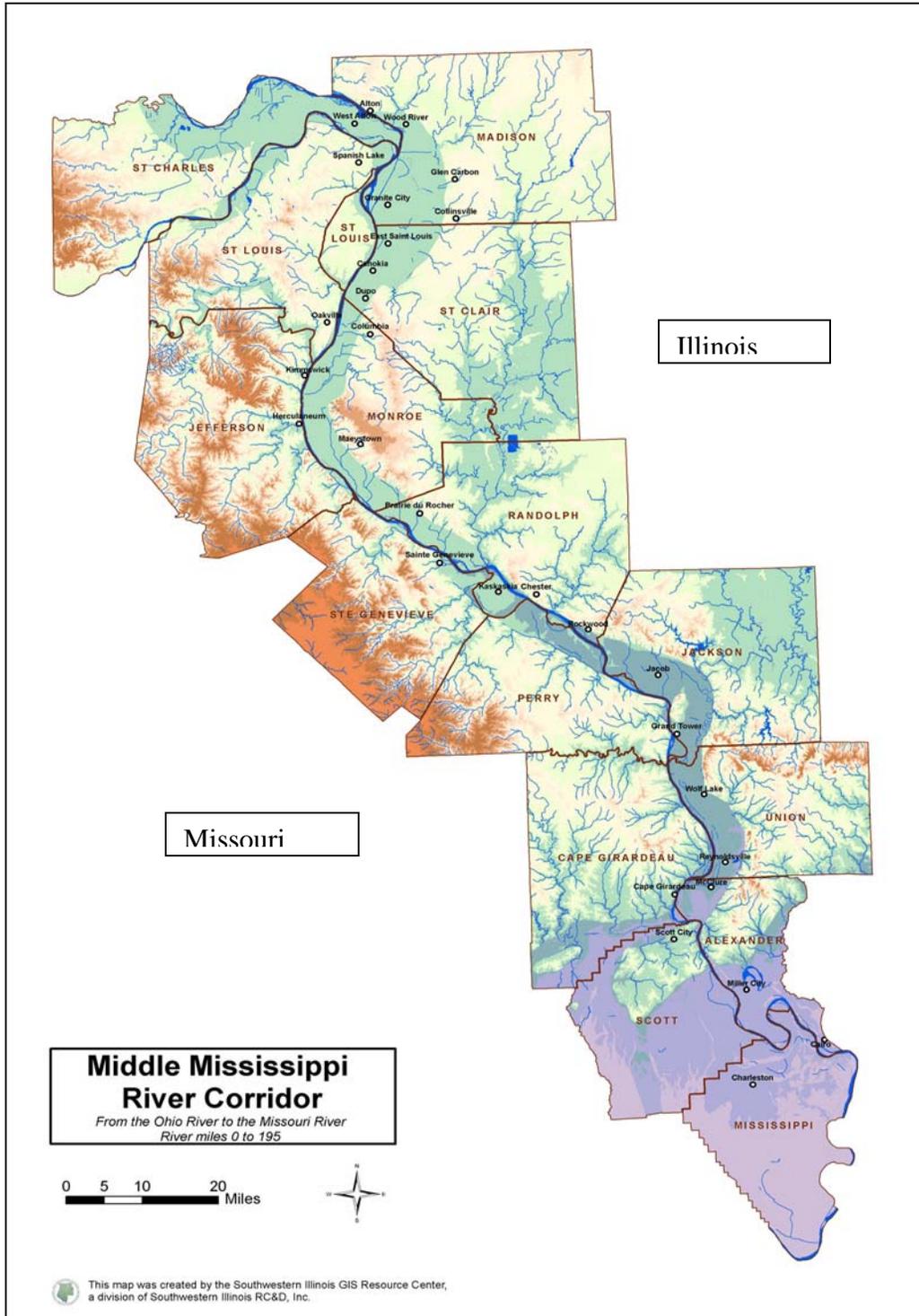


MIDDLE MISSISSIPPI RIVER (MMR) REGIONAL CORRIDOR



General Expense Project Proposal
For
Comprehensive Analyses of Multi-jurisdictional Use and Management of Water
Resources on a Watershed or Regional Scale

Middle Mississippi River (MMR) Regional Corridor

BACKGROUND. The Middle Mississippi River (MMR) regional corridor is a key corridor in a critical transportation system and it provides recreation opportunities to millions of citizens. Additionally, the corridor serves as a major international migratory flyway for waterfowl and non-game birds. Social and cultural resources are abundant along this region that has experienced thousands of years of human influence. The Mississippi River is one of the world's most important and intensively regulated river systems. Much of the river and its associated floodplain have been extensively modified for commercial navigation, agriculture, as well as other human developments. The river and its adjacent forests, grasslands, and wetlands provide important habitat for fish and wildlife and includes a significant continuous system of wetland, open-water, and floodplain habitats, including extensive habitats on public lands.

The Middle Mississippi River (MMR) Partnership was officially formalized in December 2004. This partnership is a multi-state, multi-jurisdictional collaboration of sixteen federal/state agencies and not-for-profit organizations. These partners, in a show of commitment to the partnership, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to establish a general framework of multi-jurisdictional cooperation to achieve the shared vision to restore and enhance the water resources of the river corridor from St. Louis, Missouri to Cairo, Illinois, a distance of 195 miles. For purposes of this proposal, the Middle Mississippi River regional corridor is defined as the lands and waters between the bluffs from the confluence of the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers south to the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. The Middle Mississippi River (MMR) Partnership consists of the following agencies and organizations:

- American Land Conservancy
- Ducks Unlimited, Inc.
- Illinois Forestry Dev. Council
- Il. Society of American Foresters
- USDI Geological Survey
- USDA Forest Service
- SIU Carbondale
- Upper Mississippi & Great Lakes
Region Joint Venture
- Missouri Dept. of Conservation
- Il. Dept. of Natural Resources
- The Conservation Fund
- The Nature Conservancy
- USDA NRCS
- Wildlife Forever
- USACE, St. Louis District
- USDI Fish & Wildlife Service

These partners have a stated goal to establish priorities for water resources planning and investment, economic development, transportation, and recreation while collaborating to bring state, local, and private resources together to provide integrated resource solutions. All partners have demonstrated a high-level of interest in this regional partnership by

signing the MOU and then developing a coordination plan that seeks to identify resource issues and concerns that are important to the long-term sustainability of the corridor.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS.

- Hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico, contributions from MMR sources and the need to control non-point sources of pollution on private lands.
- Lack of connectivity of river to floodplain, connectivity of floodplain habitat to upland habitat, non-functional floodplain, and the need to maintain/restore/protect riparian zones in the corridor.
- Increasing demand for recreational opportunities relating to natural resources, public access, green space preservation, river access, etc.
- River morphology and associated trends such as down cutting of the main channel that impacts water levels, transportation, and floodplain connectivity.
- Role of private landowners in addressing natural resource issues in the corridor.
- Need for reliable navigation on a functional river channel.
- Loss of bottomland hardwoods/forest health and the impacts on wildlife habitat and timber production.
- Protection of threatened and endangered species habitat and sensitive species.
- Maintenance/management of surface drainage systems involving multiple landowners.
- Conversion of wetlands to agricultural uses and loss of wetland habitat.
- Inter-jurisdictional fishes and availability of aquatic habitat.
- Ecosystem restoration and associated processes.
- Public ownership/management of lands versus private ownership/management of lands as it relates to providing environmental, social, and economic benefits to the region.
- Continued agricultural production in the floodplain and use of alternative crops.
- Regulatory issues relating to the Clean Water Act and the Flood Insurance Program.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES. The purpose/outcome of this Middle Mississippi River Regional Corridor proposal is to develop a collaborative planning document that will build upon and expand the established MMR Partnership goals and coordination plan. The plan will identify those issues and concerns that are common to the partnership, while seeking to broaden the partnership to other federal, state, and local entities, such as EPA, DOT, and Levee and Drainage Districts. The outcome will be a plan that defines a regional strategy and identifies implemental actions for the future for some or all of the partners/stakeholders within the regional corridor. The plan will also seek solutions to statutory and regulatory barriers to cooperative conservation and more effective local involvement in Federal decision making. This plan will clearly demonstrate the Corps' ability to plan in a collaborative manner.

The plan will use historical and recent natural resource information and trends; relevant GIS and other information on the regional corridor; broad based goals and strategies for resource protection and enhancement; partnership roles, responsibilities, and programs to address the resource concerns, to include the economic importance of the navigation/transportation system, natural water resources in the corridor, wetlands, agriculture, water quality, overall ecosystem health, and the regulatory responsibilities of various levels of government.

PROPOSED ACTIVITIES AND ESTIMATED COSTS.

1. Develop Project Management Plan (PMP) and identify project delivery team (PDT) members. The PMP will establish a cross-functional, interagency team that will fully define our collaborative planning business process. (\$20,000)

2. Continue to identify, define, and share existing data, and develop a multi-agency accessible GIS database to determine trends, needs, and potential opportunities to address resource concerns. This activity would be conducted by the PDT to develop a system of plans and identify programs/resources/authorities of partner agencies that are needed in the MMR. Existing data suggest there are unique opportunities in this reach to address transportation, recreation, agriculture, economic development, regulatory, wildlife, forestry, and other natural ecosystem resource needs. These activities would potentially include:

- Identify potential land/water areas to determine locations of water resource management (gap analysis) that would subsequently help develop a map of regional needs for restoration, maintenance, etc.
- Identify current wildlife habitats by looking at diversity, values, and features of existing areas. Consider habitat features thought to be critical, such as water depth, plant biomass, velocities of water, woody debris, forest quality, etc.
- Analyze fish data to determine main feeding guilds in fish community and relate that to potential food resources. Conduct similar analysis in other parts of the UMR and Missouri to compare to the MMR and consider possible management actions.
- Identify potential recreation access areas in the corridor.
- Identify water quality watershed influences, including tributary streams, point and non-point pollution sources.
- Identify statutory and regulatory requirements/impediments to implemental actions.

(\$250,000)

3. Support the mapping (using existing digital elevation models if possible) for the entire corridor, or for identified selected areas of the corridor, 2 foot contour interval mapping, to get a better dataset for hydrology, flooding, land resources, etc. This data would help support a number of potential programs relating to wetlands restoration, maintenance of drainage and flood control, water management, and regulatory functions. (\$200,000)

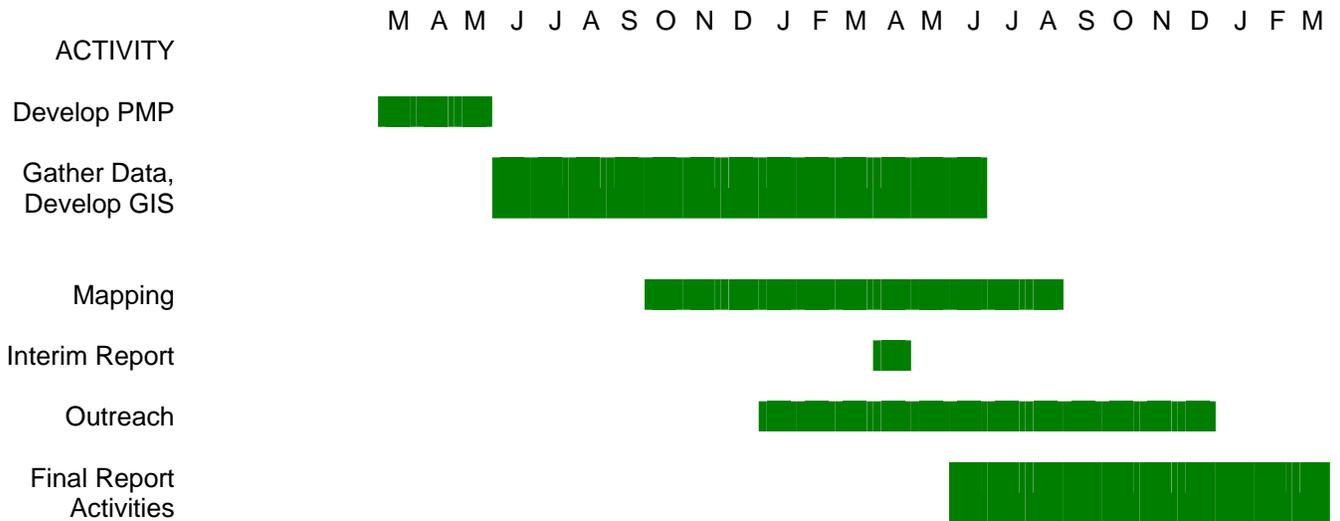
4. Develop high-quality outreach material (brochure, website) that summarizes the MMR Partnership and the level of cooperation involved. This material will be used to promote the resource needs of the Middle Mississippi River Corridor, raise the awareness level of the Partnership in the corridor, and help educate and garner support for accomplishing the goals of the MMR Partnership. The Mississippi River ecosystem is often heralded as a multiple-use resource. Human use of the river and its floodplain for various purposes is expected to increase, along with inputs of sediment, nutrients, and potentially harmful chemicals from the watershed. Clearly, the greatest challenge on the Mississippi and

other large rivers is to maintain ecological integrity while sustaining multiple human uses of the ecosystem. (\$30,000)

5. Prepare interim and final plan of regional needs analysis that identifies a regional strategy and implemental actions for the future for some and/or all of the partners/stakeholders within this region along with guidance for implementation. Identify existing programs within agencies that have potential applicable funding programs, and, if possible, establish priorities for early actions. (\$150,000)

TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$650,000.00

SCHEDULE.



BRIEF RESUME OF PROJECT MANAGER. Mr. Richard F. Astrack, PE. Extensive experience as Project Manager and Flood Plain Management Manager, Planning and Project Development Branch, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division, St. Louis District, USACE. Regional Project Manager for the Upper Mississippi River Comprehensive Plan (planning phase-flood damage reduction) and St. Louis District Project Manager for the Upper Mississippi River-Illinois Waterway System Navigation Study (PED phase-navigation and ecosystem restoration). Study manager for numerous Flood Damage Reduction studies, including urban and rural settings, small drainage areas to watershed drainage areas in scale. Many studies were multi-purpose studies. Also an instructor for Corps PROSPECT Plan Formulation Course.

DESCRIPTION OF PDT. The potential PDT would consist of a Project Manager from the Corps along with a biologist and hydraulic engineer, other vertical Corps team members such as the Corps' National Ecosystem Planning Center of Expertise and the Navigation Planning Center of Expertise, a member from the NRCS, RC&D to assist with data collection from partners and creating a database of this data, a member from the Forest Service to supply and analyze data, a member from the F&WS to supply and

analyze data, a member from the American Land Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy to assist with analysis, and a member from each State, Illinois and Missouri to provide input, review data and analysis. Involvement of the matrix of team members will help to develop senior water managers not only within the Corps, but within other agencies as well.

POINT OF CONTACT FOR MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMAND.

Mr. Rayford Wilbanks, Mississippi Valley Division, 608-634-5847.

SUMMARY & STATEMENT OF INTEREST/SUPPORT. The proposed initiative is not currently a budgeted activity and does not represent a project specific solution or substitute for project cost-sharing requirements. This proposed effort emphasizes a holistic focus on water resource and land related problems and opportunities, emphasizes the MMR regional corridor as a logical geographic area for managing water resources, emphasizes a systems approach for analyzing the problems and solutions, emphasizes collaborative planning approaches, and emphasizes efficiencies to be gained by collaborating with existing resources. These things make this proposed effort consistent with the HQUSACE Civil Works Strategic Plan and assigned mission authorities.

Funding of this proposal will help to more closely align the Corps with partners/stakeholders of the MMR and build upon the existing relationships established in the MMR partnership. It will continue to develop water resource leaders at various levels of government, many of which are tied to MMR Partnership already. It will strengthen and increase the existing network between senior watershed managers within all agencies of the partnership as well as promote and encourage other agencies to join the partnership. Additionally, all of these activities require complete integration of our regulatory function (and other agency regulatory functions) as it applies to water resource planning, i.e., parameters for wetland delineation, permits, etc.

Many of these proposed activities will help contribute to the goals of both states. As stated by Illinois Department of Natural Resources, *"We are interested in meeting the public's open space needs and resource protection needs. Also, we currently manage several important public land sites in the MMR. Providing habitat for waterfowl and other wildlife species is a primary goal in areas such as Horseshoe Lake and Union County Conservation areas. Maintaining this partnership provides us the opportunity to enhance resource protection and resource-compatible recreation opportunities. Also, involvement in this partnership will improve our ability to meet habitat and fish and wildlife goals on a larger scale."* The Missouri Department of Conservation is seeking to work cooperatively with natural resource agencies, organizations, and private citizens to enhance management and conservation of fish and wildlife habitats, including wetlands and forests within the MMR.

The USDA Forest Service is seeking to achieve quality land management under a sustained multiple-use management concept to meet the diverse needs of present and future generations. They have developed a forest plan that emphasizes protection and restoration of watershed health as one of the main management priorities of the Forest.

The NRCS is able to work directly with private landowners and partners in each county and the MMR Partnership goals are consistent with the NRCS mission goals.

These shared values and joint commitments of the MMR partners offer a strong foundation for building greater participation among technical specialists and decision makers in a comprehensive collaborative planning process for water resource initiatives in the Middle Mississippi River Regional Corridor.