AT A GLANCE

PROJECT: The Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee’s Restoring America’s Greatest River initiative involves the implementation of aquatic habitat restoration and river-access improvement projects.

SCOPE: Lands and waters within the river’s active floodplain from Cairo, Illinois, to the Gulf of Mexico in Louisiana.

BENEFITS: Restoration of aquatic habitat is improving habitat for native fish; helping endangered species such as the Pallid Sturgeon, Fat Pocketbook mussel, and Interior Least Tern; and increasing access for recreational fishing and boating.

STATUS: Fifteen restoration projects have been completed since 2006.


TAKING THE PLAN TO ACTION

- The Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee partners have identified more than 200 projects to restore aquatic habitat and provide greater public access to the river.

- Water flows have been restored to more than 50 miles of side channel habitat. More projects are planned based on how they improve habitat quality and whether they are cost-effective.

- The LMRCC, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other partners are monitoring habitat changes at restoration sites.

Photos: Angie Rodgers, Bruce Reid, Paul Hartfield, Bill Stripling, John Ruskey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Jan Hoover
FISH AND WILDLIFE BENEFITS

PALLID STURGEON: Studies in the last decade have confirmed that the Pallid Sturgeon, an endangered species, occurs throughout the Lower Mississippi River. Restoration of side channels, among other actions, is improving habitat for young sturgeon to survive. Biologists with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are continuing to study sturgeon populations to learn more about the habitats they need and how they may benefit from restoration projects.

FAT POCKETBOOK MUSSEL: This species, also endangered, was first reported from Mississippi River channel habitats in 2003. Recent studies indicate that the mussels are associated with secondary channels where water flows are maintained by dike notches.

INTERIOR LEAST TERN: The bulk of the world’s population of endangered Interior Least Terns occurs along the Lower Mississippi River. The Fish and Wildlife Service states construction of notches in Lower Mississippi River navigation dikes enhances Least Tern breeding habitats by limiting the ability of terrestrial predators to reach nesting colonies.

LMRCC MEMBER AGENCIES

Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality
Arkansas Game and Fish Commission
Kentucky Department for Environmental Protection
Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries
Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality
Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks
Missouri Department of Conservation
Missouri Department of Natural Resources
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency