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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
MEMPHIS DISTRICT CORPS OF ENGINEERS
167 NORTH MAIN STREET B-202
MEMPHIS TN 38103-1894

For Immediate Release

New Grand Prairie Area Demonstration Project Web Site Launched

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Monday, March 19, 2001 – The Memphis District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) today officially launched its new web site designed to be an information resource and to keep the public abreast of the construction work on the Grand Prairie Area Demonstration Project (GPADP).

The GPADP is a plan designed to reverse the diminishing groundwater supply in an area of eastern Arkansas known as the Grand Prairie. The White River is the main tributary in the Grand Prairie area.

“We launched this web site to counteract a lot of misinformation about the project,” said James A. Bodron, project engineering manager with the Memphis District USACE. “We wanted to provide the public with accurate information on the area’s groundwater problems as well as how this problem will devastate the area if nothing is done to stop the drying of the alluvial aquifer.”

The web site is easy to navigate, according to Bodron.

“This web site features a project overview, the most frequently asked questions we get, and information on how the project will impact the area,” Bodron said. “Radio buttons on the home page correspond to the key subjects the project affects.”

The selected radio button transports the viewer to a sub page which provides detailed information on a certain element or aspect of the project.



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
MEMPHIS DISTRICT

Grand Prairie Area Demonstration Project

Overview

Fri, March 16 - 10:20:27 am

Conditions at Stuttgart, AR
Cloudy 63° - Wind 57
Hum. 94% - Pres. 30.06f

Area Conditions & Project Benefits

Maps, Reports & Studies

News & Updates

What Others Are Saying

Media Resources

FAQs

Ever think you'd run out of water where you live? Neither did the people in the Grand Prairie area of eastern Arkansas. That's why this web site has been created. To give you information - the facts and figures - so you can understand what the Grand Prairie Demonstration Project (GPADP) is all about. If you've come here on purpose, you're obviously looking for information on the GPADP. Maybe you're looking for something specific or perhaps you simply want to get the big picture. If you've arrived by chance or accident, we encourage you to look around. Either way, we've got a story to tell you. [Continue...](#)

Project Partners



Environment & Weather

The Arkansas Grand Prairie has become an unfortunate victim of three consecutive years of above normal temperatures and below normal rainfall. The National Drought Mitigation Center says the region's warmer seasons and lack of natural moisture have caused a drought condition ranging between abnormally dry and extreme. Groundwater has quickly become the Grand Prairie's most precious natural resource. [More...](#)



Aquifers

Groundwater supplies found below the Arkansas Grand Prairie have been shrinking for the past 70 years because natural recharge of the aquifers has not been able to keep up with demand. The shallower Alluvial Aquifer was once a prime water source for agriculture but its capacity has been diminished, and deeper wells are now drawing on the region's supply of drinking water contained within the deeper Sparta Sand Aquifer. [More...](#)



The White River & River Wetlands

An important natural resource to the State of Arkansas, the White River bounds the Grand Prairie on the east and continues to play a key role in the region's evolution. The White River drainage contains a viable wetland ecosystem providing prime habitat for both wildlife and fisheries. The River's most important ecological role may be as a well-defined migration corridor for North American waterfowl, while providing wintering habitat for the world's largest concentration of mallard ducks. [More...](#)



Hunting, Fishing & Outdoor Activities

This portion of the Natural State - The Grand Prairie - is rich in fish, wildlife and outdoor tradition. From the White River National Wildlife Refuge to the south, up through the Bayou Meto Wildlife Management Area, and into the Wattenaw Wildlife Management Area near Beavall Bluff, this region offers unlimited year-round recreational opportunities for a wide variety of outdoor interests. [More...](#)



Nature

Because the Grand Prairie region is so rich with fish and wildlife habitat, nature abounds. While most of the original Grand Prairie was cleared and leveled for farming during the early 1900s, many aboveground and ground reservoirs were also created as seasonal waterfowl habitat. Bottomland hardwoods along with seasonally flooded bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), Tupelo gum or water Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*) make up the forest along many of the region's creek and bayou drainages to create a wide variety of prime fish and wildlife habitat. [More...](#)



Agriculture & Local Economies

If the White River is the Grand Prairie's lifeblood, then agriculture is its economic engine powered by thousands of rice and soybeans acres. Stuttgart has long been known as The Rice and Duck Capital of the World because of the region's exceptional rice production, storage, processing and marketing capabilities. The harvest residue from rice affords a natural attraction to waterfowl and is a welcomed bi-product that helps make duck and goose hunting a secondary source of income for many landowners. [More...](#)



People & Communities

The Grand Prairie includes the first American settlement west of the Mississippi and early on was inhabited by the Quapaw Indians. This vast prairie landscape was later cleared and farmed by many European immigrants. Communities including Humnoke Indians and Eastern European Slovaks are present-day examples of the region's historic diversity. The Grand Prairie region has also produced many waterfowl legends including Chick Major (1896 - 1974), a sportsman, duck call maker, duck-calling champion and member of the Arkansas Outdoor Hall of Fame. [More...](#)

[Overview](#) | [Area Conditions & Project Benefits](#) | [Maps, Reports & Studies](#) | [News & Updates](#)
[What Others Are Saying](#) | [Media Resources](#) | [FAQs](#) | [Search](#) | [Site Map](#)
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The POC for this Page:
Jim Bodron, CEM/VM-PP-PM
904-544-3639
James.A.Bodron@mvmt02.usace.army.mil



Mailing Address:
U.S. Army Engineer District, Memphis
B-202 Clifford Davis Federal Building
167 North Main Street
Memphis, Tennessee 38103-1854

On the top half of the home page, the site features radio buttons that correspond to an overview of the project. The names of other buttons include Area Conditions and Project Benefits; Maps, Reports and Studies; News and Updates; FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions); and Media Resources. This section of radio buttons also includes the topic "What Others Are Saying."

"It's no secret that there are disparate feelings among the public about this project," Bodron said. "We plan to post what others outside the partners on this project are saying about the project."

Bodron said this will be accomplished by posting articles written by legitimate journalists in newspapers and magazines, when and where allowed.

"We have to request reprint or web site posting permission from the publisher of these articles first and if we get usage permission, the articles will be posted," Bodron explained.

He also said audio and video clips from broadcast journalists' reports will also be posted on the web site following the request for rebroadcast permission as will be done with print articles for posting on the site.

"We intend to put as much information as we can about this project on our web site so that the public can get a balanced perspective and accurate information on the project," Bodron explained.

Other radio buttons on the bottom half of the home page include such topics as Hunting, Fishing and Outdoors activities; The White River and River Wetlands; Agriculture and Local Economies; People and Communities; Nature; Environment and Weather; and Aquifers. On the site home page in the top right-hand corner are buttons for a search tool, a site map, a glossary of terms and a contact for more information.

“We also have a sign-up mechanism for people who want to get on our electronic communications list,” Bodron said. “If people would like regular project updates and the project newsletter e-mailed to them, they can register with us for that service.”

The Memphis District USACE will maintain the web site and it will be updated regularly, according to Bodron.

“As parts of the project are started, as they progress and are completed, we’ll be posting this information,” Bodron said. “It will behoove people to check the site for new information on a regular basis.”

The GPADP was instigated because of studies by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) and the National Water Management Center (NWMC) which revealed the Grand Prairie’s alluvial aquifer – the main groundwater source for commercial and agricultural use – was being depleted at a rate far faster than it could recharge. These reports stated that the alluvial aquifer would be too small for use by 2015 unless there was intervention and a project developed and enacted to reverse the trend.

The project developers are the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the White River Irrigation District and Arkansas Soil and Water Conservation Commission along with the Memphis District USACE.

The project when completed will be a network of canals, streams and pipes which will divert excess water from the White River into the Grand Prairie for commercial and agricultural uses thus allowing the alluvial aquifer to replenish, which is expected to take several decades. The project is expected to cost \$319 million and take most of this decade to complete.

"We hope people will visit the site and gather information on the project," Bódrón said.

"We also want to encourage people to submit any questions they have about the project through the contact option we've placed on the site for their convenience."

The web site address is <http://www.mvm.usace.army.mil/grandprairie/>.