



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

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**

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**EXPIRATION DATE: 11 August 2014**

**NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY**

**Draft Assessment of the Need for River-Related Recreation and Access  
of the  
Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment**

**REPLY TO:**

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**Planning Division**

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**TITLE:** Draft Assessment of the Need for River-Related Recreation and Access of the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment

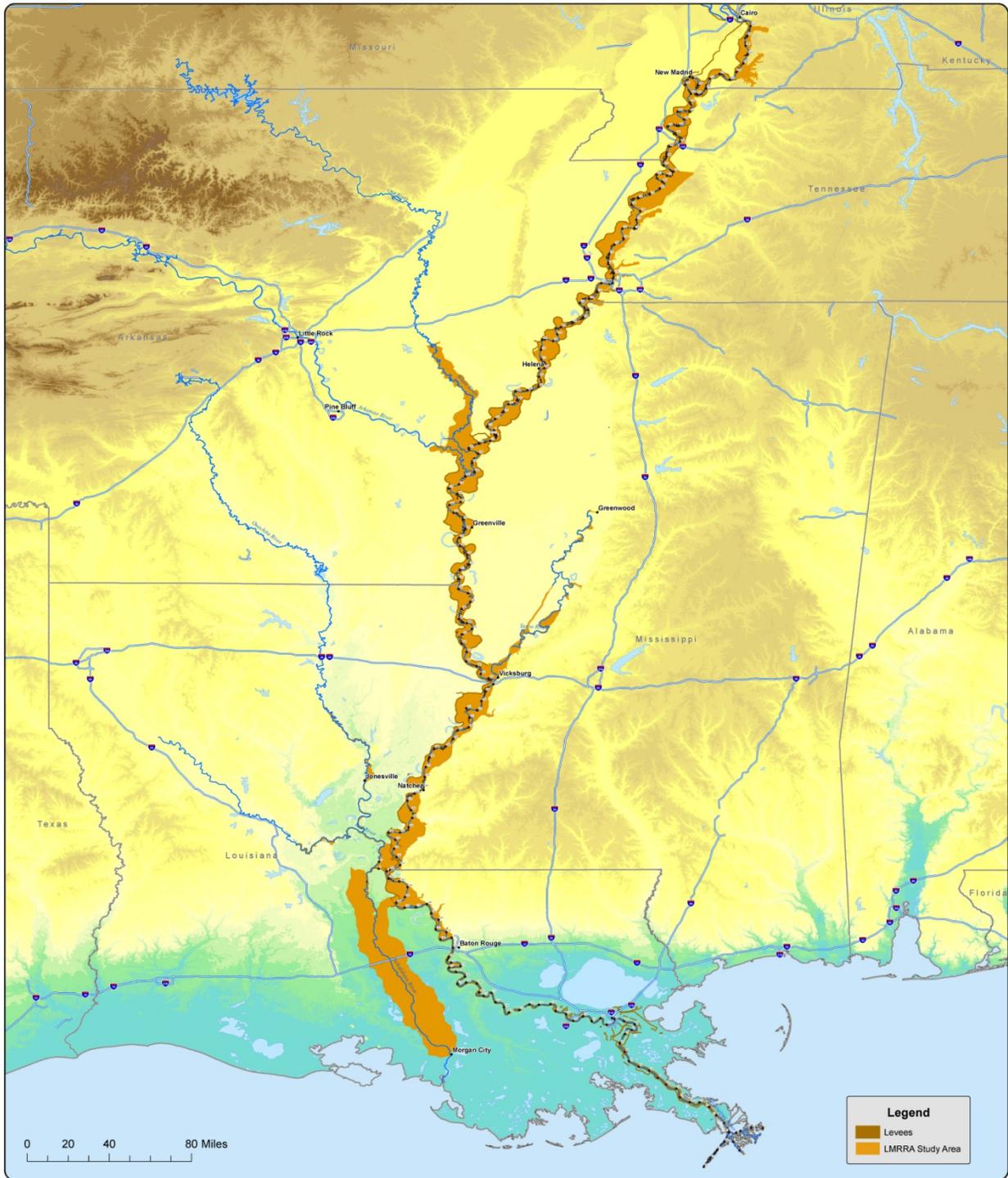
<http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/Missions/Projects/LMMRA.aspx>

**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 study 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. The study boundary extends up the following rivers and canals that have existing commercial navigation (i.e., commercial barge traffic) to the point of direct influence between each channel and the main-stem Mississippi River: the White River upstream to Clarendon, Arkansas; the Arkansas Post Canal upstream to Norrell Lock and Dam, Arkansas; the Yazoo River upstream to Greenwood, Mississippi; the Red River upstream to Lock and Dam No. 2 in Louisiana; the Ouachita/Black River upstream to Columbia Lock and Dam in Louisiana; and the Old River from the Old River Lock to its confluence with the Red and Atchafalaya Rivers in Louisiana. The Atchafalaya Basin floodway system in Louisiana is included in the study area.



# LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER RESOURCE ASSESSMENT STUDY - OVERVIEW



**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District, is issuing this notice of the availability of a draft Assessment of the Need for River-Related Recreation and Access for the Lower Mississippi River.

**PURPOSE:** The Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment will produce three separate assessments and one comprehensive plan combining those three assessments. This report is the Assessment of the Need for River-Related Recreation and Access. It examines the known and anticipated recreation needs based on current and foreseeable plans and operations.

The other two reports are the Assessment of Information Needed for River-Related Management completed in 2013 and the Assessment of Natural Resource Habitat Needs which is scheduled for public release in September 2014.

### **Executive Summary**

This report assesses the need for river-related recreation and access on the Lower Mississippi River from its confluence with the Ohio River at Cairo, Illinois, to the Head of Passes in Louisiana. The investigation was authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000. The Nature Conservancy – Great Rivers Partnership is the lead study sponsor.

More than 140 million Americans participate in outdoor recreational activities. The outdoor recreation industry supports 6.1 million American jobs and generates \$646 billion in spending each year. In the Lower Mississippi River Region, outdoor recreation and tourism combine to generate nearly \$17 billion annually and 240,000 jobs.

The study team identified eight areas of need on the Lower River: boat ramps, bicycle trails, outfitter and guide services, lodging and dining, parks and vistas, interpretation, riverboat landings and marketing. Addressing some of the recreation and access needs on the Lower River would add to residents' quality of life, and bring increased revenues and jobs to the region and the nation.

Fishing and paddling generate nearly 900,000 American jobs and \$9 billion in Federal and state tax revenues annually. The biggest obstacle to expanding fishing and paddling use of the Lower Mississippi River is the lack of well located boat ramps. There are only 129 boat ramps along the 954 miles of the Lower Mississippi River. The ramps are clustered around urban centers like Memphis, Baton Rouge and New Orleans; and many of them were not designed for launching small craft.

More than 60 million Americans ride bicycles. Bicycling generates 1.1 million American jobs, and \$81 billion in annual spending. More bike lanes are being built in urban areas and the public would like to link these urban systems to bicycle trails in more rural settings with less traffic. Outfitter and guide services in the Lower Mississippi River Region can provide safe, convenient options for people who want to hunt, fish, paddle and bicycle. The services are very limited but the increasing popularity of paddling and bicycling along with hunting and fishing create a good opportunity for small businesses all along the River.

Lodging and dining are readily available in urban areas, but are lacking in rural areas. Long distance bicyclists and paddlers, hunters and fishermen, and families visiting cultural and historic sites could all use more lodging and dining options in rural areas.

Many of the small towns on the Lower Mississippi River have no public space along the riverfront for picnics or even good views of the River. The topography of the Lower River limits the number of natural vistas providing broad views of the River, and some of the places that could provide a view are not accessible. Riverside parks are excellent areas for interpretive centers that tell the story of the River and its habitat, value for navigation, and flood risk management system.

Riverboats are making a comeback on the Mississippi River. The boats dock at small towns and big cities along the length of the River and offer excursions to see cultural and historic sites, participate in local activities, and take guided trips into natural areas. Many small towns do not have adequate docking facilities and miss the revenue from riverboat visits when the River is too high or too low.

The Lower Mississippi River passes seven states and many cities. There are numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism, but there is no single entity marketing the Mississippi River for tourism. Many visitors to the region come for a single purpose and are unaware of other opportunities.

This assessment and the other two previously mentioned will be combined into a Watershed Plan that will include recommendations for projects and programs to manage the Lower Mississippi River into the future.

**PUBLIC INTEREST REVIEW:** The purpose of this public notice is to solicit comments and information to improve this report. This recreation assessment does not propose any action.

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 wish to obtain additional information or submit comments on this proposal, contact Marsha Raus (901/544-3455 at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Planning Branch, 167 North Main Street, Room B-202, Memphis, Tennessee 38103-1894. **Comments should be forwarded to this office by 11 August 2014.**

Sincerely,



Edward P. Lambert  
Chief, Planning Branch