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Corps of Engineers and DU to sign regional cooperation agreement

MEMPHIS, Tenn. – The Mississippi Valley Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Ducks Unlimited, Inc. (DU) are cementing an enduring partnership by signing a memorandum of understanding (MOU) at 1:00 p.m. from Mud Island North boat ramp, Nov. 24, 2008.

This Regional MOU ties six Districts within the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division and three DU Regional Offices into one team for environmental success in protecting, restoring and managing wildlife in the U.S. All six District Commanders will attend the ceremony.

"A partnership between the Corps and Ducks Unlimited makes sense, because as two organizations, we can work collaboratively toward a common goal. A major portion of our Corps mission is preserving our Nation's environment," said Col. Tom Smith, the Corps' Memphis District commander.

The purpose of the MOU is to solidify the collaborative effort of both organizations by working toward mutual goals to protect, restore and enhance the environment.

"This is an important step for both of our organizations as we share overlapping and important goals for the entire Mississippi River watershed," said Dr. Alan Wentz, Senior Group Manager of Conservation, Communications and Marketing for Ducks Unlimited.

This Regional MOU builds on the National MOU signed in July 2002 with a specific focus on collaborating efforts within the Mississippi River Basin.

Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, Mississippi Valley Division, Commander of the Corps is scheduled to speak at the signing ceremony with Col. Smith and Dr. Wentz. Brig. Gen. Walsh has been integral in building this partnership.

"If we are to engage in finding solutions that sustain both the natural environment and the economic benefits of water use, we must become more inclusive in the make up of our partnerships," Gen. Walsh said recently. "We are all stewards of the environment, and we all have a stake in the economic health of America. To be successful, we must continue to work together, share ideas and dedicate ourselves to finding comprehensive solutions that work. Through cooperation, communication and commitment, we will make a lasting difference for our Nation."

Three of DU's regional leaders will also sign the MOU with Gen. Walsh and Dr. Wentz: Great Lakes/Atlantic Regional Office Director Dr. Bob Hoffman (represented by David Brakhage- Dir. of Conservation Programs), Great Plains Regional Office Director Dr. Steve Adair and Southern Regional Office Director Dr. Curtis Hopkins. "We greatly appreciate Brig. Gen. Walsh's leadership in moving this partnership forward. Now we must make it work on-the-ground between our organizations and our many partners who share these same objectives," Dr.

Wentz said.

DU and Corps employees will explore opportunities for collaboration under the new MOU by attending a workshop at Ducks Unlimited's national headquarters in Memphis on Nov. 25. The workshop is intended to educate and inform participants on the programs and projects each organization offers.

For more information about the signing ceremony, or to obtain digital photographs of the event, please contact Chris Jennings at 901-758-3732 or Stacy Ouellette at 901-544-3360.

With more than a million supporters, Ducks Unlimited is the world's largest and most effective wetland and waterfowl conservation organization with more than 12 million acres conserved. The United States alone has lost more than half of its original wetlands – nature's most productive ecosystem – and continues to lose more than 80,000 acres of wetlands important to waterfowl each year.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (<http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cepa/envprinciples.htm>) affirms its commitment to the environment through a set of "Environmental Operating Principles. These principles ensure that the Corps considers conservation, environmental preservation and restoration in all its activities and, by implementing them, the Corps will continue its efforts to develop the scientific, economic and sociological measures to achieve environmentally sustainable solutions to the nation's water resources problems.