Reconnecting to the Rivers

2020 River Conversations
and the
2021 Global Freshwaters Summit

2020 River Conversations

- Freshwater issues from a variety of perspectives
- Community conversations
- Local stakeholders
- Public witness & participation

6 River Conversations

1. Reconnecting to the river
2. Understanding and communicating the Importance of the river
3. Valuing the river's gifts
4. Nurturing and restoring a natural river
5. Protecting and respecting the rivers
6. Living with the river, its floodplains, and wetlands

Conversation 1: Reconnecting to the River

- Build appreciation of the Mississippi River. We know that people do not advocate for something until they understand their relationship with it and appreciate it.
- Grow awareness of how important the river is both locally and globally.
- Empower people to relate to the river in new ways and to build personal connections.
- Grow awareness of how decisions about the river are made and how individuals can actively support the well-being of our river.

Conversation 2: Understanding and Communicating the Importance of the River

- How do we convey greater social and civic understanding of the River?
- How is the River perceived in our society?
- What descriptive terms, narrative, images, sounds and other medium/methods do we use to communicate its importance?
- Are there more effective means of communicating appreciation of rivers for those who do not know them well, especially children and youth?
- What is effective river advocacy?

Conversation 3:
Valuing the River's Gifts

- How can we reach a more realistic valuation of the river – including recognition for biodiversity, wetlands?
- How does the river support and affect our economy?
- What specific ecosystem services are provided by the river, gone and can be restored?
- What are the impacts on society when the River's benefits are externalized?
- Which commercial emphasis (e.g., recreation, tourism, agriculture) might be made to privilege the river's well-being?

Conversation 4:
Nurturing and Restoring a Natural River

- How do we best care for the river, and by so doing, care for all life?
- What is the nature of the river?
- What life is supported by the river?
- How do we protect and care for its natural systems?
- Where have we made room for the natural river?
- How do we balance increasing intensity of rainfall and flooding with communities' needs for protection and growth?

Conversation 5:
Protecting and Respecting the Rivers

- How do we acknowledge the river's gifts and identity?
- What is the First People's example of respect for the River?
- What is environmental personhood and how will it benefit the river?
- How can the river's environmental rights be effectuated?
- How can our spiritual, emotional, and intellectual river values be codified in the legal and transactional/ownership world we live in?

Conversation 6:
Living With the River and its Floodplains and Wetlands

- Where and how do we live with the river?
- What are the places that are most important to the river in which we live, work and play?
- Where is flooding and why does it occur?
- How can we better design our communities, farms and other modified lands to function in harmony with the river and nature?
- Where can we make room for the river?

2021 Global Freshwater Summit

April 23-25, 2021

- Celebrate recovery & restoration of freshwater biomes of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers
- Consider the intrinsic rights of the rivers
- Explore personal and civic relationships to the rivers

2021 Global Freshwater Summit

- Ceremonial welcome
- Keynote speaker for each day
- Panel and interactive discussions
- Signing of Rights of Rivers Resolution

MISSOURI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Emerson Center

- ATT Room
- Schnucks Classroom
- Laclede Room
- Lower Level Classroom
- Millstone Room

MacDermott Grand Hall

Lee Auditorium

Lee Auditorium

MIGHTY
MISSISSIPPI

The Exhibit: Mighty Mississippi

- North America's greatest river
- The foundation of our civilizations for over a thousand years
- The largest and most influential Native American centers (during the Mississippian period)
- Vast European and Indian fur trade networks that forever changed the continent
- Steamboats, factories, and immigration of the Industrial Age
- Our river world worth caring for

- Images, media, and 250 artifacts tell the story of a river heritage giving direction to our future
- Many artifacts date back more than 1,000 years
- Dozens of artifacts have never been exhibited before
- 65 interactive video interviews give voice to current issues

Four Sections

- Lifeblood of the Heartland
- First Peoples' World
- Course of Empires
- Avenue of Industry

The Lifeblood of the Heartland

The river is a vast, living watershed system with roots tens of thousands of years old

The First People's World

The first great North American civilization grew and flowered in the Middle Mississippi River Valley

The Course of Empires

The Mississippi River's vast natural resources enabled commerce and colonization based mainly on export of animal furs

Avenue of Industry

Steam power revolutionized Middle Mississippi River Valley transportation and settlement through the industrial City of St. Louis

The Lifeblood of the Heartland

Explore

- Flooding & Development
- Clean water & Community Health
- Commerce & Industry
- Natural Resources & Biodiversity
- Climate Crisis & Pollution

Special Artifacts

- Joseph Pulitzer's mallard duck
- Dimick waterfowling shotgun
- Winning design for STL flag with Confluence
- First chemist's water quality microscope
- Lead water supply pipe
- River sonar for the Cahokia Power Plant electricity transmission cable
- Stained glass window of Alter tow boat

Unique Experiences

- Introductory media wall
- River superlative infographics
- Contemporary issues & concerns
- 4 interactive kiosks provide ~50 video interviews
- Plastic river waste sculpture

Lifeblood of the Heartland
Just as the Mississippi River runs through the center of the United States, from its Minnesota headwaters to its mouth at the Gulf of Mexico, an ancestor river flowed through the continent's heartland over 6 million years ago. Today, thousands of tributaries continue to drain and carve the land toward the Mississippi's main channel. The Wisconsin, Des Moines, and Illinois rivers are some that feed the Upper Mississippi. The Middle Mississippi is located from the Missouri to the Ohio—the Mississippi's two largest tributaries. The wide Lower Mississippi receives the Arkansas and Red rivers as it flows toward the Gulf.
The river's abundant water has never run dry. These waters have bestowed diverse natural habitat, farmland, and cities throughout the country, and they've brought floods and destruction. Though it's often an afterthought for many people who live in the region, this great river is crucial to our survival. The Mississippi enables industry, recreation, transportation, and the arts while an ever-growing population strains its floodplains and watersheds. Maintaining natural resources and a supporting a clean, healthy, biodiverse river has been a constant challenge over the last century.
Living in a River Comm
50 cities rely on the Mississippi for their water supply.
The Mississippi is the second-longest river in North America.
The English translation of Misi-ziibi is "great river," or "a river spread over a large area."
A River of Many Names
Misi-ziibi
Xósáu
Ni Tonga
Ny-sonks
Bahat Siesin
Kickaapoo
Mihcisipiiwi
How Big and Fast Is the Mississippi River?
A Strong Brown God
The Future River: Scenario and Planning

A Heathly, Diverse River
41% of the continental United States is drained by the Mississippi River.
About 278 industrial facilities and municipal sewage treatment plants discharge wastewater into the Upper Mississippi River.
Low water
54% of all fish species in North America are native to the Mississippi River.
Birds Found Along the River
Fish Found in the River
The Gulf of Mexico's 5,000- to 9,000-square-mile dead zone is the result of fertilizers that have been dumped into the Mississippi River.
Preserving the River
1908
1918
1924
1929
1940
1970s
Since 2013
A Healthy, Diverse River
Floods and Droughts
IN MISSOURI...
100,000 of the 166,750 authorized acres still need to be restored.
River floodplains provide floodwater storage, water quality improvement, climate change mitigation, and diverse natural habitats.
Floodplains and Levees
The River's Floodplain

HIGH WATER MARKS
AUG. 1, 1993
49'
48'
47'
46'
JUNE 10, 2019
45'
44'
APR. 28, 1973
43'
JAN. 1, 2016
42'
APR. 1, 1785
MAY 22, 1995
MAY 6, 2017
JUNE 27, 1844
MAY 6, 2019
41'
Commerce and Transportation
According to Congress, the Upper Mississippi River is the only body of water that is both a "nationally significant ecosystem and a nationally significant commercial navigation system."
Before being channelized for navigation, the Mississippi regularly cut new paths and abandoned the old, changing its length and width.
$12.6 billion annual waterway revenue fuels 35,300 shipping industry jobs.
Native American Settlements in the Mississippi River Valley, late 1600s
The river has been a network of transportation and trade for centuries of people.
UPPER MISSISSIPPI
1 Dakhóta
2 Mamaceqtaw
3 Ojibwe
4 Báxoje
5 Thakiwaki and Sa ki wa ki
6 Kaskaskia
7 Peewaareewa
8 Niutachi
9 Tamarowa
10 Michigamea
11 Ni-u-kon-ska
12 Cahokia
13 Shawanwaki
LOWER MISSISSIPPI
14 Chikasha
15 Ogaxpia
16 Kadohadacho
17 Tunica
18 Tum Nuca
MN
WI
IA
IL
MO
KY
TN
AR
MS
LA
3,500 levees and about 190 underwater dams restrict the river's path to help maintain a main shipping channel.
Commerce and Transportation
The Future River: Commerce and Navigation

65 Video Segments

The Future River: Restoring and Planning

Select a Topic

- How has the Mississippi River been damaged?
- Why is it important to restore the river?
- What is an ecosystem?
- How is the river being restored?
- How are people helping the river?

Lenovo

Why Is It Important to Restore the River?

Select a Topic

Kat McCain explains the importance of restoration
0:26

Brad Walker on the costs and benefits of a healthy river
2:05

David Wilson on economics and ecology
0:33

Back to Main Menu

Lenovo

Kat McCain
Chief of Environmental Planning
US Army Corps of Engineers
US Army Corps of Engineers
REGIONAL PLANNING &
ENVIRONMENTAL NORT
ST PAUL-ROCK ISLAND-ST LO
is important for this system because of all the stuff

Lenovo

Confluence
Trash

MIGHTY
MISSISSIPPI