

Report card workshop

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.



The America's Watershed Initiative concluded the series of workshops in the five basins with a meeting in Arlington, Virginia to discuss the integration of basin results into the overall watershed results. The meeting also addressed issues that are applicable at the scale of the entire watershed, but that were not evident from the basin workshops. This meeting built on the results of the workshops held in each of the basins in the watershed over the previous year. During these workshops, stakeholders chose indicators to measure the status of achieving each of the six America's Watershed Initiative goals.



Nutrient laden waters from the Mississippi River flow into the Gulf of Mexico, contributing to the summer hypoxic zone.



More frequent, intense rainfall will put added stress on flood control, transportation systems, water supplies, and may alter seasonal flows necessary to support healthy ecosystems.



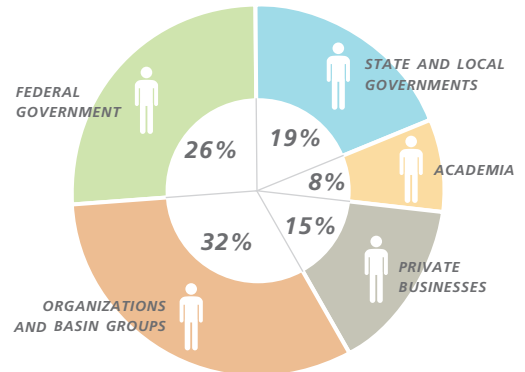
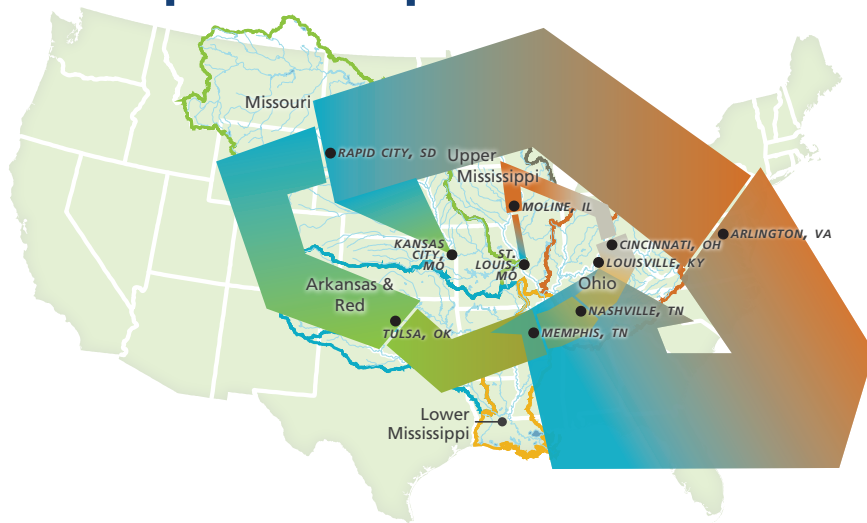
The Mississippi River watershed provides critical habitat for migratory waterfowl.



Workshops were held in each of the five basins, during which participants provided input on goals, values, desired conditions, and indicators of watershed health.

Watershed-level issues relate to the immense area covered and to the river's role linking areas across the continent and from the sea to the continental interior. Concerns include the contribution of agricultural practices on the Gulf of Mexico hypoxic zone and the consequence of climate change on the reliability of transportation and flood control. The conservation of migratory waterfowl involves the entire watershed, which includes summer nesting habitat in the north and wintering habitat in the south. Participants cited the need for better coordination among regional programs directed at ecosystem restoration and economic development across the watershed.

The report card process and timeline



America's Watershed Initiative workshop participation as it increased at each of the five basin workshop locations (left), and workshop participation by affiliation (right).

Developing the AWI report card relies on diverse stakeholders with expertise related to six America's Watershed Initiative goals. This collaboration is intended to create a data-driven and transparent report card that is relevant to the issues and concerns most important to each region. The report card will account for the unique differences throughout the watershed by performing assessments in five basins, and integrating the results to create the overall report card results as well as seeking information at the watershed scale. Workshop participants provide expert knowledge on the features, values, issues, and threats that are most important and then used these issues to identify indicators that measure status of the six America's Watershed Initiative goals. Over 250 participants representing non-profit, private, academic, and local, state, and federal government organizations from 23 states in the Mississippi River watershed joined us in a series of 10 workshops and meetings. The workshop process has created dialog between a diverse set of organizations that each have a stake in creating a shared approach for management in the Mississippi River. The draft report card will be presented for feedback at the AWI Summit October 2014 and the final report card released spring 2015.

America's Watershed Initiative goals



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 recreation opportunities



Serve as the nation's most valuable river transportation corridor



For more information:
Harald (Jordy) Jordahl, Director
America's Watershed Initiative
hjordahl@tnc.org
americaswatershed.org



Angela Freymuth



Workshop participants:

Steve Mathies (AECOM)
Harald (Jordy) Jordahl (America's Watershed Initiative)
Teri Goodmann (City of Dubuque)
Alexis Segal (Council on Environmental Quality)
Stephen Dawson (Dawson & Associates, Inc.)
Kellis Moss, Dan Wrinn (Ducks Unlimited)
Nancy DeLong (DuPont Pioneer)
Pamela Hunter (Engineering News-Record)
Eileen McLellan (Environmental Defense Fund)
Dan Mecklenborg (Ingram Barge Company)
Larry Weber (Iowa Flood Center, University of Iowa)
J. Gordon Arbuckle (Iowa State University)
Sharon Buccino (Natural Resources Defense Council)
John Doyle (Jones Walker)
Charles Somerville (Marshall University)
Stephen Gambrell (Mississippi River Commission)
Amy Larson (National Waterways Conference)
Bramble Klipple, Sarah Murdock, Michael Reuter,



Robert Sinkler (The Nature Conservancy)
Alan Vicory Jr. (Stantec Consulting)
William Dennison, R. Heath Kelsey, William Nuttle, Brianne Walsh, Caroline Wicks (University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science)
David Hokanson (Upper Mississippi River Basin Association)
Ellen Gilinsky, Joe Piotrowski (US Environmental Protection Agency)
Moira McDonald (Walton Family Foundation)
Ben Grumbles (US Water Alliance)
Sandra Knight (WaterWorks)
Steven Solomon

Science communication and facilitation:

C. Wicks, B. Walsh, H. Kelsey, W. Nuttle, W. Dennison, J. Thomas, S. Spitzer (University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science)
A. Freymuth (US Army Corps of Engineers)