The Lower Mississippi River and its associated natural resources support a diverse and productive regional economy, according to a new profile released by the Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee. In their research, economists sought to document the economic values derived from or associated with the Lower Mississippi River and its abundant water, extensive forests, rich soil, diverse fish and wildlife, and other resources.

**OVERVIEW**

The Lower Mississippi River and its associated natural resources support a diverse and productive regional economy, according to a new profile released by the Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee. In their research, economists sought to document the economic values derived from or associated with the Lower Mississippi River and its abundant water, extensive forests, rich soil, diverse fish and wildlife, and other resources.

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Considered together, 10 river-related economic sectors generate $151.7 billion in annual revenue and employ 585,423 people.

- The manufacturing sector generates 70 percent of the region’s revenue.

- Employment is more evenly distributed among the sectors, with tourism providing nearly as many jobs as manufacturing. The agriculture, outdoor recreation and mineral extraction sectors also are significant employers.

**REVENUE**

- Manufacturing 70%
- Tourism 10%
- Outdoor Recreation 1%
- Energy 5%
- Farms 6%
- Water Supply 0.2%
- Minerals 5%
- Resources Harvest 0.4%

**JOBS**

- Manufacturing 35%
- Tourism 33%
- Outdoor Recreation 9%
- Farms 10%
- Energy 1%
- Water Supply 0.1%
- Minerals 7%
- Resources Harvest 2%

- $151.7 BILLION ANNUAL REVENUE
- 585,423 JOBS

**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
Agriculture is the third largest contributor to the regional economy. Cropland covers 22.5 million acres. Production of soybeans, corn, rice, cotton and other crops represents 82 percent of this sector’s revenue. Including crops, livestock production and fish farming, the sector generates a total of $8.7 billion in annual revenue and employs nearly 56,000 people.

Mineral extraction in the region involves oil and gas production and extraction of non-fuel products such as salt, clay, crushed stone, and sand and gravel. Louisiana generates 99 percent of the region’s natural gas and 92 percent of its oil, with the rest coming from Mississippi. The mineral sector produces $7.8 billion in annual revenue, mostly from oil and gas extraction, and employs 41,000 people.

Outdoor recreation along the Lower Mississippi River includes fishing, hunting, wildlife watching, paddling, cycling and camping. Economists calculated revenue and employment for three activities: fishing, hunting and wildlife watching. Together, these activities result in 38 million trips annually, generating $1.3 billion in trip expenditures and employing more than 54,000 people.

Commercial navigation is one of the most visible sectors of the river-related economy. Shippers hauled nearly 74 million tons of commodities on the Lower Mississippi River in 2011, generating $4.2 billion in revenue and employing nearly 19,000 people. More than 20 ports service the region’s shippers. River navigation facilitates a wide array of economic activity, including farming, mineral extraction and manufacturing.

Natural resources harvesting is a diverse sector that produces freshwater fish from the river, saltwater species such as shrimp, finfish and crabs from coastal areas, timber products such as sawlogs and pulp, and other products such as alligator skins. Overall, the sector produces $560 million in annual revenue and employs nearly 14,000 people.

Tourism benefits from the region’s rich cultural and historic resources, generating $15.5 billion in annual expenditures and employing 190,000 people, second only to manufacturing. Major tourist attractions are concentrated in and around New Orleans, Louisiana, and Memphis, Tennessee. This sector has proven to be resilient in the face of natural and man-made disasters such as floods, hurricanes and oil spills.

Energy production depends on the Mississippi River for shipment of fuel to power plants and generating water. Thermoelectric power plants in the region use an estimated 6.9 billion gallons of river water daily. The energy sector produces $6.8 billion in annual revenue and employs at least 2,700 people. Coal is used to produce nearly half the region’s electricity, followed by natural gas and nuclear fuel.

Waste disposal. As cooling water and a means of important shipping route as well Arkansas. The river provides an important shipping route as well.