



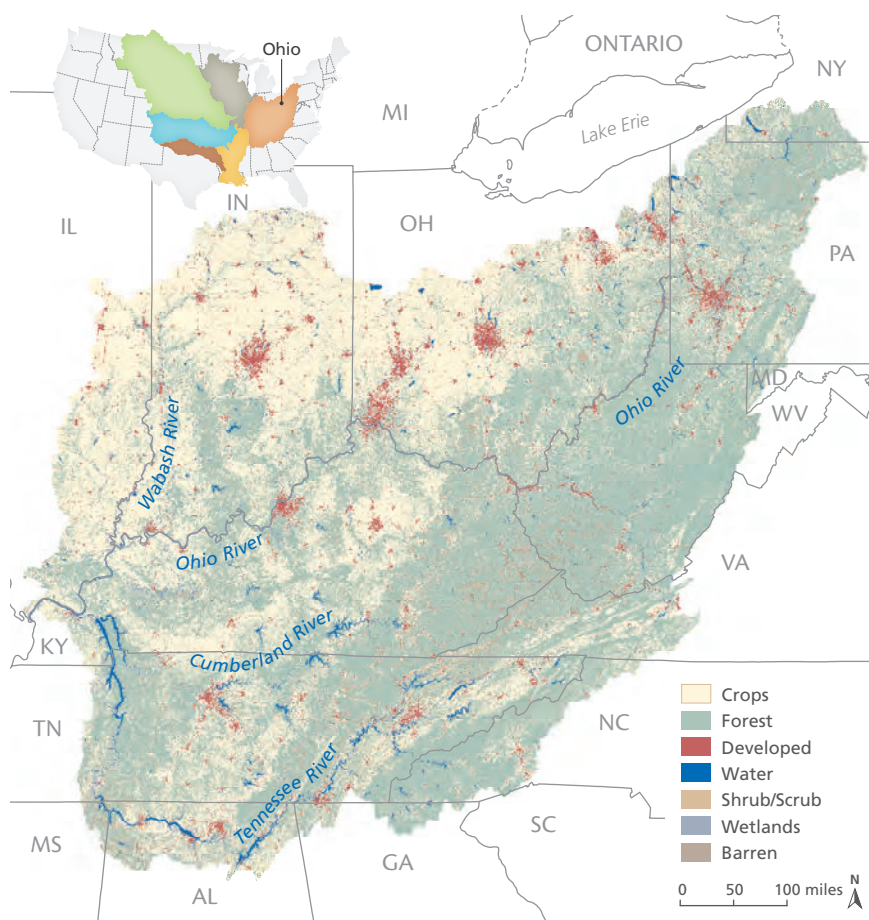
Report card workshop

Ohio River Basin

America's Watershed Initiative is a collaboration of organizations, businesses, and agencies which will bring a basin-wide perspective to the Mississippi River Basin's greatest challenges. Developing a comprehensive watershed report card is an important component of the Initiative. It will summarize and communicate the status and trends in achieving objectives for six broad management goals. The report card results will encourage people and organizations to engage in issues affecting the watershed.



The America's Watershed Initiative Report Card project continued with a regional workshop for the Ohio River Basin, held near Cincinnati, Ohio on December 12–13, 2013. At the workshop, stakeholders and experts from social, economic, and environmental sectors identified easily understood and transparent ways to measure status and trends for the Ohio River Basin in relation to six broad goals. Similar workshops will be convened in each of the remaining basins and results will be integrated into a report card for the entire Mississippi River Basin.



Participants at the regional workshop discuss Ohio River Basin health related to the six goals. Image courtesy of C. Wicks.

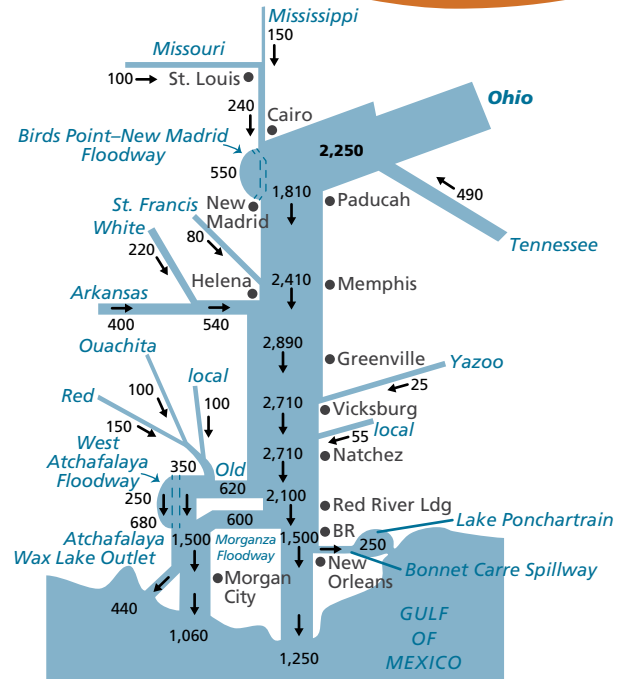


The map (top) shows the Ohio River Basin land use types. It is dominated by developed, forested and cropland areas. A barge full of coal piles slowly passes Cincinnati, Ohio on its way upriver. Image courtesy of B. Walsh.

Beautiful, productive, abundant water

The Ohio River Basin is the 200,000 square-mile eastern drainage of the Mississippi River watershed, covering an area from southwestern New York to northern Alabama, including parts of 14 states. The basin is dominated by forests, row crop agriculture, pastureland for livestock, and urban development. Due to its vast resources of coal and water, it is home to 29 million people and produces roughly 20% of the electricity in the United States. At the heart of the basin lies the Ohio River, a 981-mile resource that is one of the major industrialized rivers of the world. With the help of navigation dams, the Ohio hosts the largest inland port in the nation and moves more than 230 million tons of cargo per year. The river provides opportunities for industrial development, power production, commercial navigation, and widespread recreation. The river also serves as the source of drinking water for more than 5 million residents.

Industrialization and urbanization came at the expense of the river itself, as with most of the great rivers throughout the nation and world. Today, however, due to a conscious effort by state and federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, private businesses, and municipalities, the Ohio River combines economic and development opportunities with recreational and ecosystem goals.



Flow capacity for the Mississippi River in thousands of cubic feet per second, based on the 1956 project design flood. Graphic courtesy US Army Corps of Engineers.

Ohio Basin features

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------|--|-------------------|
| | Locks and dams | | Forested areas |
| | Shipping/navigation | | Recreation |
| | Power plants | | Water supply |
| | Reservoir tourism | | Biodiversity |
| | Riverboat | | Animal feed lots |
| | Corn belt | | Cattle grazing |
| | Soy farming | | Hydropower plants |

Ohio Basin issues and threats

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Aging infrastructure | | Surface coal mining |
| | Combined sewer overflows | | Mountaintop mining |
| | Habitat loss | | Hydraulic fracturing |
| | Economic disparity | | Transportation corridors |
| | Stormwater | | Harmful algal blooms |
| | Flooding | | Nutrients |



Underlying geology

- Karst
- Coal
- Utica Marcellus shale formation

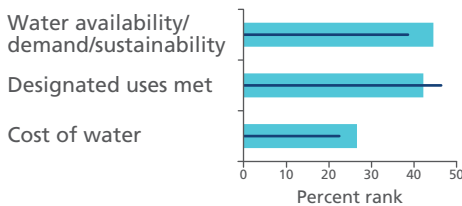
A conceptual diagram illustrates the main threats and key features of the Ohio River Basin.

Potential indicators for the Ohio River Basin

America's Watershed Report Card is designed to report on the status of achieving six broad goals developed at the America's Watershed Summit in September 2012. The goals were developed to reflect the things that people value in the watershed. Potential indicators for each goal were determined at the Ohio River Basin workshop. The final list of indicators will be determined by several factors, including data availability and how well they represent the goals.

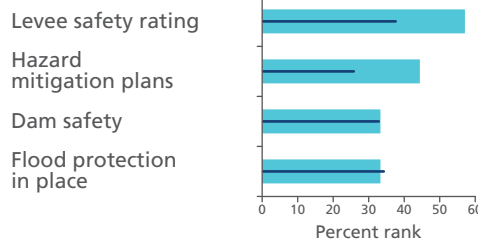


Water supply



Flood control and risk reduction

Flood preparedness

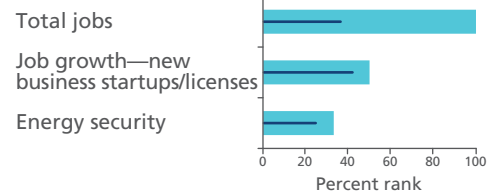


Flood risk

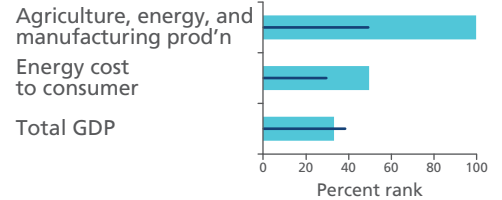


Economy

Employment

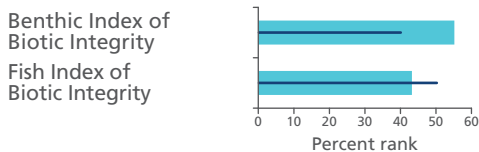


Monetary value

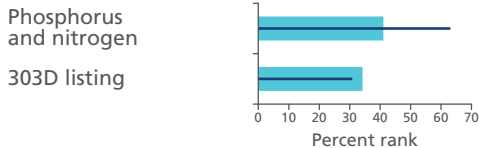


Ecosystems

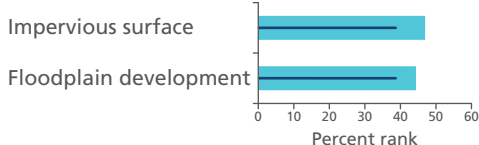
Biota



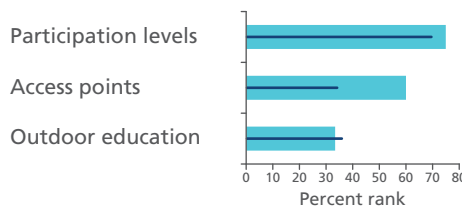
Water quality



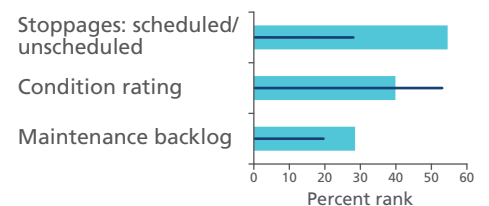
Habitat



Recreation



Transportation

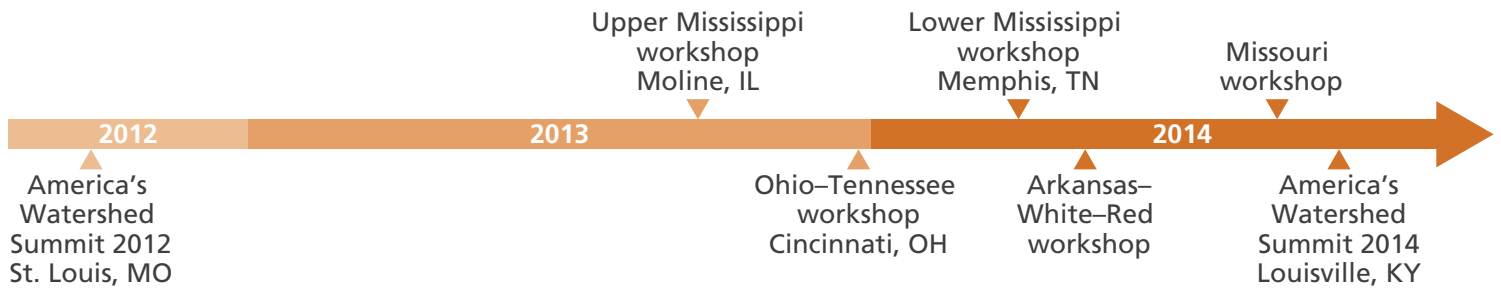


Survey results from the Ohio River Basin workshop are summarized from a) topical experts and b) the non-experts participating in the workshop. The number of experts and non-experts varied between goals, and the combined number of experts and non-experts included all workshop participants. The percent rank was calculated from the rank ordering of each potential indicator following expert group breakouts and communication to the overall workshop.

This list of potential indicators is not intended to be comprehensive, but provide examples from what was generated at the workshop.

The report card process and timeline

Generating a report card requires participation from managers, scientists, researchers, subject experts, and other stakeholders knowledgeable about resources and available data. The process requires broad representation across sectors and geographic areas throughout each basin. These experts provide input on goals, values, desired conditions, and indicators of watershed health in each of the basins. The workshop process brings different groups together to create a product and promotes broad perspectives, dialogue, and collaboration among different sectors and participants. Information and feedback from other sources unable to attend the workshops will be sought to strengthen the report card. The Mississippi River watershed includes parts of 31 states and two Canadian provinces. The watershed includes six basins, which will each have their own indicators, scores, and report card results. Stakeholders from all sectors will participate in workshops in each basin. A report card for the whole watershed will be developed using the information from all of the basins.



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