



Report card workshop

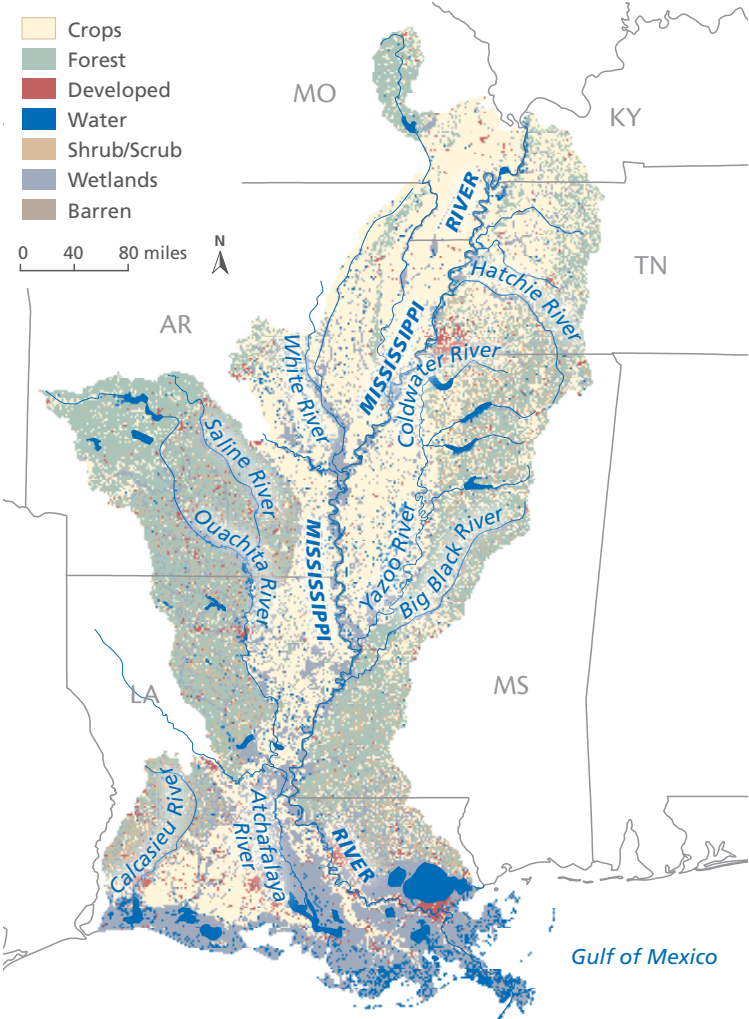
Lower Mississippi River Basin

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.

Uniting people, land and water across 31 states

America's
WATERSHED Initiative >>

The America's Watershed Initiative Report Card project continued with a regional workshop for the Lower Mississippi River Basin, held in Memphis, Tennessee, March 25–26, 2014. At the workshop, stakeholders and experts from social, economic, and environmental sectors worked to identify easily understood ways to measure status and trends for the Lower Mississippi River Basin in relation to six broad goals. Similar workshops have or will be held in each of the river basins and the results will be integrated into a report card for the entire Mississippi River Basin.



Lower Mississippi River Basin land use is dominated by developed, forested, and cropland areas, and has the largest proportion of wetlands of the entire Mississippi River Basin.



Participants at the regional workshop discuss Lower Mississippi River Basin health related to the six goals. Image courtesy of A. Freyermuth.



Catfish are a primary species targeted for recreational fishing in the Lower Mississippi River basin. Image courtesy of Mike Wintroath.



A flock of ducks lands in a rice field. Image courtesy of Mike Checkett, Ducks Unlimited.

Diverse, productive, powerful river

The Lower Mississippi River Basin supports a diversity of uses, dependent upon both natural and human engineered systems. For example, the river is used extensively for transportation, which is made possible by a natural supply of abundant water from upstream sources, as well as through an engineered system of channel maintenance. Similarly, there are abundant natural areas which provide recreational opportunities like paddling, birding, fishing, and hunting. Innovative channel structure design such as notched dikes provide recreational opportunities off the navigation channel, as well as increase diversity of habitats available to river-dependent species. These diverse uses and systems are supported through the Mississippi Rivers and Tributaries Project (MR&T), authorized through the Flood Control Act

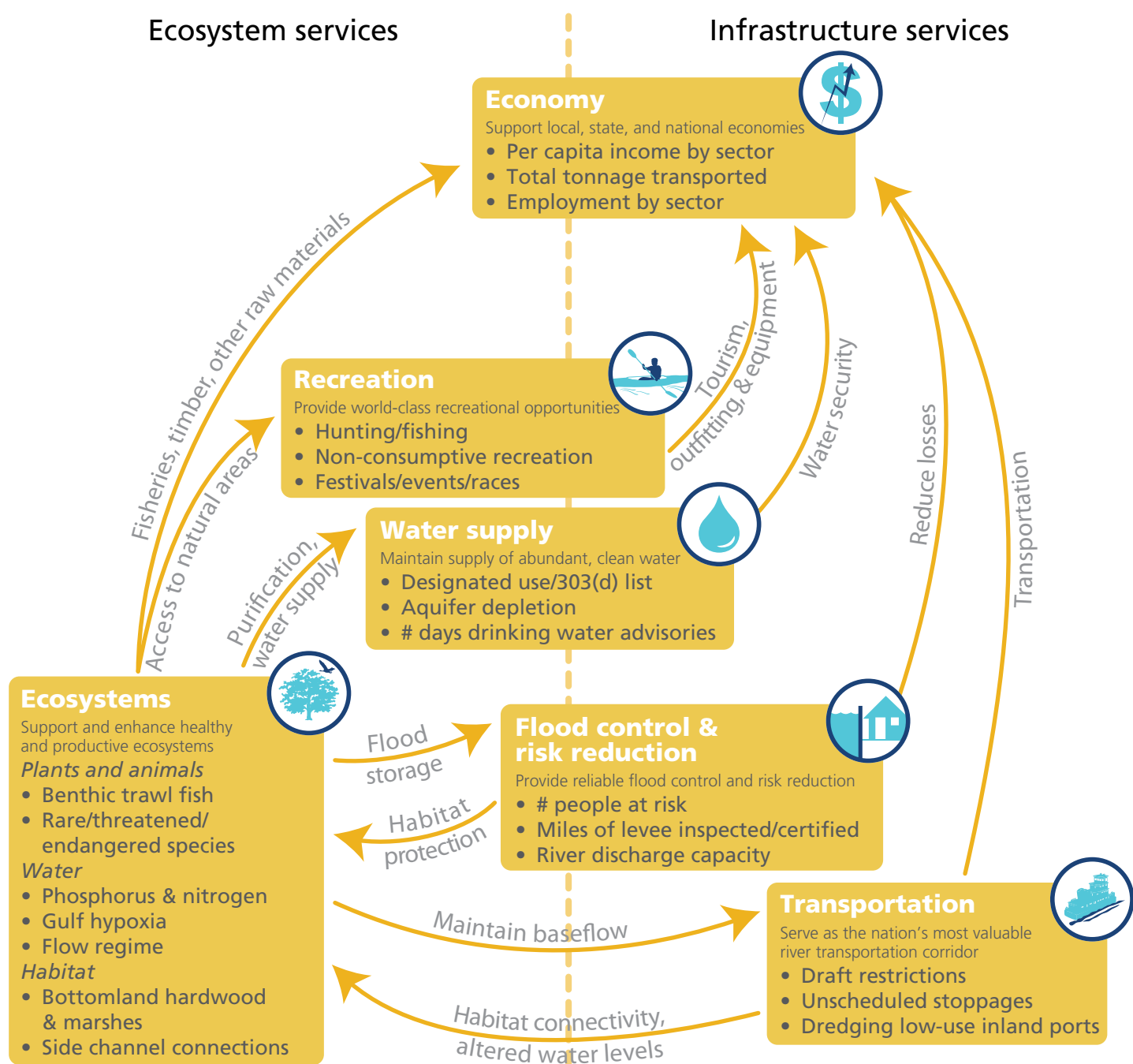
of 1928. The features of the MR&T Project work together to provide a safe and dependable commercial navigation channel on the Mississippi River, while protecting adjacent towns, farms, industry, manufacturers, energy providers, public and private investments, ports and transportation systems from 'uncontrolled' flooding. This increases reliability and productivity and protects the nation's high value investments. Google "MR&T project" to learn more.



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

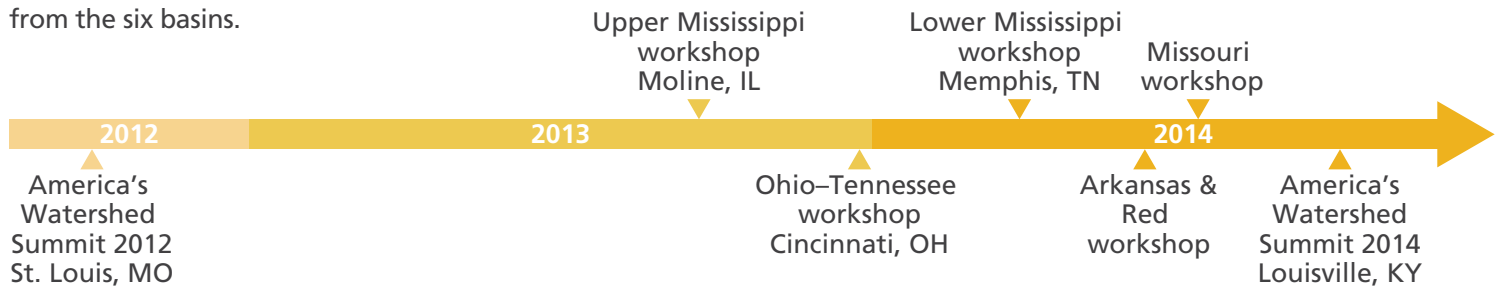
Potential indicators for the Lower Mississippi River Basin

America's Watershed Report Card is designed to report on the status of achieving six broad goals developed at the 2012 America's Watershed Summit. These goals reflect things people value in the watershed, are supported by both natural and human systems, and are interconnected. People living and working in the 31 states that make up the Mississippi River watershed are connected in many different ways. Regional workshops conducted by the America's Watershed Initiative are exploring connections between six broad goals that people share for the river and its watershed. This figure represents some of the connections revealed at the workshops. These will be used to develop a basin-wide report card for the watershed.



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 provided by individuals unable to attend the workshops will be sought to strengthen the report card. The Mississippi River watershed includes 31 states and two Canadian provinces. The watershed includes six major sub-basins, and 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 gathered from the six basins.



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