



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers** ®  
Memphis District

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**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY**

**Draft Final Assessment  
of the  
Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment**

**REPLY TO:**

**ATTN: Marsha Raus**

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

167 North Main Street, Room B-202

Memphis, Tennessee 38103-1894

Tele: (901) 544-3455

E-mail: [Marsha.L.Raus@usace.army.mil](mailto:Marsha.L.Raus@usace.army.mil)

**TITLE:** Draft Final Assessment in Response to Section 402 of WRDA 2000  
<http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects/LMMRA.aspx>

**AUTHORITY:** The Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment is authorized by Section 402 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000, Public Law 106-541.

**LOCATION:** The assessment area extends from River Mile 953 of the main-stem Mississippi River channel south of Cairo, Illinois, downstream to River Mile 0 (Head of Passes) in Louisiana (see map on page 2). The area encompasses the main river channel and the area between the Mississippi River and Tributaries project levees or natural high ground (batture), including the mouths of all tributaries between the levees.

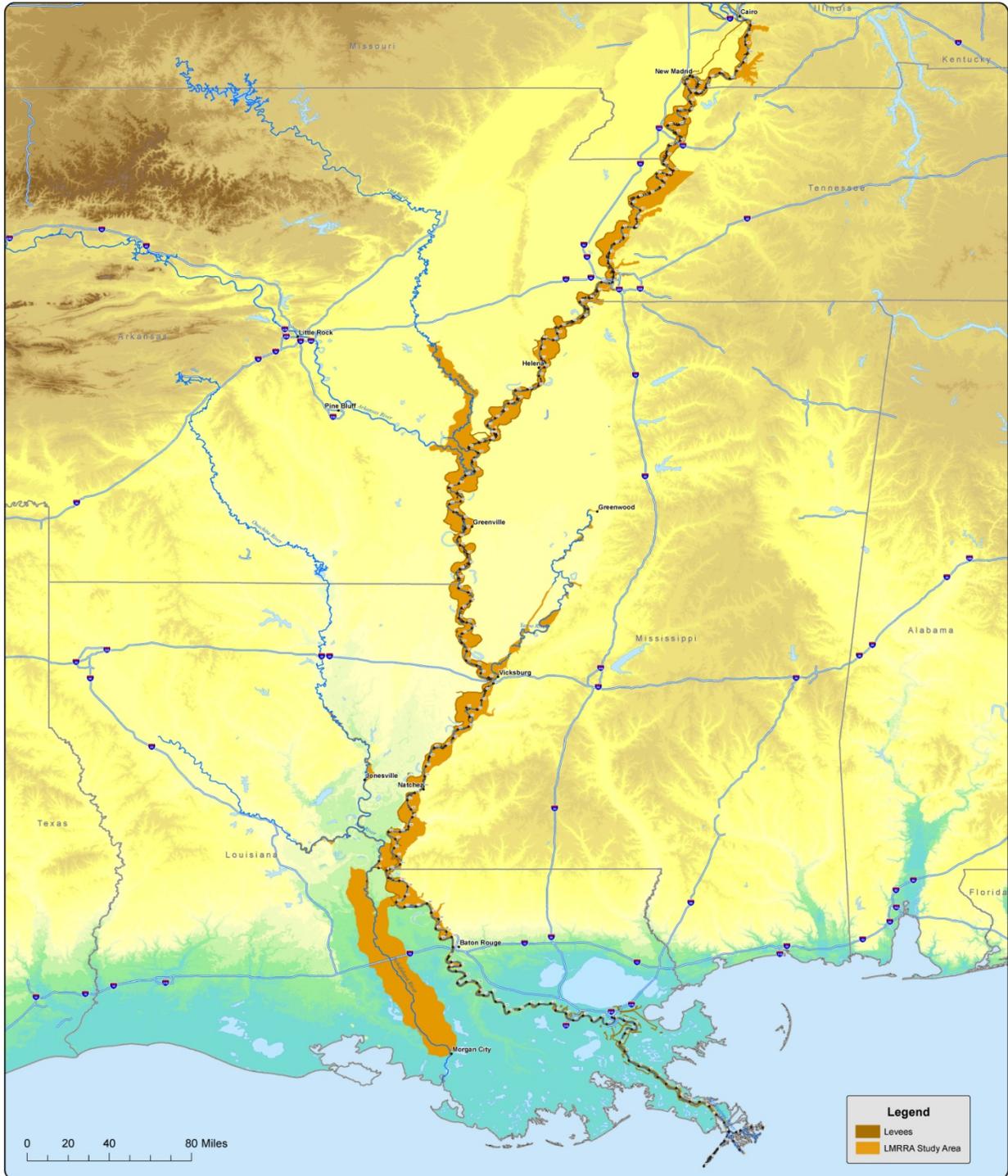
**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District, is issuing this notice of the availability of a draft Final Assessment of the Lower Mississippi River resource Assessment.

**PURPOSE:** The Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment included three separate resource assessments and this final assessment combining them. The three resource assessments identified needs for information, habitat, and recreation. This final assessment combines those results and makes recommendations to meet the identified needs.

The previous assessments were the Assessment of Information Needed for River-Related Management completed in 2013, the Assessment of River-related Recreation and Access completed in 2014 and the Assessment of Natural Resource Habitat Needs completed in 2015. All are available at the link above.



# LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESOURCE ASSESSMENT STUDY - OVERVIEW



## Executive Summary

Congress authorized the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment to examine river management information, habitat, and recreation; identify needs for each of these; and make recommendations for meeting those needs. The Assessment of Information Needed for River-Related Management found that information about sediment and water quality was lacking, data storage and availability need to be better managed, and a better understanding of tributaries would benefit management of the Mississippi River. The Assessment of Natural Resource Habitat Needs found there was a need to better understand water quality, restore the native vegetative mosaic, reconnect secondary channels, manage invasive species, improve the quality of floodplain habitats, inventory river islands, restore main channel habitats, support coastal wetland restoration, and develop plans to comprehensively restore entire river reaches. The Assessment of the Need for River-Related Recreation and Access identified the need for more and better boat ramps, bicycle trails, outfitter and guide services, lodging and dining options, riverside parks, interpretation, riverboat landings and marketing.

This Lower Mississippi River Final Assessment accumulated the needs identified in the previous assessments and found overlap among many of them. In fact, most river related recreation is directly related to the natural resources and habitats on the river. This assessment recommends three programs to address the needs on the river. Each of these programs includes multiple studies and projects. The recommendations leverage existing programs and encourage both public and private investment in the river. All recommendations are compatible with navigation and flood risk management.

The recommended Data Information Science and Communications Program would create an interagency center to store and share information, support the ongoing sediment studies, establish a comprehensive water quality monitoring program, conduct studies on tributary watersheds, and complete ecological inventories of river islands and potential natural vegetation. Program implementation would rely on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; U.S. Geological Survey; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; the states of Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana; and non-governmental organizations. The program would benefit a variety of habitats, species, recreational users, local economies, navigation, flood risk management, and other river resources.

<b>Data Science and Communications Program</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Lead Organization</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
DISC 1	Science Technology Information Center	USGS – lead; USACE, EPA, NPS, USFWS, states and NGOs	\$2 million/year	Promote interagency cooperation, encourage research, foster public interest, and support other recommendations.
DISC 2	Sediment Study	USACE	\$4 million/year	Support management plans, better manage dredging and coastal restoration.
DISC 3	Water Quality Monitoring Program	USGS & EPA	\$2 million/ year	Provide clean water for people, industry, and habitat.
DISC 4	Tributary Watershed Studies	USACE	11 @ \$1-\$5 million each	Develop plans to manage tributaries for habitat, water quality, sediment, water supply, navigation and recreation.
DISC 5	Ecological Inventory	USACE & USFWS	\$1.7 million	Provide information to support restoration.

The recommended Habitat Restoration and Management Program would support restoration of river reaches, numerous individual aquatic habitat restoration projects, terrestrial habitat restoration, and invasive species management. This program would primarily rely on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee with their cooperating agencies, partners and states – Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, Tennessee, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. The program would benefit a variety of habitats and the species that rely on them, recreational users, local economies, and other river resources.

<b>Habitat Restoration and Management Program</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Lead Organization</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
HRMP 1	Conservation Reach Studies	USACE	8 @ \$3 million each	Restore aquatic (side channel, oxbow, main channel, islands, and sandbars) and terrestrial (wetlands, bottomland hardwoods, and floodplain) habitats for native species and especially federally listed species.
HRMP 2	Aquatic Habitat Restoration Studies	USACE & USFWS	125 @ \$200,000 to \$15 million (maximum)	Restore individual sites for native species.
HRMP 3	Terrestrial Habitat Program	USDA & LMVJV	\$18,000,000	Restore floodplain habitat.
HRMP 4	Invasive Species Program	MICRA & ANSTF	Part of larger effort	Promote and protect native species.

The recommended Recreation Program would support construction of boat ramps, bicycle trails, riverfront parks and riverboat landings; encourage coordinated marketing and interpretation; and entice lodging, dining and outfitter guide businesses. The program would rely on entrepreneurs to provide commercial services, and local community governments and organizations with assistance from the National Park Service to build public infrastructures. The program would benefit recreational users and local economies and would add visibility to all of the other resources of the river.

<b>Recreation Program</b>				
<b>Recommendation</b>		<b>Lead Organization</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Value</b>
RP 1	Boat Ramps	LMRCC and others	\$50,000 - \$750,000 each	Increase safety and meet recreation demand.
RP 2	Bicycle Trails	NGOs	variable	Increase safety and meet recreation demand.
RP 3	Riverfront Parks	Local Communities	variable	Promote community cohesiveness and meet demand.
RP 4	Riverboat Landings	Local Communities	variable	Provide safe, accessible opportunities and support local economic development.
RP 5	Marketing	NPS, MRPC, NGOs	\$2 million	Promote river use and encourage economic development.
RP 6	Lodging and Dining	Private Enterprise	variable	Meet demand and support economic development.
RP 7	Outfitters and Guides	Private Enterprise	variable	Increase safety, meet demand and support economic development.

**PUBLIC INTEREST REVIEW:** The purpose of this public notice is to solicit comments and information to improve this report and to gauge public and agency support for the recommendations included in this report. This assessment proposes scientific studies and feasibility studies, but does not directly propose any federal construction.

Two public meetings will be held for those who wish to make comments in person or ask questions. Both are Open Houses.

Natchez, MS May 4, 4:00 – 7:00 pm  
Natchez Convention Center 211 Main St. Natchez, MS  
[Click Here for Map](#)

Memphis, TN May 6 4:00 – 7:00 pm  
Harbor Landing on Mud Island 280 Island Drive Memphis, TN  
[Click Here for Map](#)

The Corps of Engineers is soliciting comments from the public; federal, state and local agencies and officials; Indian Tribes; and other interested parties. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps of Engineers to improve the quality of this report and to determine the overall public interest in the assessment. **The draft report will be circulated to agencies and any other parties that respond to this notice requesting copies. Copies of these documents have been placed on the District's website at:**

<http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects/LMMRA.aspx>

**COMMENTS OR REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** If you need additional information or want to submit comments, contact Marsha Raus (901/544-3455 at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Planning Branch, 167 North Main Street, Room B-202, Memphis, TN 38103-1894. **Comments should be sent to this office by 20 May 2015.**