

*A vision for*

# America's Watershed Report Card



*America's*  
**WATERSHED** Initiative >>

# America's Watershed Initiative

America's Watershed Initiative is working to bring a collaborative, basin-wide perspective to the Mississippi River Watershed's greatest management challenges while also supporting the many initiatives and work at multiple scales. This effort is designed to support federal and state authorities, communities, and businesses by working to make their efforts more integrated and effective, and seeks to leverage creativity that emanates from diversity rather than being hampered by opposing viewpoints.

We seek to build and implement a vision based on collaboration and mutually beneficial outcomes in contrast to single-purpose advocacy. We will help to find solutions to issues that span multiple regions—issues such as transportation, water quality, energy, and more comprehensive flood management—while respecting vital work at smaller scales.

We will develop a vibrant network that can:

- Maintain supply of abundant, clean water.
- Provide reliable flood control and risk reduction.
- Support local, state, and national economies.
- Support and enhance healthy and productive ecosystems.
- Provide world-class recreational opportunities.
- Serve as the nation's most valuable river transportation corridor.

## The America's Watershed Initiative Report Card

This example report card is intended to present one vision of a possible framework and communications tool. We enthusiastically seek feedback on how to improve the framework and values associated with the larger goals of America's Watershed Initiative. The general process for establishing the report card may follow the process outlined below.

### 1 Create a conceptual framework



Create a framework defining goals and major aspects of each goal that should be evaluated over time.

### 2 Choose indicators



Select indicators that convey meaningful information and can be reliably measured.

### 3 Define thresholds



Define status categories, reporting regions, and method of measuring threshold attainment.

### 4 Calculate scores

State	Station	Region	Date	WQI Value
DR	CCCC000		4/20/09	9.00
DR	CCCC000		4/20/09	9.50
DR	CCCC000		4/20/09	9.70
DR	CCCC000		5/20/09	9.90
DR	CCCC000		5/20/09	9.00
DR	CCCC000		5/20/09	9.00
DR	CCCC000		5/20/09	9.00
DR	CCCC000		5/20/09	9.00

Calculate indicator scores and combine into index grades.

### 5 Communicate results

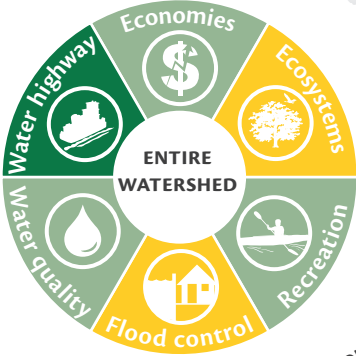
Communicate results using visual elements, such as photos, maps, and conceptual diagrams.



# Report card prototype



## Potential Results



## Status



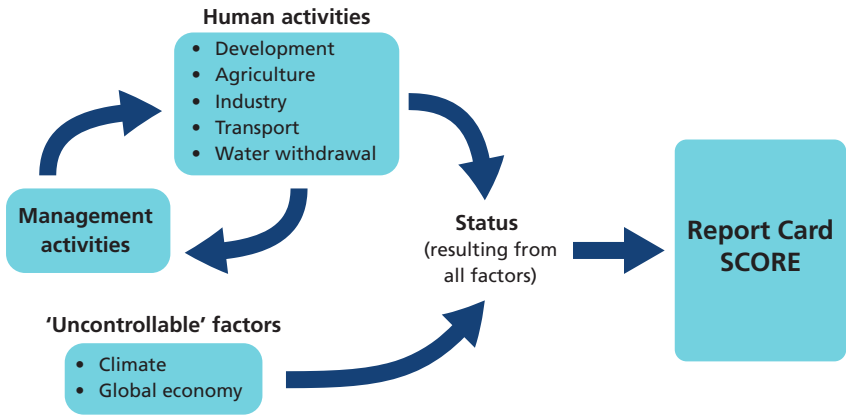
- Maintain supply of abundant, clean water
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	Missouri	Arkansas-White	Red	Upper Mississippi	Lower Mississippi	Ohio	Entire watershed
Maintain supply of abundant, clean water	→ C	→ B	→ B	→ C	→ C	→ B	→ B
Provide reliable flood control and risk reduction	→ C	→ C	→ B	→ C	→ C	→ B	→ C
Support local, state, and national economies	→ A	→ B	→ B	→ A	→ C	→ B	→ B
Support and enhance healthy and productive ecosystems	→ B	→ C	→ C	→ B	→ C	→ C	→ C
Provide world-class recreational opportunities	→ C	→ C	→ B	→ B	→ A	→ B	→ B
Serve as the nation's most valuable river transportation corridor	→ B	→ B	→ B	→ A	→ A	→ A	→ A

NOTE: The content of this table is meant to be illustrative, not an accurate or final product.

# A tool to communicate current status

The report card score is intended to communicate current status, which is a result of effects from human activities as well as from factors that are mostly uncontrollable. Management activities may alter effects that human activities have on status, but factors such as variable weather and global economic changes are difficult to influence.



An alternate way to communicate status and trends is from the perspective of economic, social, and environmental sectors. We expect that each goal will have indicators and metrics that reflect on more than one sector. For instance, indicators for the goal "Maintain supply of abundant clean water" may include water security and water quality, which have implications for each of the society, economic, and environment sectors.

	Society	Economy	Environment	Overall
Maintain supply of abundant, clean water	→ C	→ B	→ C	→ B
Provide reliable flood control and risk reduction	→ C	→ B	→ C	→ C
Support local, state, and national economies	→ A	→ B	→ C	→ B
Support and enhance healthy and productive ecosystems	→ B	→ B	→ C	→ C
Provide world-class recreational opportunities	→ C	→ B	→ A	→ B
Serve as the nation's most valuable river transportation corridor	→ B	→ B	→ A	→ A

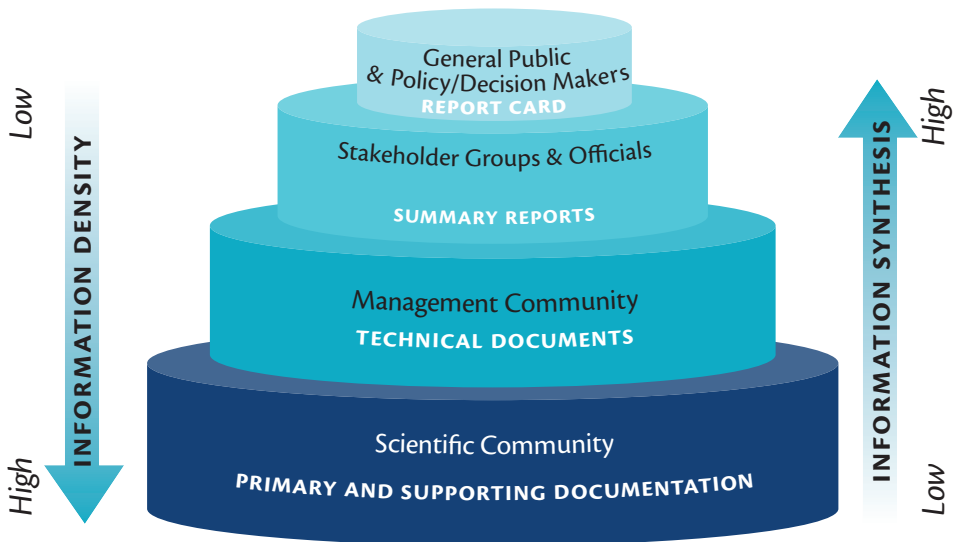
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# Information for multiple uses

Report cards allow us to distill key messages from large amounts of information in a tiered approach. These key messages are important for communicating priority management needs to decision and policy makers.

Our vision for the report card framework is based on tracking status and progress towards achieving goals identified in America's Watershed Initiative. The framework incorporates information from social, economic, and environmental sectors, and is intended to be transparent and clear. The primary purpose of the report card is to identify status and trends that need to be addressed, and to celebrate successes.

This framework enables the communication of results to broad audiences and provides a scientific foundation for the report card results. Users should be able to clearly understand the content and proposed uses of the report card, and be able to access information that was used to derive the results. This access provides the transparency necessary for understanding and acceptance.



*The reporting framework is set up like tiers in a cake. The foundation is based on the supporting material for the report card, with the report card itself at the top.*

For more background information about America's Watershed Report Card and updates on our workshops to develop the report card in each of the sub basins, please visit [AmericasWatershed.org](http://AmericasWatershed.org) and select the report card tab.



# Moving the report card forward

Completing a report card for the entire Mississippi River basin will rely on the participation of many groups, individuals, and agencies. Following the September 2012 Summit in St. Louis, America's Watershed Initiative formed a work group which meets regularly to lead the report card process.

The group is coordinating workshops in each sub-basin of the watershed with experts in environmental, social, and economic evaluation to help gather input on issues, indicators, and measures relevant to sub-basins. Following the completion of these workshops, we will integrate the sub-basin measures into the overall Mississippi River Basin Report Card.

We plan to present a draft report card for the entire Mississippi watershed at the America's Watershed Initiative Summit in 2014 and provide opportunity for summit participants to provide feedback.



*Workshop participants provide knowledge of the system as well as feedback on the generation of the report card.*

## America's Watershed Initiative Steering Committee

Dru Buntin (State of Minnesota), Stephen Gambrell (Mississippi River Commission—U.S. Army Corps of Engineers), Teri Goodmann (City of Dubuque, Iowa), Steve Mathies (Lower Mississippi River Basin), Daniel Mecklenborg (Ingram Barge Company), Rob Rash (Mississippi Valley Flood Control Association), Michael Reuter (The Nature Conservancy—Great Rivers Partnership), Rainy Shorey (Caterpillar Inc.), Charles Somerville, (Ohio River Basin Alliance), Roger Wolf (Iowa Soybean Association).

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For more information, visit [AmericasWatershed.org](http://AmericasWatershed.org) or call (608) 445-8543.

## Report Card Work Group

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## Photo credits

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