's health. The six study reaches have different habitats, threats, and conditions.



Long Term Resource Monitoring of the Upper Mississippi River System

For 35 years, UMRR's Long Term Resource Monitoring (LTRM) captures trends in nutrient concentrations, plant community changes, forest loss across the system, and the impacts from invasive carp expansion to the abundance and diversity of native fishes.

LTRM informs our understanding of the river's ecology and focuses investments for the greatest benefit of the river and the public .

What Does LTRM Tell Us?

There is **more water in the river more of the time**. High flows are lasting longer and occurring more frequently throughout the system. This is important because water flow is the primary driver affecting the quality and quantity of habitat.

Floodplain forest loss has occurred in nearly all study areas except south of the locked portion of the river. The forests may be responding to changes like increased flood inundation and invasive species.

In most of the river system, **water in main channel has become clearer** and **aquatic plants have become more abundant**, improving habitat for some fish and wildlife. Increased water clarity in the river allows sunlight to reach deeper into the water and promotes plant growth. These plants slow water flow and anchor the sediment, which further improves water clarity and triggers more plant growth.

Concentration of nutrients, notably nitrogen and phosphorus, remain high, exceeding U.S. Environmental Protection Agency benchmarks. However, total phosphorus concentrations have declined in many of the studied reach areas.

The river continues to support diverse and abundant fishes. Recreational fishes have increased in parts of the system. However, there have been substantial declines in forage fish, an important food source for larger fishes and animals, throughout the river network. Invasive carps have substantially affected the river ecosystem where they have become common.

How Does LTRM Benefit People Along the River?

In the 1980s, there was a massive collapse of vegetation on the Upper Mississippi River that increased sedimentation of the navigation channel, negatively impacting the river's ability to support navigation. The collapse was likely caused by poor water quality. Monitoring vegetation, sediment and water quality is important to maintaining reliable transportation of commerce.

UMRR long term monitoring of nutrients provides the agricultural community with long term information about trends, informing the success of past investments in nutrient management and informing decisions about future investments in conservation practices.

The Upper Mississippi River System is a treasured ecosystem abundant with fish and wildlife and a multi-billion-dollar economic engine. It plays a major role in local, regional, state, and national economies. LTRM works towards a healthier and more resilient ecosystem that supports these systems.



D-3

This information is available in greater detail in the following scientific publications:

2022 Ecological Status and Trends of the Upper Mississippi and Illinois Rivers

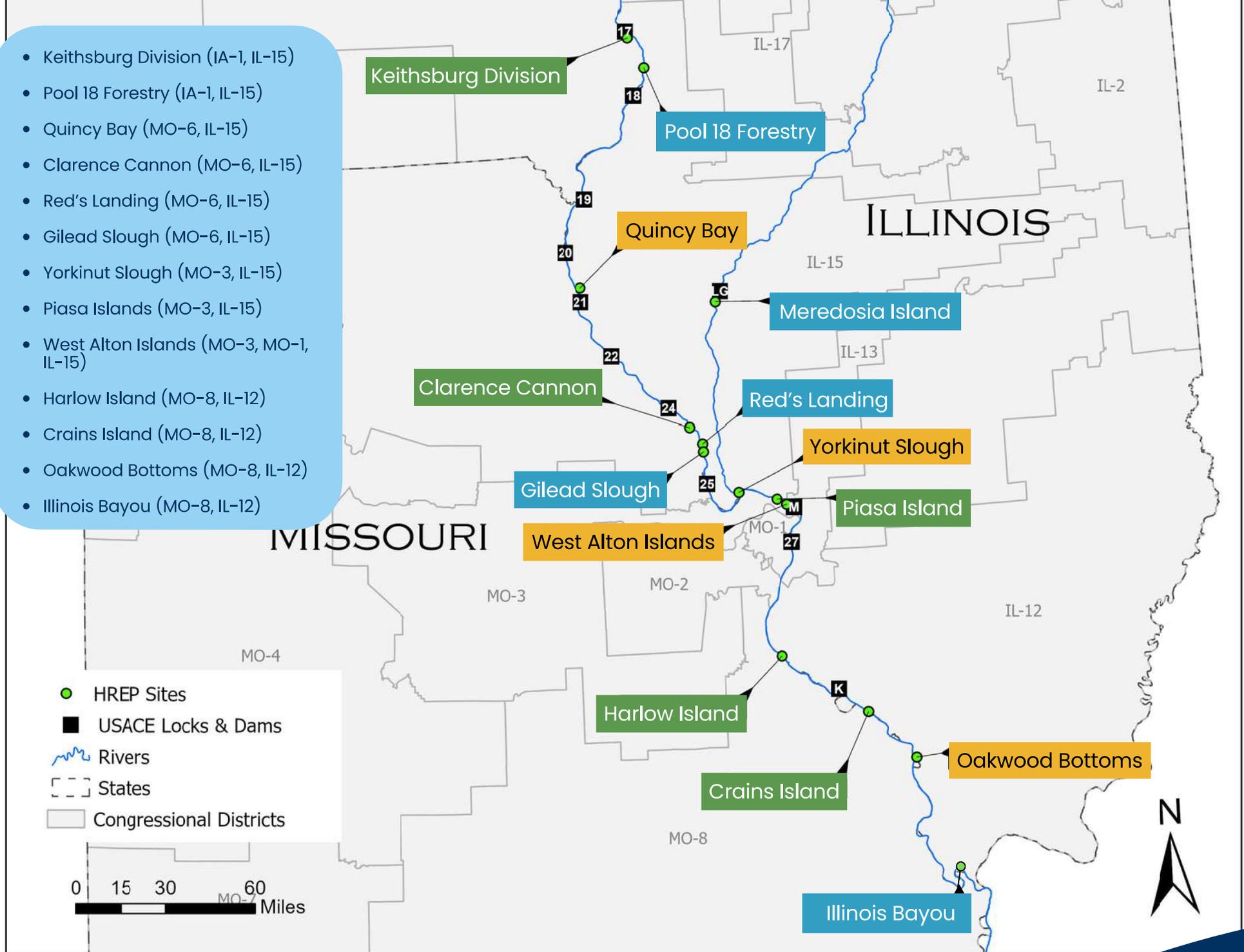
2018 UMRR Habitat Needs Assessment II





- Bank Stabilization (MN-2)
- Big Lake (MN-1, WI-3)
- Robinson Lake (MN-1, WI-3)
- Reno Bottoms (MN-1, IA-2, WI-3)
- McGregor Lake (IA-2, WI-3)
- Lower Pool 10 (IA-2, WI-3)
- Lower Pool 11 (IA-2, WI-3)
- Pool 12 Forestry (IA-1, IA-2, WI-3, IL-16)
- Green Island (IA-1, IL-16)
- Lower Pool 13 (IA-1, IL-17)
- Beaver Island (IA-1, IL-17)
- Steamboat Island (IA-1, IL-17)

- Keithsburg Division (IA-1, IL-15)
- Pool 18 Forestry (IA-1, IL-15)
- Quincy Bay (MO-6, IL-15)
- Clarence Cannon (MO-6, IL-15)
- Red's Landing (MO-6, IL-15)
- Gilead Slough (MO-6, IL-15)
- Yorkinut Slough (MO-3, IL-15)
- Piasa Islands (MO-3, IL-15)
- West Alton Islands (MO-3, MO-1, IL-15)
- Harlow Island (MO-8, IL-12)
- Crains Island (MO-8, IL-12)
- Oakwood Bottoms (MO-8, IL-12)
- Illinois Bayou (MO-8, IL-12)



Restoring Complexes of Habitat: Portfolio of Projects in 2025 - 2027

Successful Implementation in FY 2025

- Initiate construction of Lower Pool 10 Islands in Iowa
- Completed feasibility plans for Pool 12 Forestry in Illinois
- Initiate planning for Bank stabilization, Minnesota River in Minnesota
- Continued construction of 7 projects, design of 9 projects, and planning of 6 projects

Ongoing Work in FY 2026

- Complete construction on McGregor Lake in Wisconsin
- Initiate construction of Reno Bottoms in Minnesota and Iowa
- Finish design of Swan Lake flood damage rehabilitation in Illinois
- Initiate design for Lower Pool 4, Robinson Lake in Minnesota
- Complete feasibility plans for
 - Lower Pool 13 Phase II in Iowa
 - Gilead Slough in Illinois
 - Reds Landing in Illinois
- Initiate planning for
 - Meredosia Island in Illinois
 - Illinois Bayou in Illinois
 - two new projects
- Continue construction of 7 projects, design of 8 projects, and planning of 3 projects

Planned Implementation for FY 2027

- Complete construction of Piasa and Eagles Nest, Illinois
- Initiate construction
 - Lower Pool 4, Big Lake in Wisconsin
 - Swan Lake flood damage rehabilitation in Illinois
- Finish design of
 - Oakwood Bottoms in Illinois
 - Yorkinut Slough in Illinois
 - Lower Pool 13 in Iowa
 - Quincy Bay in Illinois
- Initiate design of
 - Robinson Lake in Minnesota
 - Gleads Slough in Illinois
 - Reds Landing in Illinois
 - West Alton Islands in Missouri
- Completed feasibility plans for
 - Bank stabilization in Minnesota
 - Pool 18 Forestry in Iowa
- Initiate planning for Lower Pool 13 Phase II in Iowa
- Ongoing construction of 8 projects, design of 4 projects, and planning of 5 projects



McGregor Lake HREP (IA-2, WI-3)

Partnership Efforts 2025 - 2027

USACE, USFWS, USGS, state of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin, the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association along with Tribal governments, conservation and navigation interests, and the public work collaboratively to achieve the goals and objectives of the 2025-2035 UMRR Strategic Plan.

The collective vision for UMRR is to rehabilitate the Upper Mississippi River System toward a healthier and more resilient state that supports the river's multiple uses.



Partnership Goals for the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program

- Improve the understanding of the structure and function of the Upper Mississippi River for better management.
- Restore at least 60,000 acres of habitat within the river ecosystem.
- Support efficient, effective, and innovative habitat restoration through strengthened collaboration between restoration practitioners and scientists.
- Foster strong relationships among UMRR partners and stakeholders.





U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS ROCK ISLAND, ST. PAUL, AND ST. LOUIS DISTRICTS

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District | P.O. Box 2004 | Clock Tower Building | Rock Island, Illinois 61204-2004
UMRR Website: www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Environmental-Protection-and-Restoration/Upper-Mississippi-River-Restoration

Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program

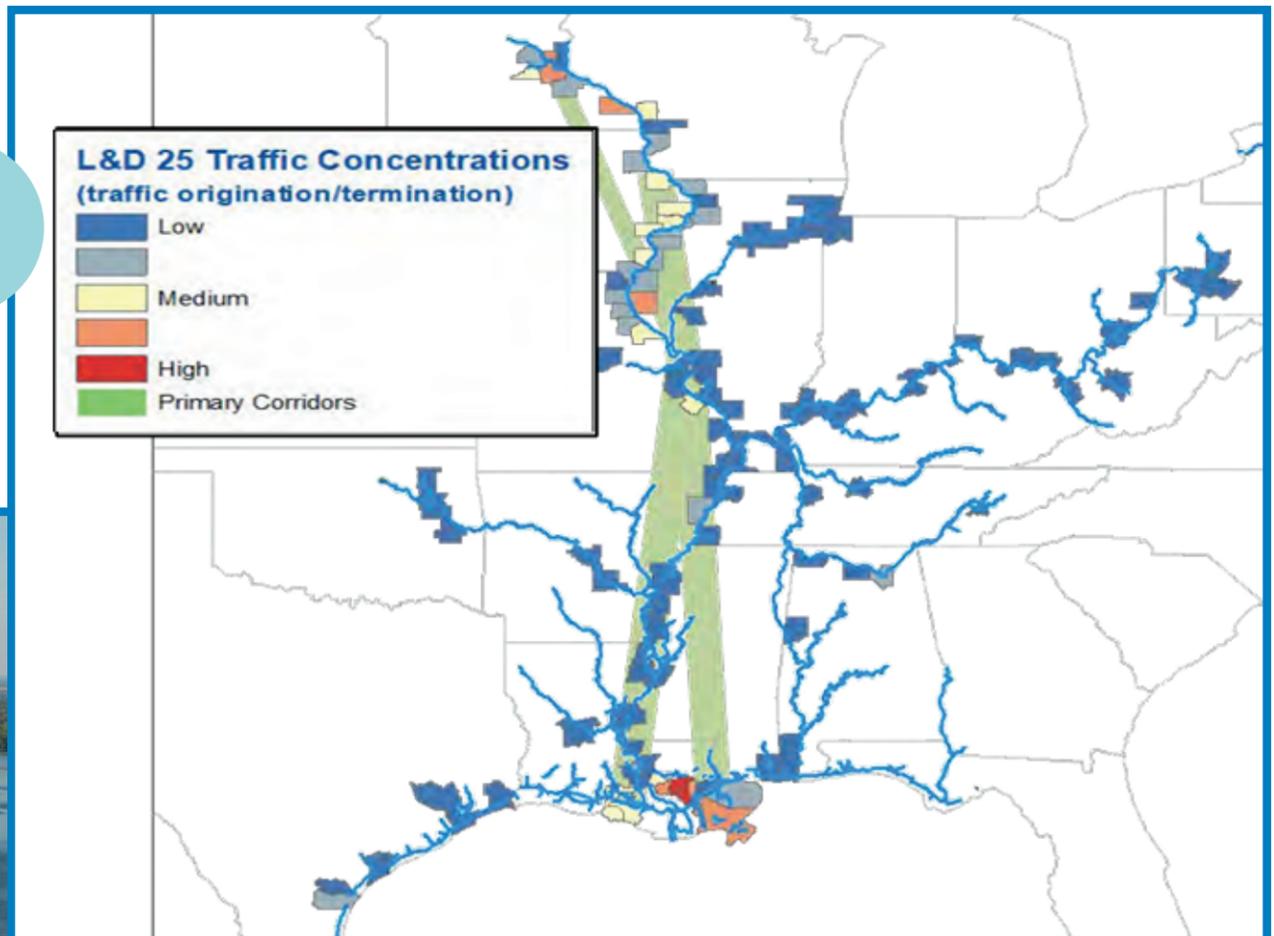
FY 2027 Appropriation Request of \$350 Million

- Advance construction of a 1,200-foot chamber at L&D 25
- Construct, design, and plan projects that improve ecological integrity

An **appropriation of \$250 million for L&D 25 construction** in FY 2027 will allow engineers to:

- Award lock chamber construction contract in 2027
- Maintain construction schedule
- Realize efficiencies with timely funding and potentially reducing contingency

L&D 25 is an important connector to U.S. transportation routes and international trade



Results of previous investments in L&D 25

- L&D 25 construction is on schedule
- USACE is constructing bulkheads and a downstream cell
- Lock foundation and site preparation is scheduled for contract award in FY 2026
- Lock chamber design will be complete in FY 2026
- Lock acquisition plan and source selection plan is final
- Navigation industry is frequently consulted

The new 1,200 lock chamber will result in more efficient and reliable navigation

The new lock, constructed alongside the existing 600-foot lock will enable the standard 1,200-foot tow to pass without separating its barges, **reducing passage time by 50 percent to 70 percent and reducing safety risks.**

The second lock will allow for two-way traffic, **keeping navigation moving** during maintenance and repair work.

Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program

FY 2027 Appropriation Request of \$350 Million

- Advance construction of a 1,200-foot chamber at L&D 25
- **Construct, design, and plan projects that improve ecological integrity**

An appropriation of \$100 million for ecological projects in FY 2027 will allow for:

Crosby Farm (MN-4): Construct floodplain habitat for migratory birds and native fish using shoreline resloping, dredging, and forest enhancement

Wacouta Bay (WI-3, MN-1): Improve aquatic habitat, restore floodplain forests, protect shorelines

Schmokers Lake and Floodplain Forest (WI-3, MN-1): Return bathymetric and vegetation diversity to accommodate a range of inundation periods

L&D Sturgeon Spawning Reef (WI-3, MN-1): Create spawning habitat reefs to recover migrating populations of sturgeon and other large riverine fish currently blocked by dams

Johnson Island (WI-3, MN-1): Improve conditions for fish and wildlife

Sny Magill - Effigy Mounds (IA-2, WI-3): Reduce damages to shoreline at Effigy Mounds Nat'l Monument, protecting integrity of Native American burial and ceremonial mounds

Goetz Lake (IA-2, WI-3): Restore backwater geomorphology and minimize excess sedimentation to enhance local timber stands and over-wintering fish populations

Lee County Islands and Backwaters (IA-1, IL-15): Enhance diversity and abundance of aquatic vegetation, improve wildlife habitat

Fabius Chute (MO-6, IL-15): Restore water flow and depth diversity and habitat structure in a backwater side channel

Denmark and Drift Islands (MO-6, IL-15): Restore flow diversity, connectivity, and substrate diversity to improve forest resilience

Tisdell Towhead Island (MO-6, IL-15): Restore island and aquatic habitat that provides more natural flow for native fish and mussels

Willow Bar Island (MO-6, IL-15): Modify sediment deposition processes to naturally build islands

Lower Pool 25 Island Building (MO-6, IL-15): Restore island composition and alter adjacent dike to expand terrestrial and aquatic habitat

Stone Dike Alteration (IL-12, MO-8): Improve aquatic habitat for riverine fishes by adjusting hydraulic conditions and geomorphological features

MMR Nat'l Wildlife Refuge, Horse Island (IL-12, MO-8): Increase forest species richness by restoring topographic diversity and promoting native understory plant habitats

Middle Mississippi River Stone Dike Alteration (IL-12, MO-8): Improve aquatic habitat for riverine fishes

Stone Dike Alteration (IL-12, MO-8): Improve aquatic habitat for riverine fishes by adjusting hydraulic conditions and geomorphological features

Pierce County Islands (WI-3, MN-1): Construct habitat for migratory birds and restore bathymetric and vegetation diversity to backwater lakes

Mertes Slough (WI-3, MN-1): Reduce algal blooms by reestablishing hydraulic connections to the floodplain and lentic backwaters

La Crosse Marsh (WI-3, MN-1): Enhance marsh hydrology and water quality through restoring flow connections and limiting inundation time

Sabula Lakes Island Complex (IA-1, IL-17): Improve water quality and structural diversity to ensure adequate habitat for aquatic and terrestrial organisms

Andalusia Island Complex (IL-17, IA-1): Restore and protect habitat in the floodplain forests and side channel aquatic areas

Rice Lake (IL-17): Restore bathymetric diversity to a backwater lake, lateral connectivity in aquatic areas, and a large island complex

Liverpool Side Channel (IL-15): Create flowing side channel habitat to provide habitat and management benefits

Clarksville/Carroll Island Side Channel Restoration (IL-15, MO-6): Restore side channel connectivity and flow to benefit native riverine fish and wildlife

Hausgen Island (MO-6, IL-15): Improve side channel hydrology, enhance habitat for fish, wildlife, and native mussels

Island Building (IL-12, MO-8): Reestablish terrestrial connectivity and flow patterns among an island complex of sandbars

Upper Mississippi River Quarterly Meetings

Attachment E

Fixing FEMA Act of 2025

Page Number	Document Title
Hyperlink	Full Legislative Text: https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/4669/text
E-1 to E-10	Section-by-Section Summary (7-2025)
E-11 to E-12	Press Release (7-2025)
E-13 to E-15	Multi-Signatory Coalition Comment Letter (7-2025)



COMMITTEE ON
**TRANSPORTATION
& INFRASTRUCTURE**

SAM GRAVES, CHAIRMAN
RICK LARSEN, RANKING MEMBER

H.R. 4669 - *Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025*

Bipartisan Section-by-Section

Sec. 1. Short title; Table of Contents.

This section provides that the Act may be cited as the “Fixing Emergency Management for Americans Act of 2025” or “FEMA Act of 2025.” This section also includes the table of contents for the bill.

Division A – Establishment of FEMA as Cabinet-Level Independent Agency

Title I – Establishment of Federal Emergency Management Agency

Sec. 11. Establishment of Independent Agency.

This section re-establishes the Federal Emergency Management Agency as an independent agency under the direct oversight of the President and outlines its mission and specific activities.

Sec. 12. Administrator; Deputy Administrator; Other Officials of the Agency.

This section directs that Federal Emergency Management Agency is headed by an Administrator appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. This section also makes clear the Administrator shall report directly to the President and meet certain qualifications. This section also directs the appointment of a Deputy Administrator, by and with the consent of the Senate. Further, this section directs the appointment of Assistant Administrators.

Sec. 13. Authority and Responsibilities.

This section sets out the authority and responsibilities of the Administrator.

Sec. 14. Office of the Inspector General.

This section establishes an Inspector General (IG) for the Federal Emergency Management Agency, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

Sec. 15. Transfer of Functions.

This section details functions transferred to the independent Federal Emergency Management

Agency.

Sec. 16. Personnel and Other Transfers.

This section details the transfer of personnel and incidental functions.

Sec. 17. Saving Provisions.

This section details the continuing effect of legal documents, proceedings, and other actions.

Sec. 18. References.

This section directs that references in law, Executive order, rule, regulation, and other official documents to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Administrator, and to the IG shall be considered to refer to and apply to the respective entity and persons in the independent agency.

Sec. 19. Federal Emergency Management Agency Working Capital Fund.

This section establishes a revolving fund for the Federal Emergency Management Agency for operation of any headquarters, multi-discipline facility to provide for the collection of fees from other Federal agencies related to the Agency's mission to ensure continuity of government.

Sec. 20. Improving Disaster Assistance for Veterans.

This section establishes a Veteran's Advocate within the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help increase veteran recruitment for the Federal Emergency Management Agency reservist positions and advise the Administrator on the unique challenges facing veterans following a disaster.

Title II – Offices and Functions of Federal Emergency Management Agency

Sec. 21. National Emergency Management.

This section makes conforming changes to various sections of the *Homeland Security Act* (P.L. 107-296) and other laws to clarify the functions retained by the Administrator and the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Title III – Related Matters

Sec. 31. Changes to Administrative Documents.

This section directs that certain administrative and policy documents are updated to reflect changes made by this Division.

Sec. 32. Recommended Legislation.

This section directs the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to consult with Congress and recommend legislation containing additional technical and conforming amendments needed to reflect the changes made by this Division.

Division B – FEMA Reforms

Title I – Public Assistance Reforms

Sec. 101. Rebuilding Public Infrastructure.

This section amends the *Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act* (*Stafford Act*) to provide for the expedited repair, restoration, and replacement of disaster-damaged facilities. Grants would be provided on a per-project basis, without regard to prior condition, based on an estimated cost developed by an appropriately licensed professional. Funds would be authorized to repair, restore, reconstruct, or replace public or private nonprofit facilities damaged or destroyed by a major disaster, including incorporating mitigation measures. For open disasters, states would have the option to either move to the new expedited process or continue their projects under existing sections 406 or 428 procedures of the *Stafford Act* until those sections sunset in 2032.

Sec. 102. Task Force to Address the Backlog of Open Declared Disasters.

This section creates a temporary task force and process for closing out existing disasters that are not moved to the new process.

Sec. 103. Disaster Declaration Damage Thresholds.

This section directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator, when making recommendations to the President regarding the declaration of a major disaster or emergency or the proposed non-Federal share of disaster assistance, to give greater weight and consideration to disasters impacting economically distressed (13 C.F.R. 301.3(a)) or rural areas (7 U.S.C. 1991 (a)(13)).

Sec. 104. Federal Permitting Improvement.

This section aligns the Federal Emergency Management Agency's permitting processes with those of other Federal grant programs. This section directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency to streamline its permitting requirements under section 316 of the *Stafford Act* and provide clarity to subgrantees. The reforms would modify the existing language in statute to ensure that waivers for environmental and historic preservation for projects on already disturbed lands include building up to current code and mitigation measures.

Sec. 105. Unified Federal Review.

This section strengthens existing law for more complex projects to be managed by the state and strengthens the Federal Emergency Management Agency's unified review process under section 429 of the *Stafford Act* to bring it into conformity with One Federal Decision.

Sec. 106. Block Grants for Small Disasters.

This section provides alternate procedures for states to request lump sum payments for small disasters (defined as up to 125 percent of a state's per capita damage threshold).

Sec. 107. Common Sense Debris Removal.

This section clarifies removal of debris is in the public interest to support more expeditious recovery following a disaster.

Sec. 108. Disaster Management Costs Modernization.

This section authorizes the President to allow recipients of certain disaster relief assistance to use excess management cost funds across all open disasters.

Sec. 109. Streamlining and Consolidating Information Collection and Preliminary Damage Assessments.

This section requires the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Small Business Administration (SBA), the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Disaster Working Group of the Council of Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency to study, develop, and implement a plan for streamlining the damage assessment process across agencies.

Sec. 110. Reasonable Incident Periods.

This section directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency to convene an advisory panel to review the process and procedures related to the determination of incident periods, provide a report, and implement.

Sec. 111. Fire Management Assistance Program Policy.

This section authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency to conduct assessments and emergency stabilization to protect public safety, including for fire management assistance grants.

Sec. 112. Indian Tribal Government Eligibility.

This section allows tribal governments to request fire management assistance directly to support expedited responses to fires on tribal lands.

Sec. 113. Strengthening Closeouts for Critical Services.

This section fixes the closeout procedures and timelines to clarify application to eligible private nonprofits responsible for critical services.

Sec. 114. Sheltering of Emergency Response Personnel.

This section amends section 403 of the *Stafford Act* to provide authority to reimburse states for costs to shelter emergency response personnel.

Sec. 115. Emergency Protective Measures to Fight Flooding Damage.

This section clarifies that owners or operators of stormwater pumping stations eligible for assistance to conduct emergency work shall be reimbursed based on applicable equipment rates.

Sec. 116. Fairness and Accountability in Appeals.

This section clarifies that the Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator is

responsible for attorneys' fees in appeals cases if a decision is issued in favor of the applicant.

Sec. 117. Expedited Funding for Emergency Work.

This section provides a reimbursement timeline for emergency protective measures, including debris removal. Once 90 percent of costs are validated, the Federal Emergency Management Agency will have no more than 120 days to disburse the funds.

Sec. 118. Consistency in Procurement Practices.

This section clarifies that for the purposes of procurement regulations, local governments are treated similarly as state and Tribal governments.

Title II – Individual Assistance Reforms

Sec. 201. Information Sharing for Federal Agencies.

This section directs the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to establish and maintain a web-based, interagency electronic information system called the “unified disaster application system” to support the development of the universal application authorized in section 202. This section also amends the *Stafford Act* by adding section 707, which streamlines information sharing authorities to ensure proper functioning of the application.

Sec. 202. Universal Application for Individual Assistance.

This section directs the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop a universal application for Federal disaster assistance for individuals in areas impacted by emergencies or major disasters.

Sec. 203. Clarifying Duplication of Benefits.

This section describes what constitutes a duplication of benefits when it comes to the provision of disaster assistance to individuals, clarifying that receiving a loan is not duplicative of assistance and allowing for the receipt of charitable donations to cover disaster losses without an impact to Individuals and Households Program (IHP) eligibility.

Sec. 204. Crisis Counseling and Addiction in Disasters.

This section clarifies that substance abuse is covered under existing crisis counseling assistance.

Sec. 205. Repair and Rebuilding.

This section amends section 408(c) of the *Stafford Act* to allow for permanent repairs for homes, if it is more cost-effective than a temporary housing solution. This section amends section 408(b)(1) of the *Stafford Act* by removing the requirement that households must be rendered uninhabitable by a major disaster to be eligible for hazard mitigation assistance. Additionally, section 408 is amended by making households that have been damaged by a major disaster eligible for hazard mitigation assistance.

Sec. 206. FEMA Emergency Home Repair Program.

This section authorizes a permanent repair program of owner-occupied homes that have been damaged by a disaster.

Sec. 207. Direct Assistance.

This section amends section 408(c)(2) of the *Stafford Act* by authorizing the President to provide direct assistance to individuals and households if applicants are unable to make use of financial assistance for repairs and when there is a lack of available resources for the repair of owner-occupied residences. Direct assistance may be used to repair owner-occupied residences damaged by a major disaster and/or rendered inaccessible for individuals with disabilities, and to carry out eligible hazard mitigation measures that reduce the likelihood of future damage.

Sec. 208. Accurate Information to Disaster Victims.

This section prohibits the Federal Emergency Management Agency from issuing denial letters prior to final determinations on available insurance.

Sec. 209. Improved Notices for FEMA Assistance.

This section requires the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide more detailed information to applicants for individual assistance who are appealing a determination of eligibility for assistance.

Sec. 210. Common Sense Displacement Assistance for Disaster Victims.

This section directs that the amount of displacement assistance immediately following a disaster for victims can provide for expenses such as hotel rooms, gas, and food for disaster survivors.

Sec. 211. State-Managed Disaster Housing Authority.

This section gives the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency the authority to implement the State-Managed Housing Pilot Authority until the issuance of final regulations. This program, created by the *Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018*, sunset in 2020. This section revives the program, removes burdensome requirements for states administering housing programs by striking section 408(f)(3)(F) of the *Stafford Act*, and implements a 25 percent non-Federal cost share to create consistency with other programs across disaster preparedness, response, recovery, and mitigation.

Sec. 212. Improved Rental Assistance.

This section authorizes the Administrator to account for local post-disaster rent rates.

Sec. 213. Online Guides for Postdisaster Assistance.

This section authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide support to states for the creation of online guides to provide more detailed information for disaster victims.

Sec. 214. Clarifying Sheltering Assistance Eligibility.

This section clarifies that absence of a fixed address for a disaster victim does not impact

eligibility and directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide alternative methods of determining eligibility.

Sec. 215. Access to Lifesaving Non-Congregate Sheltering.

This section clarifies for individual and households eligible for non-congregant sheltering that they are not required to provide a credit card or security deposit to access this sheltering assistance.

Sec. 216. Assistance for Total Loss.

This section directs that when a homeowner suffers a total loss from a disaster the Federal Emergency Management Agency is authorized to provide assistance to replace the home (reduced by insurance proceeds) if the cost of doing so is less than providing temporary housing units.

Title III – Mitigation Reforms

Sec. 301. Preapproved Project Mitigation Plans.

This section establishes a process for state mitigation project plans to be submitted and peer reviewed for approval. This peer review process will create additional staff capacity at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, streamline disbursement of funding, and speed implementation of mitigation projects by having a pre-approved list of projects. The new Public Assistance program, created by Section 101 of this Act, additionally incentivizes states to utilize non-Federal funding sources to complete peer reviewed mitigation projects by providing an increased Federal share.

Sec. 302. Reducing Disaster Costs and Protecting Lives

This section reforms the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s pre-disaster mitigation program by restructuring it to be a formula-based grant to improve predictability. The formula implements the strategic allocation of resources: 40 percent will be available to be distributed equally among states to ensure baseline mitigation capacity; 20 percent of funding will be distributed based on each state’s vulnerability to natural hazards, ensuring resources align with risk; 20 percent of funding will be distributed on a combination of population size and median income, targeting areas with greater potential impact and lack of available resources; and 20 percent of funding will be distributed to states with mitigation projects located in economically distressed or rural areas, to enhance resilience in communities with smaller tax bases.

This section also includes an **existing** statutory set-aside for Tribal community governments. Additionally, this section authorizes applicants to use pre-disaster mitigation funds disbursed via formula for the development of the project mitigation plans described in Section 301 and preserves the existing Direct Technical Assistance program.

Sec. 303. Resilient Buildings and Communities.

This section updates the definition for applicable building codes to include the latest two published editions with flexibility for states to account for specific hazards. This section would also establish a residential resilience pilot program.

Sec. 304. Strengthening Hazard Risk Reduction.

This section enables funds from the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s hazard mitigation and pre-disaster mitigation programs to be combined for large and innovative projects. It also eliminates the requirement that homeowners bear the up-front costs of home retrofits funded through the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s mitigation programs. By replacing the current reimbursement-based model with a direct funding structure to reduce financial barriers, the section removes uncertainty for homeowners and accelerates project implementation.

Sec. 305. Utility Resiliency.

This section incentivizes faster power restoration after a disaster by clarifying eligibility to build in mitigation.

Sec. 306. Additional Amendments to Hazard Mitigation Revolving Loan Fund.

This section improves the implementation of the *Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation (STORM) Act* by increasing the administrative cost set-aside from two to four percent of a capitalization grant and allowing entities with relevant expertise, such as infrastructure banks or public finance authorities, to fully administer revolving loan funds by broadening the definition of eligible administering agencies beyond emergency management.

Sec. 307. Streamlined Hazard Mitigation Application Process.

This section directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop a consolidated grant application for pre-disaster and post-disaster hazard mitigation funding, streamlining the application and review process to improve efficiency, reduce the administrative burden, and expedite access to mitigation resources.

Sec. 308. Study and Report on Mitigation Benefits.

This section directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator to conduct a study to evaluate the effectiveness, long-term cost savings, and strategic impact of the Federal Emergency Management Agency funded hazard mitigation activities across the United States. The findings are required to be reported to Congress, updated annually, and made available online in a searchable, user-friendly format.

Title IV – Transparency and Accountability

Sec. 401. GAO Review on the FEMA Transition.

This section directs the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to monitor and review the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s transition to an independent agency.

Sec. 402. Transparency and Online Accountability.

This section improves transparency of disaster spending by requiring disaster assistance to be reported publicly by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, SBA, and HUD through a website developed and managed by Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Sec. 403. Prohibition on Political Discrimination.

This section prohibits discrimination based on political affiliation in disaster assistance.

Sec. 404. Review of Burdensome Regulations and Policies.

This section directs a GAO review of the Federal Emergency Management Agency regulations and policies to determine their necessity, if they slow and increase costs for disaster assistance, whether they conflict with statute, or are obsolete.

Sec. 405. Report on Assistance to Individuals.

This section directs the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to submit a report on the average amount of individual assistance received by households at various income levels.

Sec. 406. Individual Assistance Dashboard.

This section directs the Administrator to publish an online web tool that displays for each major disaster declaration the number of individual assistance applications received, the number of applications approved and denied, a ranked list of reasons for denials, the total dollar amount of assistance provided to property owners and renters, and the percentage of housing stock destroyed.

Sec. 407. GAO Report on Preliminary Damage Assessments.

This section directs the GAO to study the accuracy and fairness of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's practices when conducting preliminary damage assessments for the purposes of providing assistance under section 408 of the *Stafford Act*.

Sec. 408. Improved Rental Assistance.

This section directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency to review challenges renters face when seeking Federal disaster assistance and any disparities of assistance provided to homeowners and renters pursuant to section 408 of the *Stafford Act*. Further, the section requires the Federal Emergency Management Agency to develop a plan that addresses any identified challenges and disparities, including any recommendations for legislative action.

Sec. 409. GAO Assessment on Identity Theft and Disaster Fraud in Disaster Assistance Programs.

This section directs the GAO to assess issues of identity theft and fraud in disaster assistance.

Sec. 410. GAO Study on Insurance Utilization for Public Assistance-Eligible Facilities.

This section directs the GAO to study the effect of Public Assistance for public infrastructure on insurance utilization for eligible facilities.

Sec. 411. Study on Wildfire Management Plans.

This section directs the GAO to review the need for wildfire management plans and how or whether states with high risk of wildfires are producing and adhering to such plans.

Sec. 412. Effectiveness of Local, State, Territory, and Federal Alerting Systems.

This section directs GAO to review the effectiveness of alerting systems in disseminating timely and relevant information during weather-related emergencies to help communities develop better policies and procedures for emergency response and enhance public safety.

Sec. 413. GAO Review of Management Costs.

This section directs GAO to review the actual management costs provided to states and local governments pursuant to section 324 of the *Stafford Act*.

Sec. 414. Report on Coordination of Disaster Assistance to Individuals.

This section requires the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide a report to Congress, in coordination with other relevant agencies, to improve the comprehensive delivery of disaster assistance to individuals.

Sec. 415. GAO Review of Cost Savings Associated with Repair and Rebuilding Reforms.

This section directs GAO to complete a study on the repair and rebuilding reforms included in the Act.

Sec. 416. Transparency for Disaster Declarations.

This section requires the President to provide an explanation upon the approval or denial of disaster declaration requests.

Sec. 417. Fast-Moving Disasters Working Group.

This section directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator to convene a working group to develop best practices for preparing for, mitigating against, public alerting, and responding to fast-moving disasters.

Sec. 418. Public Assistance Dashboard.

This section directs the Administrator to publish an online web tool that displays information for each major disaster declaration on cost estimates, the status of Agency review and approval, project-level progress updates, and other relevant information.

Sec. 419. Improving Disaster Workforce Retention.

This section directs the Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator to study the existing workforce challenges to hire and retain Federal employees in Hawaii, Alaska, and the United States territories and identify solutions to address these shortages.



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Graves, Transportation Committee Leaders Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Dramatically Reform FEMA



July 24, 2025 [Press Release](#)

WASHINGTON, DC – Transportation and Infrastructure Committee leaders introduced legislation in the U.S. House that would provide the most robust legislative reform of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and federal disaster assistance programs in decades.

The *Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act of 2025* (H.R. 4669) was introduced by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chairman Sam Graves (R-MO); Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Ranking Member Rick Larsen (D-WA); former Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Subcommittee lead Republican Daniel Webster (R-FL); and Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management Subcommittee Ranking Member Greg Stanton (D-AZ). The *FEMA Act* was introduced following Graves' and Larsen's release of a discussion draft bill on May 8, 2025, and the subsequent feedback the Committee received on the draft from Members of Congress and the emergency management stakeholder community.

The *FEMA Act* streamlines the federal government's disaster response and recovery programs while also making FEMA a cabinet-level agency once again that is directly accountable to the President. The bill rewards effective state and local preparedness, protects taxpayers, cuts red tape, and ensures that relief efforts are fast, fair, and free from political bias.

"The American people need an emergency management system that works quickly and effectively, not one that makes disaster recovery more difficult," said **Chairman Graves**. "But time and time again, we've heard the same story from state and local officials, emergency managers, and disaster victims: the federal process is too slow, complicated, and disconnected from the realities on the ground. Communities trying to rebuild are forced to navigate a maze of complicated rules, conflicting timelines, and mountains of

burdensome paperwork. FEMA is in need of serious reform, and the goal of the *FEMA Act of 2025* is to fix it. This bill does more than any recent reforms to cut through the bureaucracy, streamline programs, provide flexibility, and return FEMA to its core purpose of empowering the states to lead and coordinating the federal response when it's needed."

"Billion-dollar disasters—like the devastating 2021 flooding in Skagit and Whatcom counties – threaten the safety and livelihood of communities in Washington and across America as the severity of disasters increase," **Ranking Member Larsen** said. "This bipartisan bill will make FEMA stronger and more efficient, giving it the tools it needs to provide relief to disaster-impacted communities like those in my district hit by the 2024 Bomb Cyclone. Thank you to my counterpart, Chairman Sam Graves, for partnering on this bipartisan solution."

"As a Floridian, I know firsthand the damage that hurricanes and natural disasters bring, and how important effective preparation, response and relief is when tragedy strikes," said **Rep. Webster**. "Florida has set the gold standard for disaster mitigation and emergency response, and this legislation builds on that success at the national level. By streamlining FEMA and cutting red tape, we ensure that federal disaster response is faster, more efficient, and accountable to the American people."

"FEMA's mission is to help Americans in their darkest hour. The agency isn't perfect, and its job is getting harder as disasters grow more frequent and more severe. But the solution is not to tear FEMA down – it's to work across the aisle to build FEMA up," said **Ranking Member Stanton**. "This bipartisan bill takes common-sense steps to streamline the agency and make sure communities get disaster assistance quickly, efficiently and fairly."

[The text of the FEMA Act of 2025 is available here.](#)

[A section-by-section summary of the FEMA Act is available here.](#)

Summary of the FEMA Act of 2025

The FEMA Act of 2025 restores FEMA's original status as an independent agency, reporting directly to the President and overseen by its own inspector general.

- This structure mirrors the *Stafford Act*, which authorizes the President to direct federal disaster response efforts through the Disaster Relief Fund.
- Returning FEMA to a Cabinet-level agency will empower the Administrator to lead a coordinated, government-wide response to disasters.
- FEMA will become more agile and focused on helping Americans – not bogged down by having its resources and personnel diverted to support non-*Stafford Act* disasters.

The FEMA Act of 2025 puts disaster-impacted states in the driver's seat, helps dollars reach communities faster, injects common sense, and cuts red tape that can drag out disaster recovery for decades.

- By replacing the slow and bureaucratic rebuilding process with faster, project-based grants, states will be able to set the pace of recovery, reduce their dependence on costly consultants, and prioritize the highest need projects, without having to take out expensive loans or wait years for reimbursement.
- For the first time, states are incentivized to make their own investments in mitigation, robust state rainy day funds, and private insurance policies.
- This legislation also makes critical reforms to federal permitting and procurement processes to speed up rebuilding projects and eliminate unnecessary delays.
- In addition, the *FEMA Act of 2025* establishes a Recovery Task Force charged with closing out more than 1,000 lingering disaster declarations dating back to Hurricane Katrina and directs FEMA to improve coordination across all federal agencies involved in disaster recovery.

The FEMA Act of 2025 makes commonsense changes to help disaster aid work better for survivors, while saving taxpayer dollars.

- Disaster survivors will complete a single, streamlined application when applying for assistance, significantly reducing the paperwork burden.
- FEMA must provide clear, understandable notices to disaster survivors, ending the confusion caused by complex and jargon-filled denial letters.

 Email Me  (816) 792-3976

support is available for disaster survivors.

- States are given more flexibility to determine the best emergency housing solution for a particular disaster.

The FEMA Act of 2025 strengthens efforts to protect communities before a disaster occurs.

- The *FEMA Act 2025* overhauls FEMA's existing mitigation framework to accelerate project timelines, reduce long-term disaster costs, and ensure greater coordination across federal funding streams, so states can more effectively leverage resources.
- States can pre-vet mitigation projects through a peer-review process to speed up funding when disaster strikes and combine funds from federal programs to expedite the completion of critical projects.
- The *FEMA Act of 2025* clarifies building code requirements, ensuring states retain the flexibility to tailor standards to the hazards they face.
- The legislation also supports homeowners as they invest in cost-effective mitigation improvements, reducing long-term disaster costs.

The FEMA Act of 2025 prevents the politicization of disaster aid and demands greater transparency and accountability from FEMA.

- The *FEMA Act of 2025* strictly prohibits any political discrimination in providing disaster recovery assistance. It directs the Office of Management and Budget to establish a centralized public website that tracks disaster assistance funding across the federal government.
- The bill mandates a full Government Accountability Office review of all FEMA regulations and policies to eliminate outdated, conflicting, and unnecessary rules.
- It also requires an assessment of identity theft and disaster fraud risks, and directs reviews related to insurance coverage, the effectiveness of public alerting systems, and cost savings associated with the reforms in the discussion draft.

July 14, 2025

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and
Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Comments on FEMA reform discussion draft, the FEMA Act of 2025

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

The undersigned organizations are pleased to provide feedback to the discussion draft FEMA reform legislation. Building smart, modern, resilient infrastructure is among our top priorities. We applaud the Committee for providing a framework for community preparedness going forward. Congress has a critical role to play.

The economics of resilience are an important catalyst in ensuring we are preparing ahead of the next crises. The U.S. Chamber together with the Chamber Foundation and Allstate released *The Preparedness Payoff*, showing that for every \$1 invested in predisaster mitigation and resilience projects and measures, there are \$13 in reduced losses and economic savings. Resilience is simply put, good public policy.

We agree with the provisions in the bill streamlining the permitting process in particular for waivers for projects that prioritize improved building codes and predisaster mitigation, which can be key contributors to economic growth.

As you advance this important legislation, we offer recommendations for your consideration:

- 1. Ensure a strong federal role** . There is a clear federal role and need for assisting states and communities preparing for and responding to disasters. Therefore, we support the Committee's recognition for the continued existence for FEMA. While we agree with the Committee's support to make FEMA an independent agency, we remain willing to explore alternatives that have comparable or improved outcomes that maintain the federal role in reducing risks that communities and companies face from disasters.

2. **Broaden stakeholders consulted as part of the advisory panel.** In addition to engaging government experts at all levels to align approaches to preparation, response, and recovery, we believe the legislation should include relevant members of the private sector and other stakeholders, who are often on the frontlines for community resilience and provide important perspectives on business continuity and community engagement measures and efforts.
3. **Offer flexible block grants weighted toward predisaster mitigation.** We support a unified and streamlined disaster application system, including web-based interagency information sharing to catalyze cooperation and efficiency. We urge, however, that states be encouraged to prioritize projects focusing on predisaster mitigation and resilience results (including the highest risk communities). The legislation should authorize meaningful funding for projects and measures that help prepare for the next crises.
 - a. **Change “may” to “shall” when providing postdisaster funding for predisaster mitigation.** Under Section 203 of the Stafford Act, the President “may” establish a program to provide technical and financial assistance to states and local governments to assist in the implementation of predisaster mitigation measures, allowing an administration to optionally forgo implementation. In order to provide states and local governments with consistent, reliable hazard mitigation grants, the FEMA Act should amend subsections (b) and (c) of Section 203 of the Stafford Act, by striking “may” and inserting “shall” in both subsections. This funding should be a component of the block grant approach.
4. **Provide additional tools and incentives** . Your legislation should continue to capitalize the resilience revolving loan program, established under the Safeguarding Tomorrow through Ongoing Risk Mitigation (STORM Act), which provides low interest loans to local governments for disaster mitigation projects. We ask that the Committee offer increased administrative set aside to assist in incentivizing state implementation.

We support efforts to incentivize states, federally recognized tribes, and territories to invest in cost-effective predisaster mitigation measures, including the adoption and effective implementation of consensus-based building/construction codes. We commend the draft legislation for including a provision “facilitating the adoption and enforcement...” of building codes as an incentive to increase the federal share of Public Assistance funding. We also

suggest that the federal cost share for predisaster mitigation projects, such as the adoption and enforcement of building codes, be included on a sliding scale of up to 85% to incentivize these approaches. Finally, we recommend that the FEMA Act of 2025 direct the Agency to obligate previously appropriated funds to existing predisaster mitigation awardees upon the bill's enactment.

5. **Include a multi-hazard approach.** The legislation should enable an integrated all hazard approach, including droughts – in addition to earthquakes, flooding, tornados, wildfire, and other severe storms contained in the draft.
6. **Promote public-private partnerships.** While the Stafford Act does allow public-private partnerships under certain conditions, more flexibility should be provided especially for implementation of predisaster mitigation projects and the inclusion of philanthropy, foundations, and donor-advised funders to maximize federal programs and dollars.

FEMA is critical to ensuring the resilience of communities and companies across the U.S. Your Committee can help facilitate a national dialogue to help gather constructive ideas to achieve that objective. We stand ready to assist you.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Global Water Adaptation
American Property Casualty Insurance Association
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Society of Landscape Architects
Future Proofing America
Insurance Institute of Business & Home Safety
International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials
International Code Council
National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies
National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies
National Hazard Mitigation Association
Precoverly Labs
Reinsurance Association of America
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
World Ocean Council

Upper Mississippi River Quarterly Meetings

Attachment F

Mississippi River Watershed Partnership

Page Number	Document Title
F-1 to F-2	Case Statement
F-3 to F-16	Partnership Workshop Report (8-2025)

Where Waters Meet, Partnership Flows

The Case for a Mississippi River Watershed Partnership



The Mississippi River watershed is a lifeline for millions of Americans – and unhealthy conditions within the watershed have far-reaching implications. Every action in the watershed creates real consequences for communities, economies and livelihoods.

Pollutants within the Mississippi River watershed threaten drinking water for 20 million people. Floods and droughts are happening more frequently. Deteriorating infrastructure compromises safe navigation. The cost of these consequences are mounting every day. Without a shared effort to improve conditions at scale, these challenges become insurmountable.

The Mississippi River Watershed Partnership (MRWP) was created to realize this shared effort. We know that rivers are linear systems and changes made in one part of the watershed affect the rest of the system. This is why a collaborative, whole watershed approach is needed.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

The goal of the MRWP is to build a diverse and robust coalition toward whole watershed solutions. Building on existing initiatives, this coalition will act with a unified voice to generate broad support and dedicated funding to catalyze action and improve the health of the Mississippi River watershed.

By convening partners across all sectors, we can act as one powerful voice for the watershed. Together, we will:

- **Share valuable data** | Data sharing enhances decision-making for the overall health of the watershed.
- **Implement watershed-wide change** | Coordinated action across the watershed enables large-scale impact that no single organization can achieve alone.
- **Access more funding** | Working together we can attract greater financial support for on-the-ground projects.

WATERSHED FAST FACTS

The Mississippi River watershed is the **4th largest** in the world



175 million tons of goods are shipped via the watershed annually



20 million people rely on the Mississippi River for safe drinking water



photo: Hagerty, Ryan/USFWS



photo: University of Iowa



photo: Robert J. Hurt Landscape Photography



photo: Jen Ackerman and Tim Gruber



photo: NOAA

- **Share multi-sector perspectives** | Engaging partners across government, community, academic, industry and NGO leaders creates innovative, effective solutions.
- **Learn collaboratively** | Sharing knowledge and insights across sectors and geographies strengthens our collective understanding of the watershed and its challenges and to build shared expertise through the partnership.

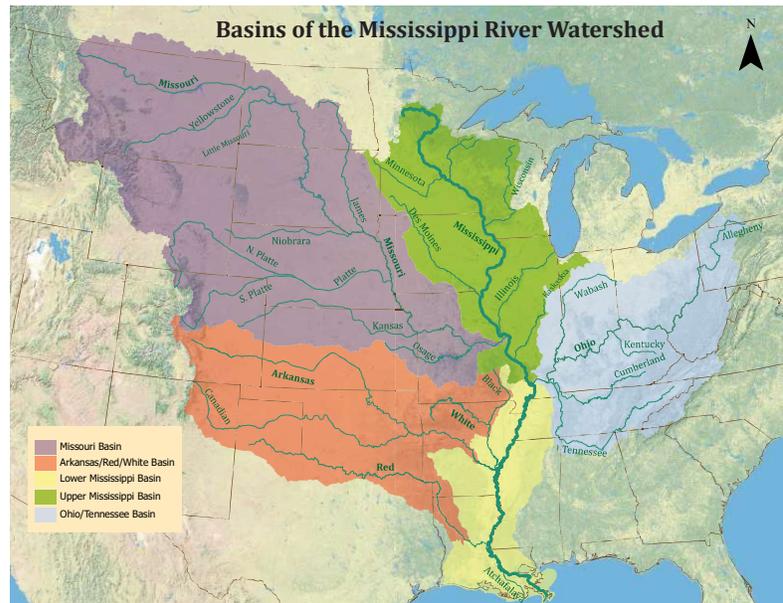
The Mississippi River watershed remains the only large freshwater river system in the U.S. lacking a comprehensive and coordinated approach. This is our opportunity to change that.

Partnership in Action

The Mississippi River Watershed Partnership aims to include broad representation from across the watershed. To date, the Partnership has actively engaged with over 200 partners representing more than 125 organizations. Partners are gathering around five goal areas to improve coordination and impact:

- **Conserve Fish and Wildlife** | More than 750 species of fish and wildlife rely on the watershed.
- **Mitigate Floods and Droughts** | Extreme weather conditions impact agricultural yields, public health, energy costs and infrastructure
- **Sustain Inland Navigation** | Modern inland navigation infrastructure is critical to safe, cost-effective transport of goods and materials.
- **Enhance Recreation** | The public perception of the watershed is determined by the ease of use.
- **Improve Water Quality** | The watershed provides drinking water for more than 20 million people.

The Mississippi River watershed is a crucial resource for the health of the economy and the people of the United States. It is the goal of the Mississippi River Watershed Partnership to connect across sectors and geographies to make meaningful progress for the health of the watershed and our communities. Join us in creating a unified strategy to address shared goals to restore and maintain the Mississippi River watershed.



We are more powerful together.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

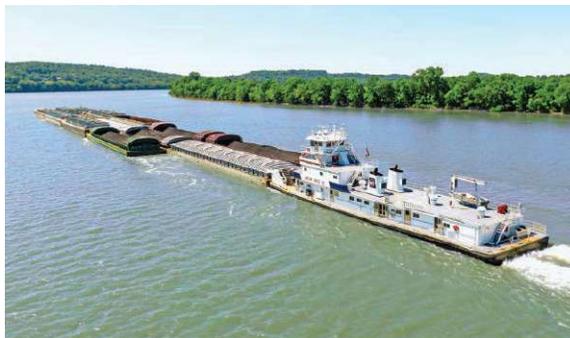
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MISSISSIPPI RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERSHIP



**AUGUST 2025
SUMMARY REPORT
OF WORKSHOP
PROCEEDINGS
AND ACTIONS**

AUGUST 2025
SUMMARY REPORT
OF WORKSHOP
PROCEEDINGS
AND ACTIONS

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We Can Still Do A Lot Amidst Uncertainty

What's Next

- Get the Roadmaps Moving
- Refine Organizational Structure
- Strengthen Connections Among Those Who Care for the Mississippi

WHERE WE'VE COME FROM

The Mississippi River Watershed Partnership (MRWP) was formed to develop a shared voice for institutions and leaders that care for and about one of our nation's most important resources, the Mississippi River watershed. Flowing across 1.245 million square miles in 31 U.S. states and two Canadian provinces, the Mississippi River and its tributaries provide drinking water to countless communities, nourish crops, transport goods, sustain robust fisheries and wildlife habitat, offer recreational opportunities, and provide food, jobs and economic security to millions of Americans. The lands and waters of the Mississippi River watershed are vital to our nation's well-being. Unfortunately, the watershed faces a number of threats that impact communities, agriculture, transportation and the environment, including poor water quality, the impacts of flood and drought, aging infrastructure, degraded and disconnected habitat, and inequitable access to recreational opportunities.

To date, America's Watershed Initiative (AWI), in partnership with The Nature Conservancy (TNC), has convened hundreds of leaders and scientists from a variety of sectors, including federal, regional and state government; communities; industry; and NGOs, to co-create the Mississippi River Watershed Partnership. In June 2024, the Partnership held its first workshop to identify and align on key issue areas for collaborative action. These key issue areas focused on efforts to: conserve fish and wildlife, mitigate floods and droughts, sustain inland navigation, enhance recreation and improve water quality.

Following the June 2024 workshop, key issue area work groups were formed and identified at least three goals and three actions for each area. To ensure alignment with expert practice and avoid geographic bias, work groups representing each of the five watershed basins reviewed all goals and actions. Following this refinement process, 84% of participants in the Partnership's December 2024 webinar strongly or very strongly agreed that the goals and actions were on the right track.

At the 2024 workshop, participants discussed the organizational structure that would best support the collaborative action needed to reach the Partnership's goals. In January 2025, over 60 people reviewed existing models - including the Chesapeake Bay Program, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, Gulf of Mexico Alliance and Longleaf Alliance - to identify lessons learned and growth opportunities. The group determined that a shared leadership structure with strong federal support would be the best long-term approach for achieving the Partnership's objectives. This foundational work sets the stage for the current workshop to develop a partnership that adds value to the already robust conservation efforts within the Mississippi River watershed.

Mississippi River Watershed Partnership Timeline



TAKEAWAYS ROADMAPS

After more than a year of collaborative planning and prioritizing, we aimed to build something more concrete and more detailed: roadmaps that allow partners to act towards our identified goals. Prior to this workshop, AWI and TNC sent a survey to MRWP participants to better understand how the work they are already doing relates to the identified actions, and to learn what actions people considered to be the highest priority. AWI and TNC used the results from that survey, as well as their best professional judgement, to choose which roadmaps would be co-developed during this workshop. The actions selected were those expected to show progress in a short time frame, already had partners working toward them, and/or were chosen for prioritization by partners. We identified six actions across the five key issue areas and four cross-cutting actions for co-development. Each action was developed through parallel virtual and in-person group sessions, generating 20 draft roadmaps across the 10 selected actions. We present summaries of the discussions for each action here.

1. Action: Conduct Gap Analysis of Water Quality Actions Key Issue Area: Water Quality

This action aims to identify where increased investment is needed to improve water quality. It would inventory existing water quality actions (particularly those from projects implemented through Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, initiatives authorized by the Clean Water Act and other relevant programs) to assess where actions are missing and which actions are most successful at improving water quality.

Most Promising Pathways Identified:

- Draw inspiration from existing reports, such as the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission report, to scale up for the whole basin gradually, tying it to existing monitoring networks and producing reports.
- Decide timeline for this action to guide the speed at which it scales up and who can take it on (e.g., recruiting a graduate student if the timeline is not urgent; hiring a consultant if it is more urgent).



SEE THE DRAFT ROADMAPS AT THESE LINKS:

[GAP ANALYSIS ROADMAP
\(VIRTUAL GROUP\)](#)

[GAP ANALYSIS ROADMAP
\(IN-PERSON GROUP\)](#)

2. Action: Ensure Alignment of State Nutrient Reduction Programs Key Issue Area: Water Quality

Nutrient runoff has a large impact on the water quality downstream and has led to hypoxia in the Gulf. There are task forces working to address this problem, but they are not always aligned or adequately funded. This action aims to facilitate the coordination and funding of their work to address the full extent of the Gulf hypoxia problem.

Most Promising Pathways Identified:

- Establish a permanent watershed coordinator network through the lens of job creation.
- Establish a watershed-level scorecard of water quality and/or conservation practice adoption.



photo: Norman Kuring,
NASA Earth Observatory, Ocean Color Team

**SEE THE DRAFT ROADMAPS
AT THESE LINKS:**

[STATE NUTRIENT REDUCTION
ALIGNMENT ROADMAP
\(VIRTUAL GROUP\)](#)

[STATE NUTRIENT REDUCTION
ALIGNMENT ROADMAP
\(IN-PERSON GROUP\)](#)



[HABITAT AND BIOTA
INDICATOR ROADMAP
\(VIRTUAL GROUP\)](#)

[HABITAT AND BIOTA
INDICATOR ROADMAP
\(IN-PERSON GROUP\)](#)

- Explore the potential for new Farm Bill incentives.
- Track the key gaps in federal loss of partners to ensure that key programs remain.

3. Action: Identify Habitat and Biota Indicators

Key Issue Area: Fish and Wildlife

The proposed Sentinel Monitoring System would provide real-time information on water quality, navigational safety, flood risk and habitat and ecosystem function. However, we need to identify which habitats and biota can indicate ecosystem function. Identifying these and incorporating them into the Sentinel Monitoring Network can facilitate long-term resource monitoring that provides the necessary data for science-based decision making to inform future management actions.

Most Promising Pathways Identified:

- Implement this action as part of existing nonprofit strategies, e.g., Environmental Defense Fund Science Strategy and TNC’s Sentinel Monitoring System.
- Advocate for programs that can support this action, such as the Mississippi River Basin Fish Commission and USGS Mississippi River Science Center.



photo: University of Iowa

4. Action: Provide Information on Floods and Droughts for at Risk Communities

Key Issue Area: Floods and Droughts

Floods and droughts impact people, natural systems, and economies by disrupting not only their immediate safety, but also their access to fresh water, clean air and other natural benefits. By providing information or tools to prepare for floods and droughts, at-risk communities can adapt to minimize these impacts.

Most Promising Pathways Identified:

- Create a hub that centralizes resources that help the public prepare for floods and droughts.
- Develop a communications strategy that expands the partnership’s presence and reaches out to at-risk communities.

[INFORMATION FOR AT-RISK
COMMUNITIES ROADMAP
\(VIRTUAL GROUP\)](#)

[INFORMATION FOR AT-RISK
COMMUNITIES ROADMAP
\(IN-PERSON GROUP\)](#)



photo: Ingram Barge Company

5. Action: Gather and Make Available Data For Cargo Transported on the River
Key Issue Area: Navigation

While the Mississippi River basin is one of the United States’ most important resources, its value for transportation of cargo is not commonly appreciated. To demonstrate the scale of the basin’s contribution, this action aims to gather data on the annual tonnage of cargo, types of commodities, and their economic value transported on the river, and make this information publicly available.

Most Promising Pathways Identified:

- Coordinate with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete their approved and fully funded study on how to improve the Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center system, and ensure that the study includes these data, an implementation and funding strategy, and an outreach strategy.
- Coordinate a discovery roundtable to secure industry consensus to compel these improvements.

6. Action: Create an Inventory of Existing Recreational Access and Observation Points

Key Issue Area: Recreation

To improve recreation and make it equitable in the Mississippi River watershed, we first need to understand its current status. An inventory of existing recreational access, observation points and users would allow us to identify opportunities to strategically increase access and use across all current and potential recreation stakeholders.

Most Promising Pathways Identified:

- Partner with a private entity that maintains and collects geospatial data so that they can create a thorough map they can use on their platform, in exchange for information on use of the access points.
- Create a working group that includes social scientists to develop a prioritization for increasing access, particularly where there is the greatest potential for success and for benefits.

SEE THE DRAFT ROADMAPS AT THESE LINKS:

[RIVER TRANSPORT DATA ROADMAP \(VIRTUAL GROUP\)](#)

[RIVER TRANSPORT DATA ROADMAP \(IN-PERSON GROUP\)](#)



photo: The Nature Conservancy

[INVENTORY OF RECREATIONAL ACCESS AND OBSERVATION POINTS ROADMAP \(VIRTUAL GROUP\)](#)

[INVENTORY OF RECREATIONAL ACCESS AND OBSERVATION POINTS ROADMAP \(IN-PERSON GROUP\)](#)

7. Action: Promote Use of and Develop Metrics for Nature-based Solutions

Key Issue Area: Cross-Cutting

Nature-based solutions are actions to address societal challenges through the protection, sustainable management and restoration of ecosystems. These types of actions can be hard to define and evaluate, as their success often depends on the implementation location. This action aims to make this strategy more legible to stakeholders in the Mississippi River Watershed.

Most Promising Pathways Identified:

- Define what nature-based solutions for the Mississippi River Watershed are and how to quantify their benefits.
- Develop an inventory of existing incentives and support rural stakeholders in accessing them.
- Compile a series of case studies that demonstrate how nature-based solutions can solve problems across the watershed.
- Publish a best practices guide to facilitate implementation of nature-based solutions in places without existing capacity.



photo: University of Iowa

[USE OF NBS ROADMAP \(VIRTUAL GROUP\)](#)

[USE OF NBS ROADMAP \(IN-PERSON GROUP\)](#)



**SEE THE DRAFT ROADMAPS
AT THESE LINKS:**

[ECONOMIC PROFILES ROADMAP
\(VIRTUAL GROUP\)](#)

[ECONOMIC PROFILES ROADMAP
\(IN-PERSON GROUP\)](#)

8. Action: Update Economic Profiles
Key Issue Area: Cross-Cutting

Economic profiles were developed for the Upper and Lower Mississippi River basins in 2016 and 2014, respectively. These profiles show the importance of these areas for the overall economic health of the United States. This action aims to both update these profiles and create new economic profiles for the Missouri, Ohio/Tennessee, and Arkansas/Red/White River basins.

Most Promising Pathways Identified:

- Write the overarching scope for a watershed-scale profile, identifying operational definitions, assumptions and common metrics, as well as who should be involved and what funding is needed to complete it.
- Begin to secure commitments needed to move forward in the upper and lower basins.



photo: America's Watershed Initiative

9. Action: Support and Educate Decision Makers on Key Legislation*
Key Issue Area: Cross-Cutting

Efficient and successful governance of the Mississippi River watershed requires key legislation that allows government agencies to take action and empowers stakeholder groups to support shared goals. Some key legislation and appropriations identified include the Upper Mississippi River Restoration program, the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program, the Ohio River Basin Alliance Restoration Plan, the Lower Mississippi Comprehensive Management Study, the Sentinel Monitoring System and the Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission, among others.

*Governmental employees participating in this action will focus solely on operational or technical support and will not be involved in policy or legislative activities.

Most Promising Pathways Identified:

- Develop a comprehensive education initiative for public programs and funding, focused on the interconnectivity of freshwater resilience across the basin.
- Organize a Mississippi River Week in Washington D.C.
- Coordinate a Mississippi River Bipartisan Caucus.
- Partner with a small number of targeted state governments to model emerging issues and needs.

[LEGISLATION SUPPORT ROADMAP
\(VIRTUAL GROUP\)](#)

[LEGISLATION SUPPORT ROADMAP
\(IN-PERSON GROUP\)](#)

10. Action: Implement a Science Strategy for the Watershed

Key Issue Area: Cross-Cutting

The Environmental Defense Fund developed a science strategy to support ecosystem management decisions in the Mississippi-Atchafalaya River basin based on expert panels, interviews and surveys, and presented it for discussion to the MRWP in August 2025. This strategy highlighted important lessons that defined scientist responsibilities and the critical elements of science programs, including a set of guiding principles and a set of tools and processes that connect science to management and vice versa. The workshop developed the most important pathways for adapting and implementing this science strategy.

Most Promising Pathways Identified:

- Develop a social-ecological model with a multidisciplinary group that allows MRWP members to understand where they fit into the model.
- Organize a Mississippi River Research Forum.



photos: Dr. B. Kleiss

SEE THE DRAFT ROADMAPS AT THESE LINKS:

[SCIENCE STRATEGY ROADMAP \(VIRTUAL GROUP\)](#)

[SCIENCE STRATEGY ROADMAP \(IN-PERSON GROUP\)](#)

EMERGENT STRATEGIES

Following roadmap development, participants reviewed and compared them to pinpoint critical coordination needs and areas of potential conflict. Four strategies were identified to support all roadmaps:

- Coordination and Convening
- Scientific Execution and Synthesis
- Communications
- Policy Education and Advocacy*

The partnership should focus on these strategies to build relationships and trust, while building a collective voice and constituency for a healthy and resilient Mississippi River watershed.

* with eligible organizations

Using the Economic Profiles roadmap as an example:

- Via coordination and convening, we can make sure we have the right people in the room to develop and update economic profiles for the watershed.
- Via scientific execution and synthesis, we can identify the data we need to develop and update the economic profiles, collect them, analyze them, and write up conclusions.
- Via communications support, we can adapt the economic profiles to audience-specific products (e.g., legislators).
- Via policy, education and advocacy roles, we can discuss those products with the target audience.

These four strategies work together to achieve watershed-scale impact.



WE CAN STILL DO A LOT AMIDST UNCERTAINTY

In 2025, the Mississippi River Watershed Partnership faces a new administration and an uncertain economic and environmental landscape.

While the Partnership determines its own near-term and long-term structures in these changing times, it can still complete significant work.

Within our current roles, we can make strategic decisions and move forward on actionable initiatives. We can begin operating as a unified basin, building experience with watershed-scale coordination and developing institutional capacity. Selecting an issue where we can achieve early success will provide valuable lessons for tackling other large-scale challenges.

In addition, conceptualizing the MRWP as a network of organizations with distinct roles, responsibilities and expertise enables agile action. For example, while broad priorities may be set by MRWP leadership, specific actions would be implemented by partners based on their unique capabilities and interests.

A DEVELOPING PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

To date, AWI and TNC have convened groups in workshop settings, temporary committees, webinars and small conversations to receive feedback about the work and structure of the partnership. Prior to this workshop, groups identified the ideal long-term structure of the partnership as having a shared leadership structure with strong federal support. This long-term structure will take time to create, and there is work to be done in the near term to advance our goals. Therefore, during this workshop, participants explored options for a near-term partnership structure that may be more feasible and has a shorter set-up time while allowing the partnership to strengthen and grow.

During the workshop, participants discussed how the proposed shared leadership structure could be adjusted to fit the current needs and capacity of the partnership, with the goal of creating something that could be implemented within the next year. Participants considered how existing federal and multi-state structures currently function either as examples or as a foundation from which to build. The general consensus was to use the proposed committees and leadership council from the shared leadership structure as an initial framework, and to expand and refine them over time. However, participants still want to address many important considerations around representation, clear roles and processes, and funding that participants would like to see addressed.



Participants wanted to make sure there was **adequate representation** by thoughtfully defining committee membership and adding additional committees. Within the committees, participants wanted to

ensure industry/commodity participation, representation from state and federal government agencies, representation from all basins, and a coordinator/convenor per committee. Participants also desired clarity on how all valued stakeholders across a geographically and professionally diverse partnership would be represented in the Leadership Council. They suggested additional committees, including an implementation committee, a coordination council and a tribal committee.

Within this structure, **roles and processes should be clearly outlined**. Groups reflected on a variety of options for roles and processes, including the following:

- Each committee should have membership defined with clear roles.
- Workplans are important tools that should be used to hold people accountable.
- Coordination councils could follow up on the workplans and should be staffed, potentially by federal employees.

- There may need to be a process for participants or non-decision-making committees to have a say in the Leadership Council.
- Voting may require a quorum based on either a minimum number of participants or adequate representation across watersheds.
- Committees should align with and support the MRWP's purpose and outcomes.
- Given reliance on voluntary or granted work, the MRWP might need to eventually incorporate a legal framework for long-term action.
- Committee membership should align with members' relevant expertise and capabilities. For example, policy committees should include organizations with advocacy capacity, while separating those that do not engage in policy work or lobbying activities.



Funding could both facilitate and ensure the participation of a diverse set of groups in order to achieve adequate representation and support outlined roles and processes. One group pointed out that the Partnership would need to be able to receive federal funding, either as a coalition or by identifying a member that could administer the funds. While the goal is to receive additional funding to support this work, there are concerns that the funding needed for this partnership may impact funding for existing organizations in a detrimental way.

What's Next

1. Get the roadmaps moving

October 2025

The Partnership will select one roadmap to refine for implementation by October 2025. This roadmap will serve as a pilot project. AWI has hired a contractor who participated in the workshop to use the workshop materials as a foundation for member outreach. Workshop participants expressed interest in refining the roadmap through small meetings, partner reviews, surveys and regular updates. In addition, several participants indicated willingness to take on expanded roles in specific issue areas or clearly defined participation opportunities. The contractor will collaborate with AWI and TNC to develop communications materials for sharing with partners, colleagues, leadership and other stakeholders. This pilot roadmap will establish the refinement process for the remaining roadmaps.

March 2026

The remaining nine roadmaps from this workshop will be refined for implementation by March 2026 according to the lessons learned from the first roadmap. The process to refine these roadmaps will be defined so that future roadmapping of actions can be streamlined. Participants identified challenges that can be addressed as these roadmaps are created including:

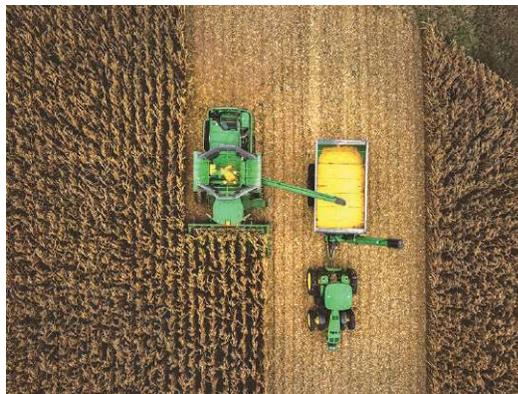
- Biased participation from organizations who have existing capacity to participate, particularly as we get further away from the workshop and lose momentum.
- A lack of clear process to decide what a "final" roadmap looks like, leading to a long review stage.
- Roadmaps that are too broad or not aligned with an overall MRWP goal and vision.
- Analysis paralysis due to too much formalization of the partnership, given how many groups are involved.
- Conflict with government functions and missions.

2. Refine organizational structure

During the workshop, participants identified aspects of the Partnership structure that require further clarification. However, participants also believed that those present could begin building the Partnership and making operational decisions without excessive formality. One proposal was to establish an interim leadership council or coordinating council to oversee the structure formalization process. As the Partnership develops more formal governance, representation and participation mechanisms can be correspondingly formalized.

The aspects that need to be clarified for the leadership council include:

- **Level of seniority and experience:** This could be informed by the types of decisions that need to be made for the roadmaps to be implemented.
- **Geographic representation:** While it is clear that this will be a watershed-wide partnership, given the size of the watershed it is important to prioritize geographic representation. However, we need more clarity on how this will be done.



- **Process for selecting leaders:** Who decides who is on the leadership council? Do sub-basin organizations send leaders? Or are there Partnership elections?
- **What does a leadership council role entail?** To answer this question, we must decide on limitations, participation restrictions, committee representation responsibilities, and meeting frequency requirements. Clarifying these expectations will help potential participants determine whether they can commit to this role.
- **How does the leadership council make decisions?** What does a quorum look like? Are decisions made by consensus or majority? Are the decisions on strategic direction or on implementation?

Generally, participants found the committee topics (both scientific/technical and strategic) appropriate and believed these committees could be operationalized immediately. However, the following aspects were identified as needing clarification:

- **Diverse representation across stakeholder types and geographic area:** How do we know that there is good representation across all stakeholder types and geographic areas of the Mississippi River watershed? Participants suggested leveraging some of the coalitions that already exist, and frequently suggested creating an inventory or map out all the different organizations and coalitions that are already doing work in the area, regardless of whether they are part of the MRWP. This would allow the Partnership to recruit specific groups and individuals whose existing work is relevant to committees.
- **Selecting a point-person for each committee:** Each committee needs a designated leader who is responsible for ensuring progress and facilitating communication with other committees and the Leadership Council.

- **Developing goals and guidelines for committee work:**

This would include cadence of meetings, communication with other committees, and roles other than point-person for committee members. We might also want to clarify the decisions that happen at the committee level so that there is autonomy and the committees do not need to rely on the Leadership Council to do work together.

Finally, participants were vocal in their support for America's Watershed Initiative and The Nature Conservancy as convening partners. They assured that both of these partners were doing a good job and that as long as they have capacity and desire, they should continue being the convening partners. Participants suggested focusing on common communications that articulate a clear vision of what the MRWP is headed towards so that all can use that goal for recruitment and internal inspiration. They also suggested that effective messaging of partnership goals are needed. Choosing a specific issue that connects the entire basin, such as water supply, could clarify the communications. In general, participants believed that recruiting an expert in creating these structures and communications would be useful in moving the partnership forward.



3. Strengthen connections among those who care for the Mississippi

December 2025

Convening partners will put out a workplan for 2026 that includes internal and external outreach and recruitment initiatives noted below.

Outreach and Recruitment

Throughout the life of the MRWP, there has been a desire to engage Tribal Nations, but the MRWP needs more participation from tribes to meaningfully work at the watershed scale. A top priority for the upcoming year is to intentionally engage with Tribal Nations and their affiliated groups to understand any barriers to participation and possibilities for collaboration. There was a strong agreement that Tribal Nations should be involved in the MRWP and in leadership positions, at the same level as U.S. government leaders.



Other groups, such as environmental justice groups, FEMA/emergency management professionals, water allocation leadership, commodity groups, levee boards, mayors and others have also been under-represented in these convenings. One potential reason for their under-representation is that they do not have enough staff or resources to participate in this partnership. A potential solution is to fundraise for partnership grants to award these groups, providing them with the funds to participate. Another potential reason is lack of social connections from the groups that are already in the partnership. An inventory of groups working in the watershed could help identify groups that are relevant but not currently engaged in the partnership.

Continuing to Connect

MRWP participants were excited about having one or two big meetings a year and smaller convenings between these meetings. Smaller convenings are important to build camaraderie and relationships, while getting into a rhythm for moving priority issues and partner work forward. Participants wanted to learn about what colleagues were doing both in their non-Partnership-related work and within the Partnership. One attendee mentioned that there should be a space to “show off all the opportunities and projects/programs that people don’t always get to see.” They also wanted a variety of opportunities for participation, as not everyone can do everything.

Some ideas for these smaller convenings and asynchronous engagement include:

- Repository of notes and reports from all MRWP meetings.
- New partner packet explaining the MRWP vision, structure, current work and resources.
- Regular newsletter to provide updates on committee work and solicit feedback.

One of the most important functions for the larger annual meetings was to provide a space for the Leadership Council and Committees to update each other and have in-depth conversations. While there was agreement that it is easier to connect with people in an in-person format, the group also noted that virtual and hybrid meetings allow flexibility for participants with constraints, whether personal or financial. In addition, members thought that the work aspect of the workshops is important to move the Partnership towards its goals, but that it should be clear how the work will be used in the future, to ensure that participants’ voices are being heard and that their input is valued.

Describing the Partnership

A recurring theme of the workshop was that as the Partnership formalizes and grows, clear communication should continue. Participants recommended that AWI and TNC track not only growth, engagement and participation, but also the expertise, decision-making authority, missions and roles of current members. Doing so would help answer questions about membership, expertise, collaboration opportunities and gaps to inform recruitment. This would allow members to feel that they are contributing to a system and helping the network grow.

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F-16



Upper Mississippi River Quarterly Meetings

Attachment G

Mississippi River Watershed

Page Number	Document Title
G-1 to G-17	State Policy Options for Risk Reduction and Resilience (1/2026)

The Mississippi River Watershed

State Policy Options for Risk Reduction and Resilience



The Mississippi River Watershed: State Policy Options for Risk Reduction and Resilience

THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN LEGISLATIVE COHORT

The National Conference of State Legislatures is the bipartisan organization dedicated to serving the lawmakers and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories.

NCSL provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues, and is an effective and respected advocate for the interests of the states in the American federal system. Its objectives are:

- Improve the quality and effectiveness of state legislatures.
- Promote policy innovation and communication among state legislatures.
- Ensure state legislatures a strong, cohesive voice in the federal system.

The conference operates from offices in Denver, Colorado and Washington, D.C.

Background and Introduction

The Mississippi River Basin, spanning 31 states and encompassing over 250 rivers, has a rich history shaped by both natural and human influences.

For thousands of years, Native Americans relied on the “Great River” for sustenance and transportation, as its freely shifting course created fertile soils and diverse habitats across a landscape ranging from arid plains to swampy cypress forests. With the arrival of European explorers and settlers, the river became an essential route for trade and movement. As populations along its banks increased, efforts to control the river’s flow grew stronger.

Major transformations took place during the 1930s and 1940s, when the construction of large locks and dams facilitated greater commercial navigation and spurred significant economic growth. Industrialization also brought the development of levees and navigation channels, replacing much of the river’s natural landscape with concrete and steel. While these changes supported urban and agricultural expansion, they also altered the river’s natural dynamics, often resulting in more severe floods, loss of habitats, reduced wetlands, destruction of forests and the spread of invasive species throughout this diverse watershed.

Today, the Mississippi provides drinking water, transportation corridors, power generation, fertile agricultural land and a multitude of outdoor recreation opportunities. The river also supports tens of billions of dollars in economic activity and provides habitat for over 780 species of fish and wildlife.



MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN LEGISLATIVE COHORT

NCSL’s Mississippi River Basin Legislative Cohort and Agriculture Task Force toured the Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam in Minneapolis with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers.

The Mississippi River Basin Legislative Cohort

Given the importance of the Mississippi River and the surrounding basin, the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) convened a bipartisan group of legislators from the 10 mainstem states—Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana—to form the Mississippi River Basin Legislative Cohort. Over the course of a year (June 2024 to June 2025), convening in person and virtually, the group shared ideas and best practices and learned from subject-matter experts to gain greater insight into the challenges of the Mississippi River Basin and discuss potential solutions.

This report provides an overview of select watershed issues identified by members of the cohort and highlights innovative policy approaches and state legislation that may serve to help states across the Basin protect their watersheds and communities from extreme weather and other hazards. A common theme among the states participating in the Cohort was the desire to tackle issues related to flooding, drought and water quality while also enhancing their state’s economic and community resilience. There was also increased awareness that actions taken to address issues such as nutrient runoff or changes to water flow, could have both upstream and downstream impacts. As such, a holistic, collaborative approach is essential to minimize unintended consequences. This perspective reinforces the idea that states are operating within a shared basin context, where individual decisions connect to broader regional outcomes.

The Largest Drainage Basin in the United States

The Mississippi River Basin covers all or parts of 31 states and two Canadian provinces.



Policy Drivers in the Mississippi River Basin

Faced with an increasing number of disasters, a changing federal funding landscape, aging infrastructure and shifting demographics, adaptation will be a throughline for state legislatures as they play an increasingly important role in addressing issues affecting the Mississippi River Basin, including flooding, drought, economic development and water quality. When considering policy options, lawmakers' decisions are largely guided by three primary drivers: economic, environmental and recreational.

■ **Economic:** The basin's ecological productivity is the foundation of its economy, hosting some of the most fertile agricultural lands on the planet. According to the Waterways Council, over 90% of U.S. agricultural exports are transported by the Mississippi River, and waterborne cargo is valued at over \$150 billion, according to the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. It's estimated that barge transportation contributes half a million jobs to the U.S. economy. The river and surrounding landscapes also support power generation, agricultural and industrial production, commercial fishing and outdoor recreation. To protect the vast economic value of the river, extensive investments have been made in engineered infrastructure to help reduce the impacts of flooding. While beneficial in some cases, in others, these conventional, human-engineered systems have led to more severe flooding and have accelerated habitat loss.

■ **Environmental:** The basin is home to diverse ecosystems, providing vital habitat for numerous species of fish, birds and other wildlife. It also includes the largest continuous system of wetlands in North America. These habitats and ecosystems face a variety of threats including hotter temperatures and extreme rainfall events in addition to increased nutrient loads. This is most evident off the coast of Louisiana where nutrient runoff has resulted in large algae blooms which have depleted the supply of oxygen, killing fish, oysters and other marine life. Known as "the dead zone," Gulf hypoxia has been devastating to the fishing economy along the Gulf coast. The health and vitality of the river are inextricably linked to the economic viability of the region and thus essential to protect and restore.

■ **Recreational:** The Mississippi river is known for its diverse recreational opportunities including boating, fishing, hiking and birdwatching which attract millions of visitors annually and generate tens of billions of dollars in economic activity. Recreation-related tourism along the river corridor supports thousands of jobs and contributes significantly to local and regional revenue. Arkansas [SB 464](#) (2023) established the Natural State Initiative Pilot Program to promote outdoor recreation and economic development through designated opportunity zones near rivers, parks and historic sites. Additionally, states are increasingly investing in river restoration projects to create new recreational opportunities and improve ecosystem health. In Minnesota, for example, a voter-approved sales tax increase, known as the “[Legacy Amendment](#)” has helped fund a wide range of conservation and recreation initiatives, including parks and trails along the Mississippi River.

These drivers also reflect the extent to which states are linked by common basin conditions, a connection that becomes even clearer in the context of increasingly variable weather.

Extreme Weather: An Emerging Policy Driver

Another challenge state lawmakers face is the increasing frequency and severity of disasters. In the past decade, the number of billion-dollar disasters has grown along with numerous disasters that may not meet the threshold of a presidentially declared disaster but nevertheless cause significant damage to the impacted communities. Catastrophic flooding increasingly impacts the Mississippi River Basin, threatening human lives, infrastructure and ecosystems. Rapid water flow accelerates soil erosion, increases sedimentation, destroys wildlife habitats and degrades water quality. These flooding events also complicate efforts to control nutrient runoff and protect water resources.

States generally develop risk reduction strategies to shield their communities from destructive flooding. However, these efforts become more complicated when the same region faces both severe floods and extended periods of drought or reduced river flow in a single year. These low-water conditions can be particularly severe in the Mississippi River Basin, affecting wildlife habitats, economic trade and recreation. The river frequently reaches low water levels, and according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, has recently shown a pattern of rapidly shifting between drought and flood conditions. These shifting conditions highlight the need for basin-wide strategies that strengthen watershed resilience across diverse landscapes.

Watershed Protections: Unpacking Environmental Policy Drivers

Having a clean and resilient watershed is essential to the recreational and economic vitality of the region. Whether addressing water flows or nutrient runoff, protecting water quality and ensuring the sustainability of the surrounding ecosystems are top-of-mind. States are expanding their toolkits by leaning into wetland restoration, land conservation and partnerships with landowners.

In an effort to address repetitive flooding and low-river levels, federal and state lawmakers are considering traditional grey or hard infrastructure along with nature-based solutions, such as floodplain reconnection, wetland restoration and riparian buffers. By enhancing and restoring these natural features, more stormwater can be stored or directed away from people and infrastructure and allowed to infiltrate into the ground,

Lessons from Loch Leven

In January 2016, record-setting rainfall throughout the Midwest led to severe flooding on the Mississippi River, overwhelming numerous levees in Illinois and Missouri and impacting downstream communities. State policymakers faced urgent challenges as levee failures, such as the breach in Wilkinson County, Mississippi, exposed the vulnerabilities of privately managed flood infrastructure. The situation at Loch Leven—a 6,000-acre island affected by these recurring floods—highlighted the critical need for coordinated state and federal policy responses. Through strategic partnerships and robust support from federal Farm Bill programs, Loch Leven serves as a [model for floodplain reconnection](#) initiatives in the Lower Mississippi River region.

recharging groundwater and depleting aquifers. Wetlands help to slow and disperse floodwaters, which reduces flood peaks and minimizes erosion. Additionally, wetlands act as natural filters by removing pollutants from the water. As communities face the costly cycle of rebuilding levees, restoring wetlands is becoming a practical and often cost-effective strategy for flood mitigation.

In 2024, Illinois enacted [Senate Bill 247](#) to support conservation services such as wetland restoration, flood mitigation and natural infrastructure. The state also enacted [Senate Bill 2510](#) (2025) to appropriate funds from the Ducks Unlimited Fund to finance wetland protection, enhancement and restoration projects, and to fund other associated efforts.

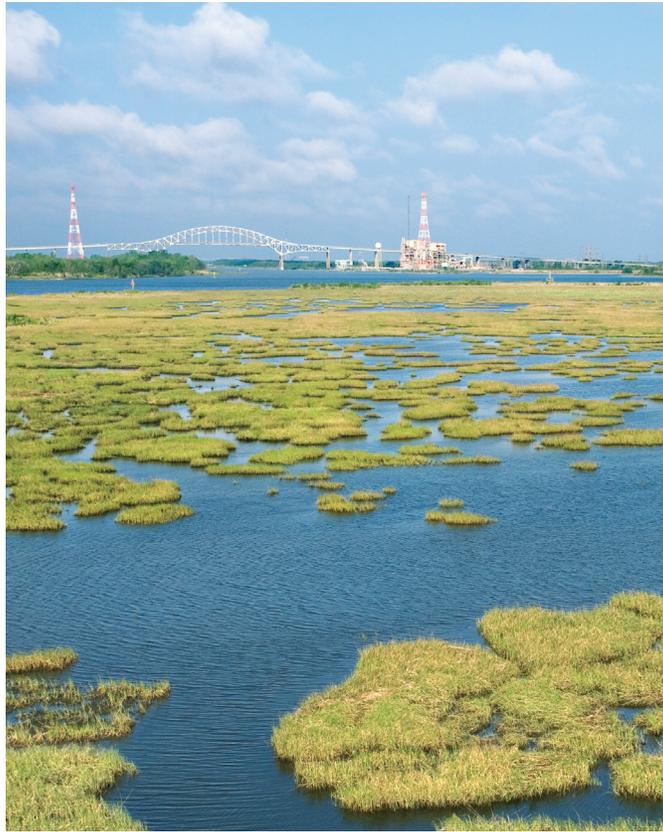
States are also recognizing that private landowners play an essential role in restoring wetlands to mitigate flood impacts and restore waterfowl and other species.

The Louisiana legislature enacted [House Bill 564](#) (2025) which established an incentive program within the conservation fund to assist landowners with enhancing wildlife habitats and wetlands on private property. Iowa established the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program ([Iowa Code § 466.5](#)) that provides incentives to landowners who voluntarily establish wetlands to reduce nitrogen loads and the movement of other agricultural chemicals from croplands to streams and rivers. In addition to improving water quality, these wetlands will provide wildlife habitat and increase recreational opportunities.

The intrinsic relationship between agriculture and water has also come into sharper focus in recent years, leading states and agricultural producers to collaborate on soil health practices and water recycling initiatives. Organizations like the Iowa Soybean Association and Ducks Unlimited, among others, support communities and farmers by providing technical assistance and grants to restore wetlands, oxbows and habitats that help rehabilitate ecosystems and enhance water quality.

Given that over 20 million Americans rely on the Basin as their main source of drinking water, maintaining high water quality standards is crucial. Although the Clean Water Act (1972) has led to significant improvements, the Mississippi River and its tributaries still face threats from excessive amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients from agricultural runoff. These nutrients, commonly used in farming, aid plant growth and carbohydrate storage. However, when they accumulate unnaturally, they fuel algae blooms whose decomposition depletes oxygen in the water, resulting in “dead zones.”

As nutrient loads in water continue to rise each year, states are increasingly working with farmers to adopt conservation measures that curb nutrient runoff. For instance, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection offers [Producer-Led Watershed Protection Grants](#) ([Wis. Stat. §93.59](#)). These grants help fund cost-sharing initiatives, on-farm demonstrations and outreach efforts to assist farmers in adopting conservation strategies and innovative methods to



GETTY IMAGES

Swamplands along the Mississippi River in New Orleans.



MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN LEGISLATIVE COHORT

The cohort tours the Highland Bridge Project in St. Paul, Minn., where native vegetation, bioengineering, advanced green infrastructure and native limestone support watershed restoration, stormwater management and economic revitalization.

The Highland Bridge Project: A Case Study in Watershed Restoration and Economic Development

While record-breaking floods may garner the most attention, a significant number of smaller floods and other weather events every year cause damage to agricultural land, communities and the economy. To combat this, both states and the federal government are investing in and implementing disaster management strategies that achieve multiple benefits and involve both structural measures (such as dams and floodwalls) and nonstructural approaches (including land-use planning, wetland restoration and nature-based solutions). These multi-benefit projects are designed to achieve multiple positive outcomes—such as environmental protection, economic growth, improved public spaces, and enhanced community well-being—through integrated planning and solutions.

A good example of this is the [Highland Bridge](#) project, which the cohort visited during its first meeting in Minneapolis -St. Paul. The Highland Bridge project employs a multi-benefit approach to flood mitigation by integrating engineered and natural stormwater systems throughout its 122-acre development. Stormwater is collected and filtered through biofiltration and central water features, capturing significant pollutants and ensuring clean, regulated water flows into Hidden Falls Regional Park and the Mississippi River. This strategy restores the previously buried Hidden Falls Creek, stabilizes water flows, and reduces untreated runoff. In addition to flood resilience, the project enhances public spaces, supports affordable housing, and promotes sustainability through extensive native landscaping and LEED-certified buildings. Comprehensive planning not only protects the environment but also strengthens community connectivity, economic development and livability.

improve water quality in local watersheds. Similarly, Arkansas, Michigan and Mississippi have acted to lower the costs for landowners who adopt practices aimed at reducing agricultural runoff. The Arkansas [Agriculture River Quality Loan Program](#) (authorized by [Arkansas Code §15-5-901](#)) provides low-interest loans to agricultural landowners for conservation practices such as the construction of tailwater recovery systems and the purchase of no-till drills to help reduce pollution impacts to water quality. The Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development oversees the [Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program](#) created by [Mich. Comp Laws § 324.8710](#), which supports landowners in developing and implementing unique conservation plans to prevent or minimize agricultural pollution risks. Finally, Mississippi Code §69-27-1 created the [Soil and Water Conservation Commission](#). The Commission uses federal funding provided by the Federal Clean Water Act to carry out agricultural non-point source pollution education and land treatment cost-share projects across the State.

Policy Issues and Approaches

Legislators are identifying policy levers within their authority to tackle these challenges with an eye towards sustainable investments that deliver long-term societal, ecological and economic benefits.

State lawmakers agree that the long-term viability of the river and the broader basin is essential to preserve the region's way of life. The economics of the basin are rooted in the river and its tributaries as movers of goods, sources of drinking water and destinations for recreation. As state, federal and private partners look to invest in the basin's infrastructure to withstand the ever-changing impacts of weather, nutrient runoff and industrial chemicals, they continue to encounter three main challenges:

- **Coordination and Capacity:** Strengthening intergovernmental coordination requires open lines of communication and collaboration among local, state, tribal and federal officials. This cross-jurisdictional collaboration is beneficial for effective water management, infrastructure planning and environmental stewardship. It also better prepares communities when funding becomes available as states and communities can have a clear framework for how they'll get "boots on the ground" to design and implement projects.
- **Data and Information:** Across the country, states are recognizing that unmanaged flood risks, water quality concerns and elongated droughts threaten public safety, local economies and long-term fiscal stability. Yet too often, states and local communities don't have the information, modeling, or data to effectively assess and plan for these growing risks. High-quality, reliable data is fundamental for conducting precise needs assessments, informing strategic investments and evaluating results.
- **Funding:** Infrastructure investments are among the costliest investments for state and federal governments, and the needs almost always outweigh the available resources. Over the years, states have sought to shore up their own funding mechanisms by creating infrastructure banks or passing resilient infrastructure bonds, among other strategies. As the federal government shifts more of the cost burden to states, lawmakers will need to reevaluate their current planning, mitigation and response systems to meet the demands of future extreme weather events through innovative funding and financing mechanisms.

Coordination and Capacity

State policymakers increasingly recognize the need to formalize and strengthen relationships with neighboring states to address shared challenges such as flooding, nutrient runoff and economic development. Legislative approaches may include the creation of interstate compacts, formal agreements or multi-state task forces that bring together lawmakers, agencies and technical experts to align priorities and share data. These collaborative structures facilitate capacity building and streamline planning across jurisdictions to ensure that upstream and downstream interests are jointly considered.

States are also exploring ways to coordinate across political and sectoral boundaries within their own



SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES

A traffic light in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, shows red above a flooded street in 2008.

borders to maximize regional benefits. At least 12 states have created a designated office or individual to enhance whole-of-government coordination. These [chief resilience offices or officers](#) lead long-term planning and coordinate agency efforts. Separately, states are using tools like data sharing, joint infrastructure investments and shared grant programs to foster cooperation and improve disaster mitigation and hazard planning.

Leveraging interagency working groups and regional advisory councils to inform basin-related decisions and increase coordination with neighboring states are other ways states work across borders to ensure protection of the Basin's assets. For example, the Upper Mississippi River Basin Association (UMRBA) facilitates interstate water resource planning among its five member states: Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin. It serves to increase resources and policy alignment on issues including floodplain resilience, water quality and ecosystems. Similarly, the Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee acts as an interstate platform for states including Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee. The mem-

Cedar Rapids: A Case Study in Watershed-Based Planning

Following the significant floods of 2008, Cedar Rapids and adjacent communities within the Cedar River basin came together utilizing a watershed-based planning approach to facilitate the exchange of data, information and advanced modeling techniques across county and municipal jurisdictions. Intergovernmental agreements allowed local governments to consolidate financial resources to maximize access to federal and state funding for expansive, multifaceted projects. A key partner in these efforts has been the [Iowa Flood Center](#), established by state legislation in 2009. As part of the University of Iowa, the Flood Center provides research and innovative tools to Iowa's decision-makers, enhancing the state's flood preparedness and resiliency.

ber states work collaboratively to develop habitat restoration plans, implement restoration projects and promote coordinated management of the lower river.

Alongside local and regional collaboration, states also engage with numerous federal agencies operating in the Basin. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plays a vital role, and the cohort highlighted the importance of the Corps' coordination with the states. The Corps manages the river's navigable channels, locks, ports, and harbors; oversees navigation infrastructure projects; implements flood risk management through levees and dams; and supports habitat restoration and long-term monitoring. Because flood control and resource management are shared responsibilities, strong collaboration among the Corps, state agencies and legislatures is crucial. This coordination helps align policy objectives, secure funding, and ensure projects effectively address the needs of both states and local communities.

By strengthening these intergovernmental relationships, legislatures can amplify the effectiveness of individual state policies and pursue more holistic strategies for water quality, flood resilience and economic vitality throughout the basin.

STATE POLICY EXAMPLES:

■ **Iowa:** In 2010, the state enacted HF 2459, establishing a [watershed planning advisory council](#) tasked with providing recommendations to state agencies regarding best practices for protecting water resources, ensuring sufficient water supply, mitigating and preventing flooding, and promoting sustainable, fiscally responsible and environmentally responsible resource management.

■ **Minnesota:** The [One Watershed, One Plan](#) originated from Minnesota [Statute §103B.801](#), establishing a comprehensive watershed management plan to create a systematic, watershed-wide, science-based approach to watershed management.

■ **Louisiana:** established the Chief Resilience Officer within the governor's office ([House Bill 526, 2023](#)) to develop strategic direction for resilience initiatives, coordinate state agency functions related to risk reduction, align departmental budgets with resilience goals, pursue federal and private funding for resilience projects and integrate resilience into major state plans like the Coastal Master Plan and Hazard Mitigation Plan.

State legislatures are increasingly working to clarify responsibilities and build structured partnerships that support more effective cross-border water governance. In tandem with efforts to improve coordination across jurisdictions, states are also exploring how investments in watershed health and infrastructure can generate lasting economic benefits for local communities.

Data and Information

Accurate, accessible, and localized data is critical to understanding, planning for and responding to water-related challenges across the Mississippi River Basin including flood risk, water quality trends, land use changes and infrastructure vulnerabilities. Yet many states continue to face gaps in modeling, data collection and risk mapping, limiting their ability to assess vulnerabilities or prioritize cost-effective mitigation strategies. These gaps can result in misaligned investments, policy blind spots or missed opportunities to build long-term resilience.

Data integrity is an emerging threat impacting decision-makers and the general public. At face value, the abundance of maps and data obtained through a simple web search may seem helpful, but understanding the origins of the data, especially if it's being used as the basis for decision-making, are essential. For example, in late 2025, a nationally recognized real-estate listing site was forced to remove climate risk scores from property listings after concerns about data reliability and legal challenges.

In addition to data integrity, lawmakers must also consider data transparency—how data is shared and with whom. As a way to protect the public, several states, including Florida through [HB 1015 \(2025\)](#), require disclosure of floods and other hazards that may impact a property's safety and value.



KC MCGINNIS/FOR THE WASHINGTON POST VIA GETTY IMAGES

Flood waters surround area businesses near the main breach in the Mississippi River in Davenport, Iowa in May, 2018.

Lastly, data is often fragmented across jurisdictions or agencies and not always accessible to the state legislators and community leaders who shape policy responses. Improved coordination between state natural resource departments, environmental agencies, universities, and local governments can help close these information gaps and enable more strategic investments.

Montana offers one example of a legislative initiative focused on data-driven decision-making. The [Modernization and Risk Analysis \(MARA\) Committee](#), supported by nonpartisan legislative staff, launched a data project to compile and analyze economic, demographic, and fiscal data from across the state. By integrating datasets from multiple agencies, the MARA project provides a more comprehensive view of long-term trends and the interconnectedness of government operations. The result is a suite of studies, reports, and interactive tools that help policymakers understand emerging risks and plan more effectively for the future.

The Louisiana Coastal Master Plan also demonstrates improved state coordination and data sharing. Following the devastating hurricanes in 2005, the Louisiana Legislature created the [Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority \(CPRA\)](#) to serve as a single state authority aligning and coordinating coastal restoration and protection priorities. The CPRA's Coastal Master Plan leverages the best available data and engineering to guide the state's coastal actions and risk reduction goals.

As Mississippi River Basin states consider new resilience strategies, coordinated efforts to improve data infrastructure and share methodologies, such as forecasting tools, mapping standards, or plan-

ning templates, can bring shared benefits from the lessons learned across the region. Regional collaboration on data can amplify state investments and lead to stronger outcomes for communities across the basin.

STATE POLICY EXAMPLES:

■ **Iowa:** [IA Code § 466C.1 \(HB 822, 2009\)](#) established the Iowa Flood Center to develop hydrologic models for flood-frequency estimation and establish community-based programs to improve flood monitoring.

■ **Texas:** [Tex. Water Code § 16.061 \(SB8, 2019\)](#) directed the adoption of a comprehensive state flood plan, incorporating regional flood plans and making recommendations to guide state, regional and local flood control policy. With mapping completed and 14 regional flood planning groups assessing risks and identifying flood mitigation projects, the first-ever [Texas State Flood Plan](#) was released in 2024.

■ **North Carolina:** [NC Session Law 2021-180 \(SB 105\)](#) directed the development of a statewide [Flood Resiliency Blueprint](#) for major watersheds impacted by flooding, providing guidance for projects and funding strategies to mitigate flooding.

Funding and Financing

Securing capital for long-term investments in infrastructure and risk mitigation can be challenging as immediate needs can easily dominate budget planning processes and these much-needed investments. To counter this, states data should include yield returns beyond finances, including lives saved, conserved habitats and preserved recreation.

States frequently encounter significant obstacles due to the fragmented nature of federal funding sources. Whether undertaking infrastructure initiatives or responding to severe weather events, funding is often distributed among multiple federal agencies, each with distinct application procedures and varied outcomes. As previously noted, appointing a dedicated individual or establishing an office to facilitate interagency coordination can streamline funding processes and reduce project misalignment. Additionally, states that develop comprehensive project plans addressing diverse objectives may enhance their ability to secure and effectively utilize available funds.

States are implementing innovative funding strategies to support water infrastructure, either by matching federal programs or developing independent state-funded initiatives. Legislators aim to enhance infrastructure reliability and ensure communities are prepared for future disasters. The following are examples of approaches currently being implemented across the Mississippi River Basin:

STATE POLICY EXAMPLES:

■ **Texas:** [Water Code §15 \(SB 7, 2019\)](#) created the [Flood Infrastructure Fund](#), which provides financial assistance for flood control, flood mitigation and drainage projects. The fund was initiated with \$793 million from the state's Economic Stabilization Fund, aka "the rainy day fund".

■ **Wisconsin:** [Wis. Stat. § 323.63 \(SB 222, 2024\)](#) established the [Pre-Disaster Flood Resilience Grant](#) to provide funds to identify flood vulnerabilities, improve flood resiliency and restore hydrology to reduce flood risk and damages in flood-prone communities.

Additionally, as states in the Mississippi River basin continue establishing and investing in programs to protect water quality, many look to leverage federal funding streams as a way to develop and sustain projects focusing on pollution control, drinking water and a variety of other water infrastructure programs. Longstanding federal programs such as the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund are essential to state infrastructure investments and support states' ability to plan and oversee projects at the local level. The creation of the federal Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act in 2014, has helped to accelerate state investments in larger infrastructure projects.



GETTY IMAGES

Two girls play on the bank of the Mississippi River below the Coon Rapids dam in Minnesota.

- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF):** The federal-state partnership fund supports a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects, including municipal wastewater facilities, nonpoint source pollution control, decentralized wastewater treatment systems, stormwater runoff mitigation, green infrastructure, estuary protection and water reuse.
- **Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF):** Capitalization grants, requiring a 20 percent match, are awarded to states based upon the results of the most recent Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment.
- **Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA):** The WIFIA program offers long-term loans that can be combined with State Revolving Fund assistance, municipal bonds and federal and state grants to help communities deliver more critical water infrastructure projects including wastewater treatment and stormwater projects.

Conclusion

While the challenges in the Mississippi River Basin are plentiful, the Mississippi River Basin Legislative Cohort found common ground on many issues, learned about best practices in the region and recognized the power of their collective voice to advocate for common-sense solutions. As we look ahead, state legislatures are increasingly adopting policy mechanisms that support both traditional infrastructure and nature-based approaches to water management. Dedicated grant programs, bonding authority and revolving loan funds are being used to advance projects such as wetland restoration, floodplain reconnection and riparian buffer enhancement. These mechanisms help align ecological goals such as habitat protection and water quality improvements with long-term economic and risk reduction benefits. By designing flexible funding streams and statutory frameworks, legislatures can make natural infrastructure a core component of their state's water management strategy.

At the same time, states are revisiting governance structures to better coordinate implementation across agencies, regions and sectors. Tools such as watershed councils, interagency planning committees and multi-jurisdictional agreements are helping to integrate ecological priorities into water management decision-making. Legislatures are also creating new pathways for public-private partnerships and using federal investment for projects that emphasize environmental resilience. With the right structures in place, states can deliver policies that are more adaptive, more inclusive and more attuned to the role of nature in sustaining river systems.

Extreme weather will continue to increase the demands on states and make the challenges of coordination, data management and funding more difficult. Without advanced planning and investments in risk mitigation, states may find themselves in a pattern of reactive funding and relief programs, but as highlighted throughout this report, states are making strides to proactively address the issues they face and doing so with the health and longevity of the Basin in mind.

Protecting and effectively managing the Mississippi River Basin requires bold, coordinated action from state governments and stakeholders. In committing to innovative policies, prioritizing watershed health and fostering cross-sector partnerships, states can help ensure the enduring vitality of this invaluable resource.

By emphasizing regional priorities and long-term outcomes, lawmakers can support efforts that benefit local communities, economies and ecosystems. Ongoing progress, collaboration and investment at the state level will play a significant role in sustaining the value of the river for future generations.

Acknowledgements

NCSL would like to thank the Environmental Defense Fund for its support of the Mississippi River Basin Legislative Cohort. The cohort illuminated the differing challenges and policy approaches in the Mississippi River Basin while showcasing the shared goals of a healthy and vibrant river. This report is intended to offer state policymakers a roadmap for addressing the watershed issues in the Basin and enhancing the resilience of their communities.

Several organizations and individuals shared information with the cohort and NCSL is appreciative of their time and expertise. These organizations and individuals include America's Watershed Initiative, American Flood Coalition, Charles Sutcliffe (National Wildlife Federation, former Chief Resilience Officer, State of Louisiana), City of Cedar Rapids, City of Minneapolis, CSRS Inc., Iowa Flood Center, Institute for Resilient Infrastructure Systems, University of Georgia, Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee, National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies, St. Anthony Falls Laboratory, Upper Mississippi River Basin Association, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers - Mississippi River Commission and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Appendix

The following chart outlines a few of the organizations who worked with the cohort and which work on issues affecting the Mississippi River Basin. This is not a comprehensive list of all the organizations working in the Basin.

Organization	Mission
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association	UMRBA serves as a forum for five states—Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin— to discuss river-related concerns, encourages joint planning and management of natural resources, helps state and federal agencies share information, and represents the collective interests of the basin states to Congress and federal agencies.
America's Watershed Initiative	AWI has partnered with The Nature Conservancy to bring together government, community, academic, industry and NGO leaders to develop shared priorities across the entire Mississippi River watershed.
National Audubon Society	The National Audubon Society partners with stakeholders, advocates and decision-makers on efforts to improve and preserve critical habitat and community resilience in the Mississippi River Basin.
The American Flood Coalition	This bipartisan coalition works at all levels of government to scale innovative solutions to protect communities from higher seas, stronger storms and more frequent flooding.
The Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative	The initiative is a coalition of mayors from cities and towns along the Mississippi River. Its mission is to protect and promote the river as a vital economic, environmental and cultural resource. The initiative works on issues such as flood resilience, water quality, sustainable development and infrastructure investment.
The Nature Conservancy	TNC focuses on strategies that deliver multiple benefits: increasing connectivity, supporting wildlife habitats and improving water quality. Through collaboration, its Mississippi River Basin program leads broad initiatives to reconnect floodplains. Using science-based tools, TNC identifies effective strategies for flood mitigation, water quality and habitat restoration.
The National Association of Flood and Stormwater Agencies	The association supports flood and stormwater agencies by advocating for effective public policy, securing essential funding and promoting innovations that help members better serve their communities.
The National Association of Floodplain Managers	This scientific and educational nonprofit organization educates policymakers on sound floodplain management policies and practices, improves the knowledge of floodplain managers, conducts applied research and develops tools that address all aspects of flooding and floodplain management.

Each Component of the Framework Outlines Options Where Legislators May Act

The American Flood Coalition's State Flood Resilience Framework outlines five areas where state legislators can take action.

LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Codify lead flood office(r) with budget, permanent staff, and authority to break down agency silos (note: either create a new office or designate an existing office). Fund watershed-based staff to plan across jurisdictions and reduce technical burden on local communities. Designate watershed-based regional entities to build flood resilience.
DATA MANAGEMENT AND RISK ASSESSMENT	<p>Establish or designate a statewide data and modeling coordination hub to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete a statewide flood risk assessment (e.g., state-owned properties, dams and levees, critical infrastructure). Collect flood data/inputs, identify gaps in the data and close them. Act as home for statewide flood data and conduct modeling that identifies risk scenarios and options to reduce risk.
STRATEGIC PLANNING	<p>Require a statewide flood resilience strategy that includes risk reduction goals, a prioritized list of flood projects, and metrics to measure progress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a technical assistance program to support resilience planning at the watershed level. Incorporate flood risk reduction into local/regional transportation and comprehensive plans.
FUNDING AND FINANCING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a statewide investment scorecard to allocate funds towards the highest priority projects and responsibly steward taxpayer money. Establish consistent funding to invest in flood protection infrastructure and solutions. Establish a state funding source for local match requirements to ensure the maximum amount of federal dollars come to the state. Create a common application or state-administered flood resilience grant programs.
STATEWIDE STANDARDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopt the latest building codes, including all flood-related provisions. Ensure flood risk disclosure to protect prospective homebuyers and renters. Enable local governments to establish stormwater utilities or similar functions to fund flood protection infrastructure.

The [State Flood Resilience Framework](#) was developed by the American Flood Coalition, a national, bipartisan coalition working with local, state, and federal leaders to advance practical solutions that reduce flood risk and strengthen community resilience.

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Upper Mississippi River Quarterly Meetings

Attachment H

Additional Items

Page Number	Document Title
H-1	Future Meeting Schedule
H-2 to H-8	Frequently Used Acronyms (4-29-2022)

**QUARTERLY MEETINGS
FUTURE MEETING SCHEDULE**

MAY 2026	
<u>Minneapolis-St. Paul Metro</u>	
May 19	UMRBA Quarterly Meeting
May 20	UMRR Coordinating Committee Quarterly Meeting

AUGUST 2026	
<u>St. Louis, MO</u>	
August 4	UMRBA Quarterly Meeting
August 5	UMRR Coordinating Committee Quarterly Meeting

Acronyms Frequently Used on the Upper Mississippi River System

AAR	After Action Report
A&E	Architecture and Engineering
ACRCC	Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee
AFB	Alternative Formulation Briefing
AHAG	Aquatic Habitat Appraisal Guide
AHRI	American Heritage Rivers Initiative
AIS	Aquatic Invasive Species
ALC	American Lands Conservancy
ALDU	Aquatic Life Designated Use(s)
AM	Adaptive Management
ANS	Aquatic Nuisance Species
AP	Advisory Panel
APE	Additional Program Element
ARRA	American Recovery and Reinvestment Act
ASA(CW)	Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works
A-Team	Analysis Team
ATR	Agency Technical Review
AWI	America's Watershed Initiative
AWO	American Waterways Operators
AWQMN	Ambient Water Quality Monitoring Network
BA	Biological Assessment
BATIC	Build America Transportation Investment Center
BCOES	Bid-ability, Constructability, Operability, Environmental, Sustainability
BCR	Benefit-Cost Ratio
BMPs	Best Management Practices
BO	Biological Opinion
CAP	Continuing Authorities Program
CAWS	Chicago Area Waterways System
CCC	Commodity Credit Corporation
CCP	Comprehensive Conservation Plan
CEICA	Cost Effectiveness Incremental Cost Analysis
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CFS	Cubic Feet Per Second
CG	Construction General
CIA	Computerized Inventory and Analysis
CMMP	Channel Maintenance Management Plan
COE	Corps of Engineers
COPT	Captain of the Port
CPUE	Catch Per Unit Effort
CRA	Continuing Resolution Authority
CREP	Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program
CRP	Conservation Reserve Program

CSP	Conservation Security Program
CUA	Cooperative Use Agreement
CWA	Clean Water Act
CY	Cubic Yards
DALS	Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
DED	Department of Economic Development
DEM	Digital Elevation Model
DET	District Ecological Team
DEWS	Drought Early Warning System
DMMP	Dredged Material Management Plan
DNR	Department of Natural Resources
DO	Dissolved Oxygen
DOA	Department of Agriculture
DOC	Department of Conservation
DOER	Dredging Operations and Environmental Research
DOT	Department of Transportation
DPR	Definite Project Report
DQC	District Quality Control/Quality Assurance
DSS	Decision Support System
EA	Environmental Assessment
ECC	Economics Coordinating Committee
EEC	Essential Ecosystem Characteristic
EIS	Environmental Impact Statement
EMAP	Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program
EMAP-GRE	Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Program-Great Rivers Ecosystem
EMP	Environmental Management Program [Note: Former name of Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program.]
EMP-CC	Environmental Management Program Coordinating Committee
EO	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPM	Environmental Pool Management
EPR	External Peer Review
EQIP	Environmental Quality Incentives Program
ER	Engineering Regulation
ERDC	Engineering Research & Development Center
ESA	Endangered Species Act
EWMN	Early Warning Monitoring Network
EWP	Emergency Watershed Protection Program
FACA	Federal Advisory Committee Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
FDR	Flood Damage Reduction
FFS	Flow Frequency Study
FMG	Forest Management Geodatabase
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FRM	Flood Risk Management

FRST	Floodplain Restoration System Team
FSA	Farm Services Agency
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
FWCA	Fish & Wildlife Coordination Act
FWIC	Fish and Wildlife Interagency Committee
FWS	Fish and Wildlife Service
FWWG	Fish and Wildlife Work Group
FY	Fiscal Year
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GEIS	Generic Environmental Impact Statement
GI	General Investigations
GIS	Geographic Information System
GLC	Governors Liaison Committee
GLC	Great Lakes Commission
GLMRIS	Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study
GPS	Global Positioning System
GREAT	Great River Environmental Action Team
GRP	Geographic Response Plan
H&H	Hydrology and Hydraulics
HAB	Harmful Algal Bloom
HEC-EFM	Hydrologic Engineering Center Ecosystems Function Model
HEC-RAS	Hydrologic Engineering Center River Analysis System
HEL	Highly Erodible Land
HEP	Habitat Evaluation Procedure
HNA	Habitat Needs Assessment
HPSF	HREP Planning and Sequencing Framework
HQUSACE	Headquarters, USACE
H.R.	House of Representatives
HREP	Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project
HSI	Habitat Suitability Index
HU	Habitat Unit
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code
IBA	Important Bird Area
IBI	Index of Biological (Biotic) Integrity
IC	Incident Commander
ICS	Incident Command System
ICWP	Interstate Council on Water Policy
IDIQ	Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity
IEPR	Independent External Peer Review
IGE	Independent Government Estimate
IIA	Implementation Issues Assessment
IIFO	Illinois-Iowa Field Office (formerly RIFO - Rock Island Field Office)
ILP	Integrated License Process
IMTS	Inland Marine Transportation System
IPR	In-Progress Review
IRCC	Illinois River Coordinating Council

IRPT	Inland Rivers, Ports & Terminals
IRTC	Implementation Report to Congress
IRWG	Illinois River Work Group
ISA	Inland Sensitivity Atlas
IWR	Institute for Water Resources
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
IWS	Integrated Water Science
IWTF	Inland Waterways Trust Fund
IWUB	Inland Waterways Users Board
IWW	Illinois Waterway
L&D	Lock(s) and Dam
LC/LU	Land Cover/Land Use
LDB	Left Descending Bank
LERRD	Lands, Easements, Rights-of-Way, Relocation of Utilities or Other Existing Structures, and Disposal Areas
LiDAR	Light Detection and Ranging
LMR	Lower Mississippi River
LMRCC	Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee
LOI	Letter of Intent
LTRM	Long Term Resource Monitoring
M-35	Marine Highway 35
MAFC	Mid-America Freight Coalition
MARAD	U.S. Maritime Administration
MARC 2000	Midwest Area River Coalition 2000
MCAT	Mussel Community Assessment Tool
MICRA	Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association
MDM	Major subordinate command Decision Milestone
MIPR	Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request
MMR	Middle Mississippi River
MMRP	Middle Mississippi River Partnership
MNRG	Midwest Natural Resources Group
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MoRAST	Missouri River Association of States and Tribes
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRAPS	Missouri River Authorized Purposes Study
MRBI	Mississippi River Basin (Healthy Watersheds) Initiative
MRC	Mississippi River Commission
MRCC	Mississippi River Connections Collaborative
MRCTI	Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative
MRRC	Mississippi River Research Consortium
MR&T	Mississippi River and Tributaries (project)
MSP	Minimum Sustainable Program
MVD	Mississippi Valley Division
MVP	St. Paul District
MVR	Rock Island District
MVS	St. Louis District

NAS	National Academies of Science
NAWQA	National Water Quality Assessment
NCP	National Contingency Plan
NIDIS	National Integrated Drought Information System (NOAA)
NEBA	Net Environmental Benefit Analysis
NECC	Navigation Environmental Coordination Committee
NED	National Economic Development
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NESP	Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program
NETS	Navigation Economic Technologies Program
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGRREC	National Great Rivers Research and Education Center
NGWOS	Next Generation Water Observing System
NICC	Navigation Interests Coordinating Committee
NPDES	National Pollution Discharge Elimination System
NPS	Non-Point Source
NPS	National Park Service
NRC	National Research Council
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NRDAR	Natural Resources Damage Assessment and Restoration
NRT	National Response Team
NSIP	National Streamflow Information Program
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
NWR	National Wildlife Refuge
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OHWM	Ordinary High Water Mark
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OMRR&R	Operation, Maintenance, Repair, Rehabilitation, and Replacement
OPA	Oil Pollution Act of 1990
ORSANCO	Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission
OSC	On-Scene Coordinator
OSE	Other Social Effects
OSIT	On Site Inspection Team
P3	Public-Private Partnerships
PA	Programmatic Agreement
PAS	Planning Assistance to States
P&G	Principles and Guidelines
P&R	Principles and Requirements
P&S	Plans and Specifications
P&S	Principles and Standards
PCA	Pollution Control Agency
PCA	Project Cooperation Agreement
PCX	Planning Center of Expertise
PDT	Project Delivery Team
PED	Preconstruction Engineering and Design
PgMP	Program Management Plan

PILT	Payments In Lieu of Taxes
PIR	Project Implementation Report
PL	Public Law
PMP	Project Management Plan
PORT	Public Outreach Team
PPA	Project Partnership Agreement
PPT	Program Planning Team
QA/QC	Quality Assurance/Quality Control
RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
RCP	Regional Contingency Plan
RCPP	Regional Conservation Partnership Program
RDB	Right Descending Bank
RED	Regional Economic Development
RIFO	Rock Island Field Office (now IIFO - Illinois-Iowa Field Office)
RM	River Mile
RP	Responsible Party
RPEDN	Regional Planning and Environment Division North
RPT	Reach Planning Team
RRAT	River Resources Action Team
RRCT	River Resources Coordinating Team
RRF	River Resources Forum
RRT	Regional Response Team
RST	Regional Support Team
RTC	Report to Congress
S.	Senate
SAV	Submersed Aquatic Vegetation
SDWA	Safe Drinking Water Act
SEMA	State Emergency Management Agency
SET	System Ecological Team
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Risk Informed, Timely
SONS	Spill of National Significance
SOW	Scope of Work
SRF	State Revolving Fund
SWCD	Soil and Water Conservation District
T&E	Threatened and Endangered
TEUs	twenty-foot equivalent units
TIGER	Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery
TLP	Traditional License Process
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TSP	Tentatively selected plan
TSS	Total Suspended Solids
TVA	Tennessee Valley Authority
TWG	Technical Work Group
UMESC	Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center

UMIMRA	Upper Mississippi, Illinois, and Missouri Rivers Association
UMR	Upper Mississippi River
UMRBA	Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
UMRBC	Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission
UMRCC	Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee
UMRCP	Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan
UMR-IWW	Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway
UMRNWFR	Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge
UMRR	Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program [Note: Formerly known as Environmental Management Program.]
UMRR CC	Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program Coordinating Committee
UMRS	Upper Mississippi River System
UMWA	Upper Mississippi Waterway Association
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
VTC	Video Teleconference
WCI	Waterways Council, Inc.
WES	Waterways Experiment Station (replaced by ERDC)
WHAG	Wildlife Habitat Appraisal Guide
WHIP	Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
WIIN	Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act
WLM	Water Level Management
WLMTF	Water Level Management Task Force
WQ	Water Quality
WQEC	Water Quality Executive Committee
WQTF	Water Quality Task Force
WQS	Water Quality Standard
WRDA	Water Resources Development Act
WRP	Wetlands Reserve Program
WRRDA	Water Resources Reform and Development Act