



Mississippi River

AMANDA MOORE
EESI CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING



Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative Act (MRRRI)

MRRRI – Support for Core Areas of River Health:



- **Clean water:** Improve water quality in the Mississippi River and Gulf of Mexico by reducing the amount of polluted runoff, excess nutrients, and sediment entering the River system;
- **Improving Resilience:** Improve community resilience with natural infrastructure by restoring the ability of the Mississippi River and its floodplain, riverine wetlands, delta and coastal wetlands, and backwaters to minimize and ameliorate flood and storm risks;
- **River habitat:** Protect and restore wildlife habitat in and along the Mississippi River and throughout the River corridor, including by preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species in the River system; and
- **Vulnerable communities:** Prioritize these efforts to address disproportionate impacts to communities of color, rural communities, and economically disadvantaged communities caused by ecological degradation of the Mississippi River and its tributaries.



Clean Water Act

Sackett v EPA decision: Impacts to Water Quality and Flood Storage

- Over **50% of the water** that reaches the Mississippi River Delta originates in streams that may not be federally protected against pollution and destruction
- Almost **two-thirds** of previously protected wetlands are no longer protected by the Clean Water Act
- Without federal baseline, the burden falls on states and localities to protect streams, which historically has fallen short to ensure the protection of waters for future generations





Disaster Funding

Pre- and Post-Disaster Funding

- Federal funding has an important role *before and after* disasters
- FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) Program aims pro-active investment in community resilience and pre-disaster mitigation activities.
- USACE managing the river for heightened climate risk and severe weather - Lower Mississippi River Comprehensive Management Study





Mississippi River Delta



Severe Threats and Building Resilience in the Delta

- 1) Governance rooted in a science-based planning process
- 2) Dedicated and protected funding streams that have given us a strong record of implementation
- 3) Public trust and support



Community Outreach and Engagement



Network Mapping Themes & Takeaways

Themes

1. Strengthening Citizen & Community Advocacy
2. Protecting Water Quality & Wetlands
3. Restoring Natural Flows & Connectivity
4. Conserving Land Area
5. Adopting Sustainable Agriculture Practices



Network Mapping Themes & Takeaways

Takeaways

1. Partnership and education are needed at the community level to foster trust, empower residents, and leverage government programs.
2. Projects and plans should fully involve communities.
3. Relationship overhauling is needed to rebrand, reconnect, and celebrate the Mississippi River.
4. Riparian restoration and protection plans are needed along the mainstem and major tributaries to reduce flood risk and protect habitats.

“Getting
community
buy-in is
critical.”

Network Mapping Themes & Takeaways



Takeaways

5. Upstream restorative management, wetland protection and restoration will benefit downstream communities and ecosystems.
6. Increased monitoring of nature-based approaches to demonstrate cost-effective benefits.
7. Increased capacity and technical assistance are needed for organizations to fully utilize the suite of federal funding opportunities.
8. Consider how to improve equity and accessibility for federal programs.



THANK YOU

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