



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI)

Partner Briefing on Status and FY 2012 Funding Opportunities

USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

December 22, 2011



Agenda

Introductions and Opening Remarks

David White, Chief NRCS

MRBI Status

**Tom Christensen,
Regional Conservationist, NRCS**

RFP Review

**Myron Taylor, Acting MRBI
Coordinator, NRCS**

Monitoring and Evaluation

**Howard Hankin,
National Aquatic Ecologist NRCS
Martin Lowenfish, Acting
Initiatives Team Leader**

Questions and Answers

**Tom Christensen
Martin Lowenfish
Myron Taylor**

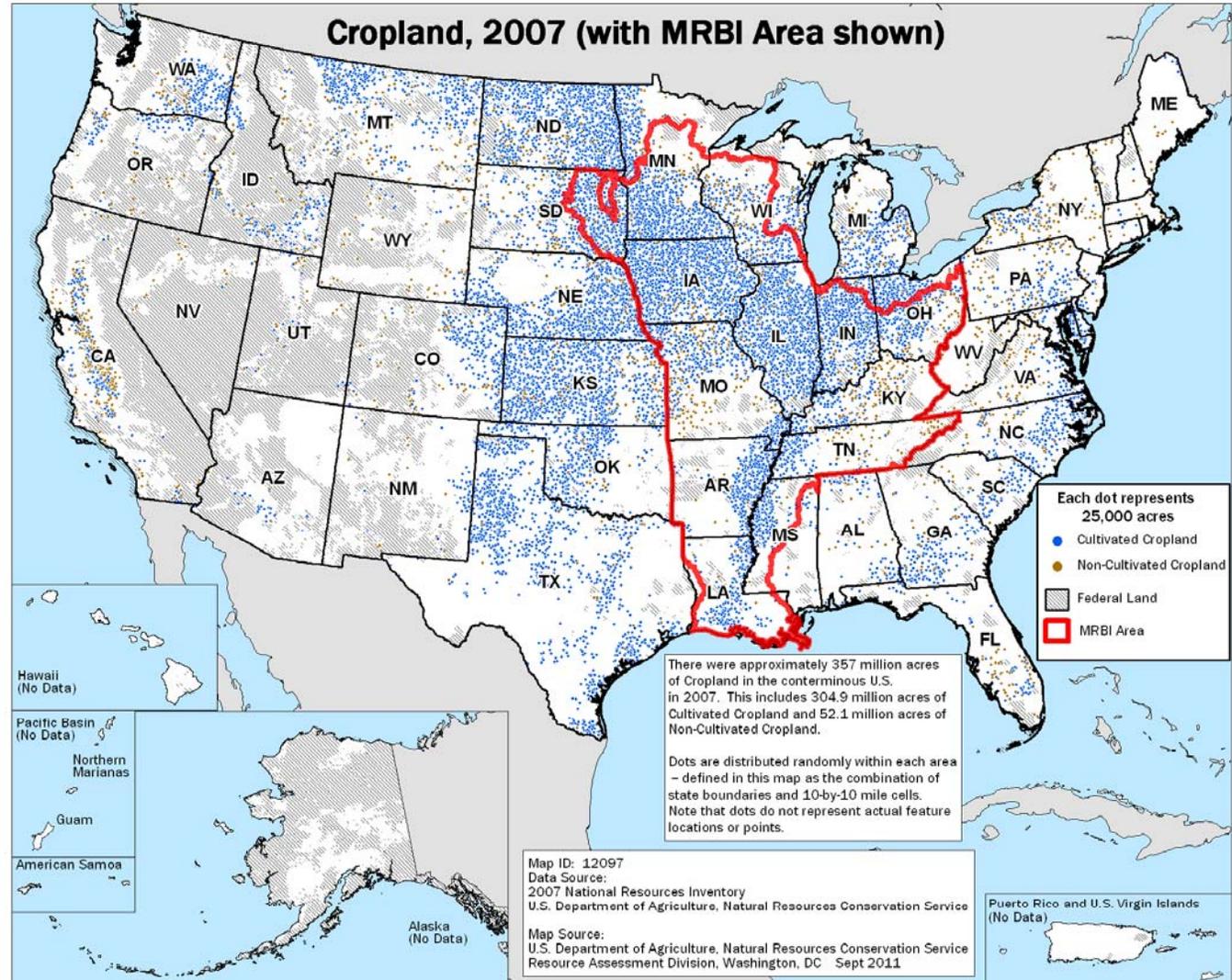
Timeline and Next Steps

Myron Taylor

Closing

Tom Christensen

Location of U.S. Cropland

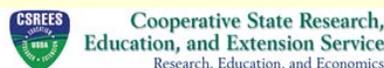




Measuring the Environmental Benefits of Conservation:

Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP)

- CEAP is a multi-agency effort to quantify the environmental effects of conservation practices and programs and develop the science base for managing the agricultural landscape for environmental quality.
- Project findings are used to guide USDA conservation policy and program development and help conservationists, farmers and ranchers make more informed conservation decisions.





CEAP - Cropland Regional Assessments

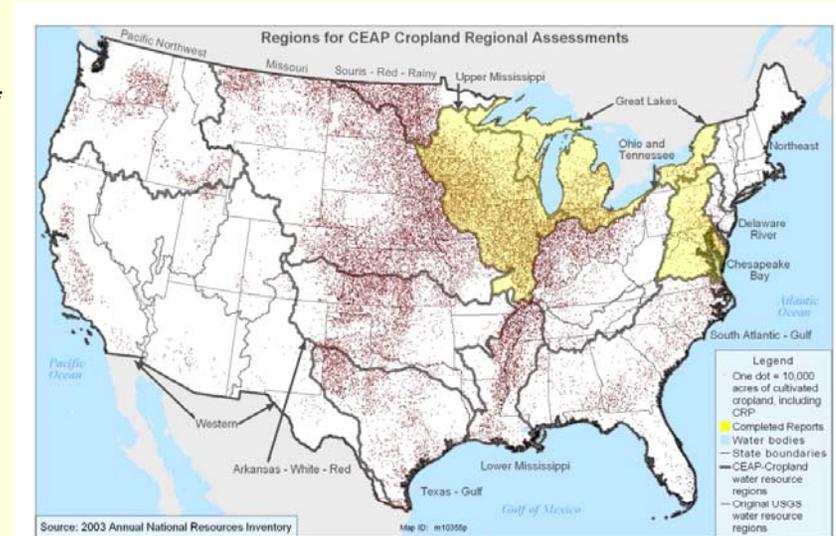
River Sub-Basin CEAP Reports

Published

- Chesapeake Bay
- Upper Mississippi
- Great Lakes

Scheduled for release by early 2012*

- Ohio-Tennessee
- Missouri
- Arkansas-White-Red
- Lower Mississippi
- South Atlantic/Gulf
- Northeast
- Texas Gulf
- Pacific Northwest



* This schedule is subject to change due to two forces:

1. Sometimes reviewers will find items they would like to be considered and NRCS explores them prior to release of a final public document.
2. The Department determines the timing of the release.



Key Findings of the CEAP Cropland Regional Assessments

(Upper Mississippi, Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes)

- The voluntary, incentives-based conservation approach is achieving results.
- Opportunities exist to further reduce sediment and nutrient losses from cropland.
- Comprehensive conservation planning and implementation are essential.
- Targeting enhances effectiveness and efficiency.
- Full treatment of the most vulnerable acres will require a suite of conservation practices.



Key Findings of the CEAP Cropland Regional Assessments (Upper Mississippi, Chesapeake Bay, Great Lakes) 2003-2006 Assessment Period

- Baseline Conservation Practices (percent of cropped acres):
 - ✓ Mulch till or no-till (82-91%)
 - ✓ High or moderately high nitrogen management (38-45%)
 - ✓ High or moderately high phosphorus management (38-54%)
- Edge-of-Field Reductions Because of Conservation Practice Use
 - ✓ Sediment (47-61% reduction)
 - ✓ Nitrogen (surface) (42-45% reduction)
 - ✓ Nitrogen (subsurface) (9-31% reduction)
 - ✓ Total Phosphorus (39-44% reduction)
- Conservation Treatment Needs (percent of cropped acres):
 - ✓ Cropland needing a high level of treatment (19%)
 - ✓ Cropland needing high or moderate level of treatment (53-80%)
 - ✓ Subsurface Nitrogen Loss (45-62%)
 - ✓ Surface Nitrogen Loss (6-24%)
 - ✓ Phosphorus Loss (12-51%)

APEX Modeling

- Based on the findings of the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP), modeling is needed to augment the limited monitoring programs nationwide
- Agricultural Policy/Environmental eXtender (APEX) is being used by CEAP in a national effort to assess the effectiveness of conservation practices
- The model is being used to simulate nutrient, pesticide and sediment losses under conditions of agricultural practices based on farmer surveys from 2003 -2006 at selected National Resource Inventory (NRI) sample points
- NRCS is working to use APEX in characterizing approximately 6 12-digit watersheds within MRBI. This effort to assess the effects of MRBI practice implementation is meant to be complementary to the focused monitoring approach being implemented within MRBI projects.





Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

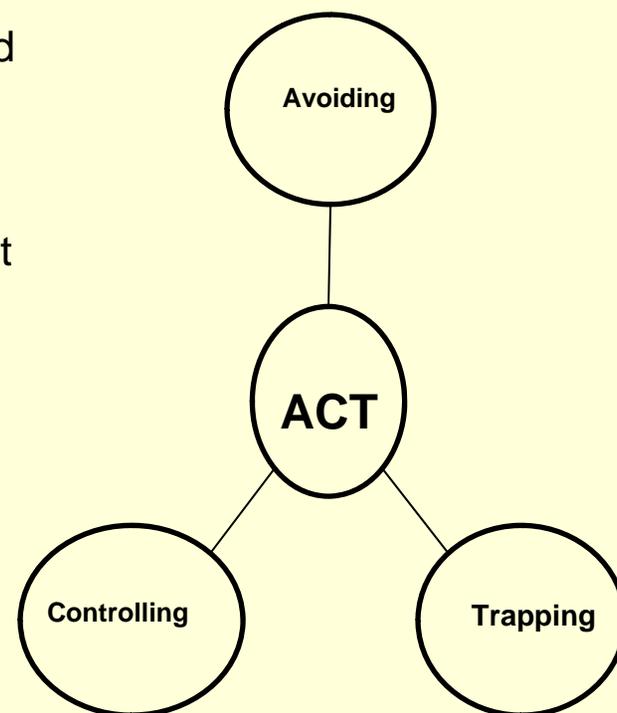
- **Objective**
 - Improve the health of small watersheds within the Mississippi River Basin – connect to agricultural producers and land users on a local level
- **MRBI Priorities**
 - Reduce nutrient runoff
 - Restore and enhance wildlife habitat and wetlands
 - Maintain agricultural productivity
- **MRBI Uses a Systems Approach**
 - Conservation practices are used in combination for greater effectiveness
- **Examples of Conservation Practices**
 - Nutrient management
 - Conservation tillage
 - Cover crops
 - Erosion control structures
 - Waste storage facilities
 - Management of drainage water



Avoiding, Controlling, Trapping



- Avoiding
 - Nutrient management
 - Rate, Timing, Form, Method
 - Adaptive nutrient management
- Controlling
 - Residue and tillage management
 - Management of drainage water
- Trapping
 - Vegetative buffers
 - Wetlands designed for nutrient removal
 - Bioreactors in tile drainage systems





Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

Target Funding Level – FY 2010 through FY 2013

- Based on project requests, dedicating \$80 million in financial assistance each year
 - Plus associated technical assistance
- This is in addition to regular NRCS program funding in the 13 Initiative states



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

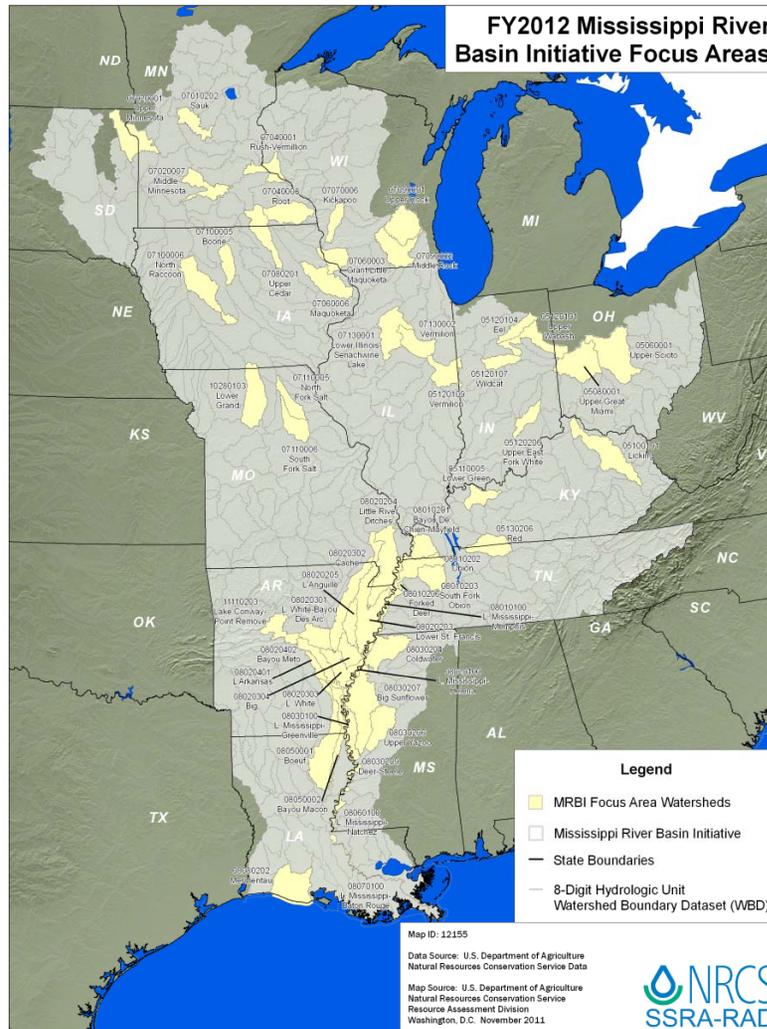
Programs used in MRBI

All are voluntary NRCS Farm Bill Programs

- **Conservation Cooperative Partnership Initiative (CCPI):**
 - Competitive process through which entities submit project proposals
 - **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
 - **Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)**
 - **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**
- **Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP)**
 - Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP)
- **Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)**
 - Component of EQIP



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative



FY 2010

- 12 States
- 41 Focus Areas

FY 2011

- 13 States added South Dakota
- 43 Focus Areas:
 - Added one in South Dakota
 - Added one in Mississippi

FY 2012

- 13 States
- 54 Focus Areas
 - Added 13 in AR, WI, MN, IA
 - Removed 2 in WI and IL

Funded 12 Digit HUCs

- 95 Funded Projects
 (Projects are smaller watershed areas within the larger Focus Area watersheds)

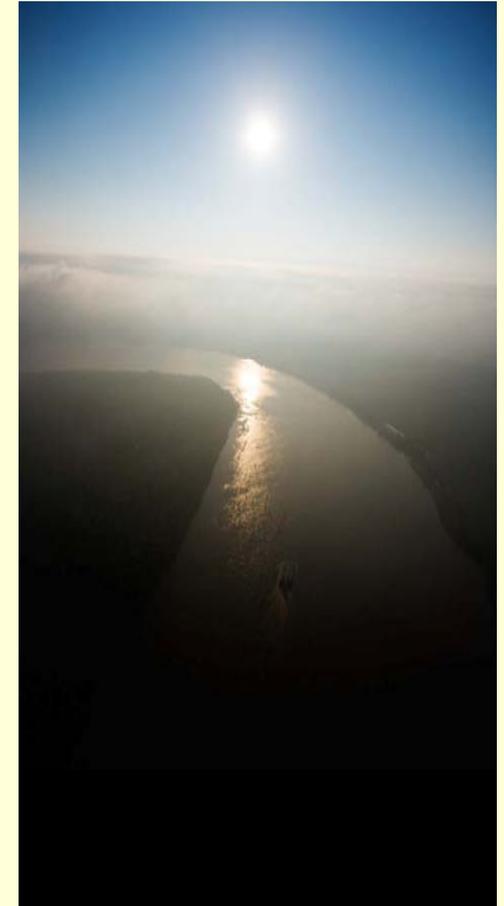
Geographic Area

Arkansas-Illinois-Indiana-Iowa-Kentucky-Louisiana-Minnesota-
 Mississippi-Missouri-Ohio-South Dakota-Tennessee-Wisconsin

Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

2010 Accomplishments

- More than 700 EQIP, WHIP, and CSP contracts supporting conservation on private lands for over \$32.8 million in financial assistance
- 18 WREP projects for over \$4 million in financial assistance
- 12 CIG projects for about \$2.9 million in financial assistance
- Work being correlated with CEAP report findings
- First year of edge-of-field monitoring has been completed





2010 Conservation Activities

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) kicked off the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI) in 2010. The 12-state initiative builds on the conservation programs in the basin, and offers agricultural opportunity for voluntary technical and financial assistance.

NRCS has identified MRBI as a priority due to water quality issues leading to the health of local water bodies and a partnership using a conservation systems approach to help producers use an agricultural fields and minimize water pollution as a source of practice to control soil erosion, and the Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) conservation programs.

Key conservation practices include nutrient management, erosion and tillage management. Producers also can create streams. On a voluntary basis, participants can receive field monitoring water quality systems in selected areas. NRCS assesses environmental outcomes of this work.

The 12 states participating are Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, Tennessee and 11 others. For more information, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov.

2) HELPING PEOPLE HELP THE LAND - MRBI

Arkansas

PRODUCER PROTECTS RESOURCES THROUGH PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

Historically, fluctuating water levels and flooding have caused erosion problems on the Willow Bend Farm in Conway County. "My dad and I had Conservation Service when I was a kid to help deal with erosion problems," says Frank Spitzer, manager of the farm. "I also used technical and financial help with the erosion control. I just didn't need that kind of help until the MRBI project - through CCPI. The conservation plan calls for monitoring and evaluation of nutrient runoff, water transfer and utilization, planting cover crops, nutrient management with grid sampling, a nutrient for water control, vertical enhancement, conservation crop rotation and fencing off a wooded area."

Through the project, NRCS and its partners will help agricultural producers in 15 sub-watersheds of the Lake Conway-Peace Reservoir Basin address a range of water quality issues by implementing nutrient runoff and water management conservation systems - all of which will help improve water quality in the Mississippi River Basin.

Conroy County District Conservation District (CCD) staff discuss the monitoring program planned on a Willow Bend Farm with Frank Spitzer, farm manager.

Illinois

CONSERVATION SYSTEMS FOCUS OF INDIAN CREEK WATERSHED

The Indian Creek Watershed project is designed to illustrate the efficacy, value and impact of agricultural conservation systems on watershed environmental health. Through this high-profile watershed project, local farmers will help demonstrate and test innovative conservation practices, including conservation tillage, nutrient management, water management and beneficial cover crop use.

The Indian Creek Watershed, covering 52,480 acres, flows to the South Fork of the Vermilion River, one of NRCS' MRBI focus areas. Agricultural producers the watershed, 95 percent of the land is cropland and the average farm is 200 acres. Implementing conservation practices over the planned six-year project will benefit watershed water quality and farm profitability.

NRCS, the Livingston County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), and the Conservation Technology Information Center (CTIC) are leading the project, in cooperation with Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Agri-Domin Corporation, AgriLink, John Deere, and other partners.

Indiana

STUDENTS MONITOR WATER QUALITY, BIOLOGY ON THE MIDDLE EEL

Produce Jury Steffen from Manchester College has been interested in water quality in the Middle Eel Watershed for a long time. Jury and his students are using automatic water samplers and biological monitoring to better understand nutrient loading and biological systems in all the major tributaries in the watershed.

Through the MRBI partnership collaboration, NRCS is helping to fund conservation practices such as no-till, cover crops, and high-level nutrient and pest management. Partners include Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management, and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources.

The 2010 MRBI Report is on the NRCS website and 2011 report should be available soon

MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN HEALTHY WATERSHEDS INITIATIVE - MRBI | 6

Fiscal Year 2010 Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative - NRCS Financial and Technical Assistance*

State	MRBI Projects		Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)		Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)		Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)		Wildlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP)		Conservation Innovation Grants	
	No. of Projects	Addressed Acres	Planned & Technical Assistance	No. of Acres	Planned & Technical Assistance	No. of Acres	Planned & Technical Assistance	No. of Acres	Planned & Technical Assistance	No. of Acres	Dollar Obligation	No. of Projects
Arkansas	4	7	\$1,948,731	93	\$1,947	1	\$189,869	8	---	---	---	---
Illinois	1	8	\$146,101	102	---	---	\$102,437	8	\$104,461	18	\$224,278	1
Indiana	1	4	\$441,979	17	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Iowa	2	10	\$1,405,146	46	\$1,748	1	\$215,101	21	---	---	\$104,801	2
Kentucky	1	8	\$1,743,793	41	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Louisiana	4	8	\$152,242	12	---	---	\$18,131	---	---	---	---	---
Minnesota	4	1	\$1,791,371	19	---	---	---	---	---	---	\$104,874	1
Mississippi	4	8	\$477,818	101	---	---	---	\$1,892,719	7	\$424,271	---	---
Missouri	11	7	\$1,812,421	161	\$48,201	16	\$10,131	4	---	---	---	---
Ohio	2	8	\$1,773,897	41	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Tennessee	1	8	\$144,118	51	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
Texas	1	1	\$44,100	14	---	---	---	---	---	---	\$104,874	---
Virginia	1	1	\$1,824,871	104	\$14,618	18	\$1,649,991	44	\$4,718,421	19	\$1,841,101	10
Totals												

State	NRCS Financial and Technical Assistance Totals	
	Planned & Technical Assistance	No. of Acres
Arkansas	\$4,418,144	44
Illinois	\$1,146,461	17
Indiana	\$1,373,490	19
Iowa	\$1,105,010	71
Kentucky	\$1,732,794	42
Louisiana	\$175,373	12
Minnesota	\$1,812,146	19
Mississippi	\$9,294,146	111
Missouri	\$1,810,149	191
Ohio	\$1,773,897	42
Tennessee	\$144,118	11
Texas	\$44,100	14
Totals	\$11,644,187	714

**Funds obligated in FY10 (08/01/09 through 03/31/10)*
***EQIP FY10 provided competitively to producers on a matching basis to implement conservation conservation technologies and approaches.*

South Dakota: MRBI not available in 2010; EQ will be eligible in 2011.
 In fiscal year (FY) 2011, projects that were approved in FY 2010 will receive retroactive funding to cover additional EQIP, WHIP, CSP, and WREP contracts. Projects will receive the following FY 2011 technical and financial assistance: EQIP - \$4.5 million, WHIP - \$4.5 million, WREP - \$4.5 million, and CSP - an allocation of \$2,372 acres.



2010 Conservation Activities | Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative
 For more information visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/mrbi/mrbi_overview.html

Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

FY 2011 Accomplishments

- 19 new CCPI and WREP projects approved in June 2011 that provided more than \$14.4 million in financial assistance to new project areas
 - CCPI – \$9.2 million
 - WREP – \$5.2 million
- New contracting continued in the 2010 project areas
 - CCPI - \$29 million
 - WREP - \$9.4 million
- NRCS collaborated with EPA, USGS, and others on monitoring (collaboration is on-going)
- 8 Conservation Innovation Grants were approved for more than \$3.7 million





Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

FY 2011 EQIP, WHIP, and WREP Financial Assistance Obligations through CCPI and WREP Projects

Total FY 2011 EQIP, CSP, WHIP and WREP MRBI FA Obligated: \$50,928,671

- Contracts entered in FY 2011: 1,133
- New acres under contract in FY 2011: 238,074

Program	FY 2011 Obligations	Number of Contracts	Acres Under Contract
EQIP	\$ 35,910,938	1,019	188,751
WHIP	\$ 183,485	34	503
WREP	\$ 13,667,285	24	4,587
CSP	\$ 1,166,963	56	48,820

NOTES:

- *These are preliminary REAP data which have NOT yet been certified .*
- *Includes contracts in MRBI projects (CCPI and WREP) approved in FY 2010 and FY 2011.*
- *Additional “general” program funds may have also been obligated in these same project areas but are not accounted for in the figures shown above.*
- *Technical assistance data, were not readily available.*

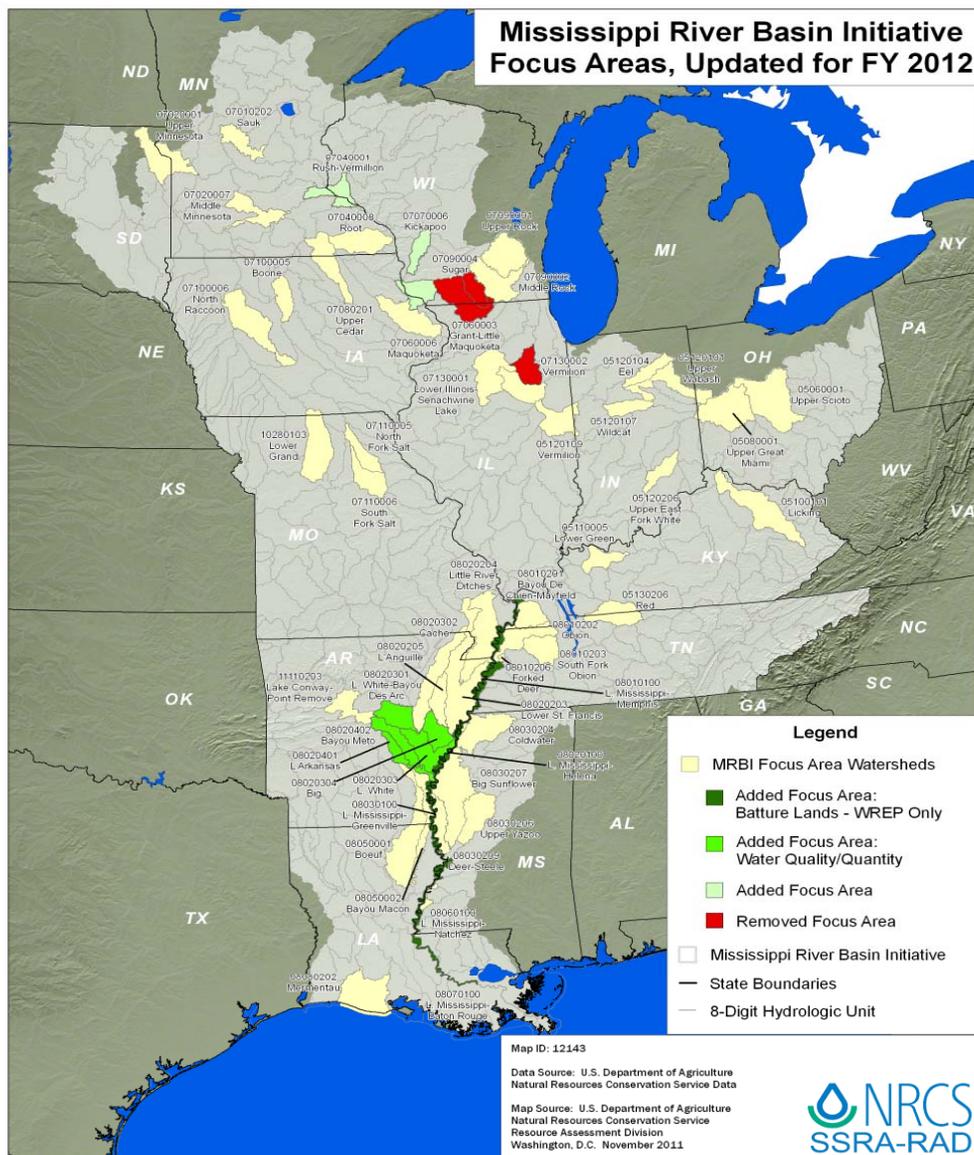


Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

Fiscal Year 2012

- Focus Areas were evaluated to ensure that they still met the goals and objectives of MRBI
- NRCS State Conservationists, in consultation with their State Technical Committee:
 - Determined if additional areas were needed to address new opportunities and issues, especially agricultural drainage water management (in the Upper Mississippi River Basin), critical water quantity issues (in the Lower Mississippi River Basin), and enhanced nutrient management; and
 - Reviewed the focus areas that have shown little or no activity to pursue MRBI projects to determine if they should be considered for removal from the Initiative.

Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative



Results of Reviews

- No changes: 4 states
 - Indiana
 - Minnesota
 - Ohio
 - South Dakota

- Recommend Removals: 2 states, 3 watersheds
 - Illinois (1)
 - Wisconsin (2)

- Recommend Additions: 8 states, 13 watersheds
 (several are shared watersheds)
 - 5 focus areas for Batture lands effort (WREP only; AR, KY, LA, MS, MO, TN)
 - 5 focus areas for water quantity (Arkansas)
 - 3 focus areas to replace two removed focus areas (Wisconsin; one shared with Iowa; one shared with Minnesota.)

- Resulting in 54 Focus Areas for FY 2012



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

Fiscal Year 2012

- Projects approved in fiscal years 2010 and 2011 will receive fiscal year 2012 funding up to \$65.4 million to award new contracts in those project areas
- A Request for Proposals for MRBI CCPI and WREP will be published in the near future
 - Will allow for new project areas to be identified
- New opportunities and issues have been identified in MRBI:
 - Agricultural drainage water management (in the Upper Mississippi River Basin),
 - Critical water quantity issues (in the Lower Mississippi River Basin)
 - Adaptive nutrient management



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

Strategic Watershed Action Teams (SWAT)

- In fiscal year 2011, NRCS provided \$4 million for the establishment of SWATs in MRBI (\$20 million across 9 initiatives)
- Provide planning and implementation assistance, outreach, etc.
- Helps fill in gaps where NRCS does not have certain disciplines in place
- SWAT staff are not federal employees, but rather partner employees
- Must have partner matching funds
 - MRBI's \$4 million has been matched by more than \$2.4 million
- MRBI will have 126 additional full-time equivalents through SWAT (over a three year period)
 - More than 40 full-time equivalents per year for each of three years
- Accounts for the most “boots on the ground” from all the initiatives
- NRCS and partners have 23 agreements signed for MRBI
- Partners include state agencies, county government entities, NGOs, others

Questions?

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/farmland/initiatives/?&cid=nrcsdev11_024120

Follow-up questions can be sent to:

CCPI or General MRBI:

- Myron Taylor, Acting MRBI Coordinator

myron.taylor@mn.usda.gov

- Martin Lowenfish, Acting Initiatives Coordinator

martin.lowenfish@wdc.usda.gov

WREP:

- Jessica Groves, WRP Program Manager

jessica.groves@wdc.usda.gov

CIG:

- Gregorio Cruz, CIG Program Manager

gregorio.cruz@wdc.usda.gov





Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

Monitoring and Evaluation

- In order to help assess the environmental outcomes of MRBI work, the Initiative utilizes a three-tiered monitoring and evaluation process:
 - Edge-of-Field
 - In-Stream
 - Watershed Level (Pour Point)
- NRCS can cost-share with land users on the edge-of-field monitoring, but need partners to assist land users with this activity
- NRCS also relies on partners to perform the in-stream and watershed-level monitoring and evaluation

NRCS has collaborated with EPA, USGS, and others on monitoring and evaluation but needs greater commitments from agencies with this expertise and experience to assist with monitoring and evaluation



Mississippi River Basin healthy Watersheds Initiative

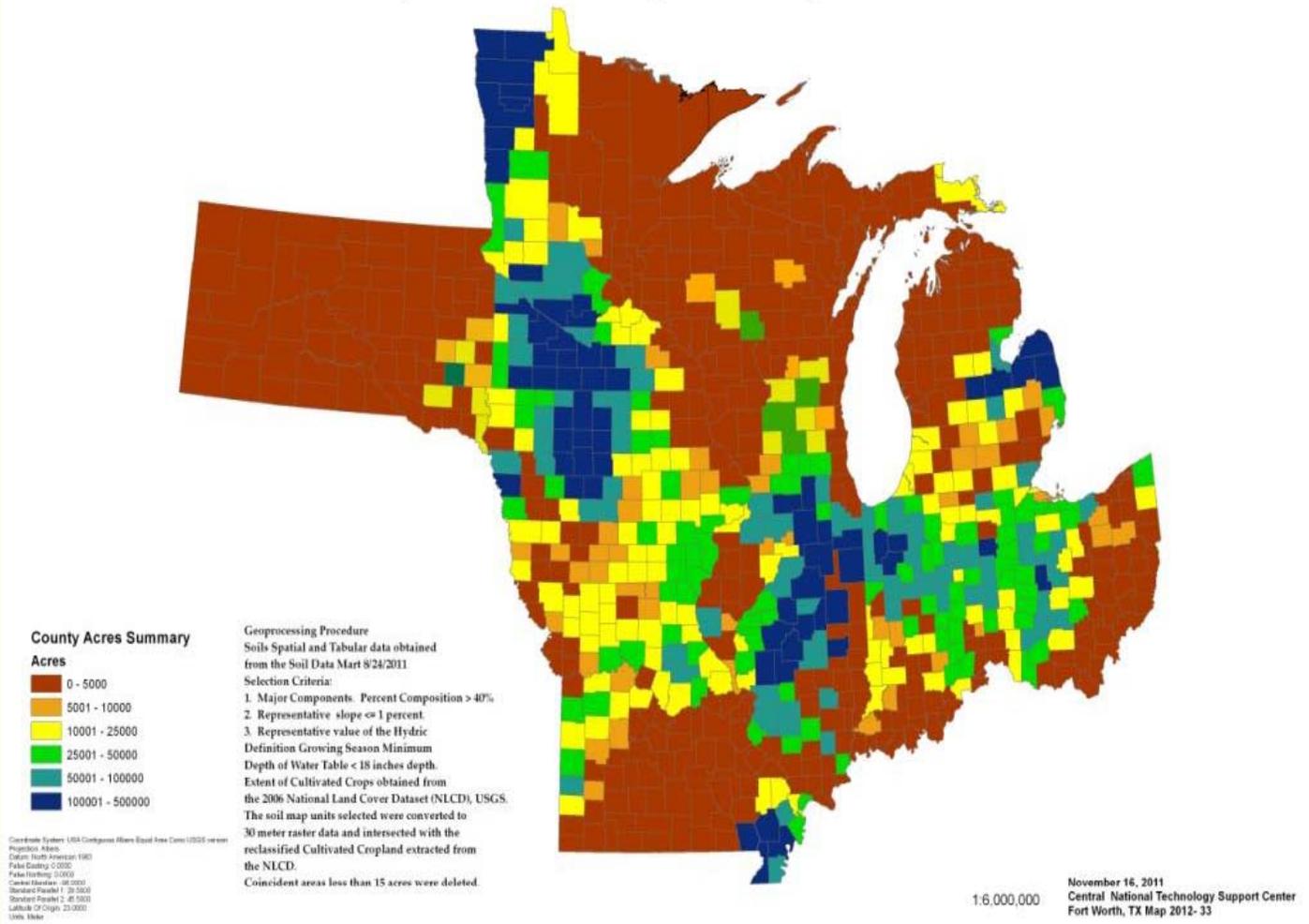
Management of Agricultural Drainage Water

- Foster greater adoption of this management system by implementing strategic actions designed to overcome past barriers and limitations, and capitalize on lessons learned.
 - Not about draining new acres
 - Focus is managing drainage water for improved environmental outcomes and sustaining crop production
 - Use a conservation systems approach – ADWM with nutrient management, conservation tillage, crop rotations, cover crops, etc.
 - Consideration must be given to watershed/landscape context – downstream flow, flooding, groundwater
 - Partnerships and collaboration will be essential – research, demonstration, technical and financial assistance, assessment and evaluation, etc.

Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative



Cropland Suitable for Drainage Water Management



NOTE: This map is Draft and is being refined.



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

Improve the health of the Mississippi River Basin by working with producers to help them voluntarily implement conservation systems which:

- Avoid, control and trap nutrient runoff
- Restore/enhance wildlife habitat
- Maintain agricultural productivity



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

- NRCS plans to offer this Initiative for four fiscal years: 2010, 2011, 2012, and 2013.
- NRCS will dedicate up to \$80 million in each of these fiscal years.
- Funding is above regular program funding levels in the MRBI States.



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

- Projects that were approved in FY 2010 received FY 2011 CCPI funding for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), and/or FY 2011 Wetland Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP).
 - Projects approved in FY 2010 and 2011 that requested future year funding do not need to resubmit a proposal for the same 12-digit project area.
- Funding amounts were 75 percent of what was requested in the project proposal.
- FY 2012 funding being distributed to states totals approximately \$57 million.
- Funding must be obligated in producer contracts by July 1, 2012.



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

- New MRBI funding opportunities include the following:
 - The Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI) and Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP) RFP for MRBI will be published in the Federal Register in January 2012.
 - The MRBI Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG) is a subpart of the national CIG Announcement for Program Funding that will be published on grants.gov in January 2012.



Details, details, details...

Please read and follow the
guidance provided in the RFP!



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

Financial Assistance Funding for Proposals:

- Up to \$11.74 million for Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative (CCPI)
 - A voluntary conservation initiative that enables the use of certain conservation programs, combined with eligible partner resources, to provide technical and financial assistance to landusers to enhance conservation outcomes and achieve resource conservation objectives.
- Up to \$25 million for Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program (WREP)
 - A component of the Wetlands Reserve Program that leverages partner assistance
- Up to \$5 million for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)



Submitting CCPI and WREP Proposals

- Proposals must be received on or before the 2012 cutoff date
- May be submitted via email or the U.S. Postal Service.
 - E-mail submission is highly encouraged.
 - Courier (FedEx, UPS) delivery is not an option.
 - Email boxes have been set up for CCPI and WREP
 - If submitting a paper copy, they are to be mailed to the NRCS NHQ (Martin Lowenfisch, Acting Initiatives Coordinator).
 - Email and hard-copy addresses may be found in the RFP.
 - Do not send the same proposal both electronically and to the Post Office Box address; **use only one method**
- Copy to the appropriate State Conservationist (STC).
 - STCs will review and provide a recommendation to the NRCS Chief to approve or disapprove

Who May Apply

- Federally recognized Indian tribes
- State and local units of government
- Farmer cooperatives
- Producer associations
- Institutions of higher education
- Non-governmental organizations
 - with a history of working with producers to address conservation priorities related to agricultural production and/or non-industrial private forestland

Note: Individual agricultural producers are not an eligible partner entity and may not submit CCPI or WREP proposals. They may, however, participate by applying for program assistance through their local NRCS office in the approved proposal areas.

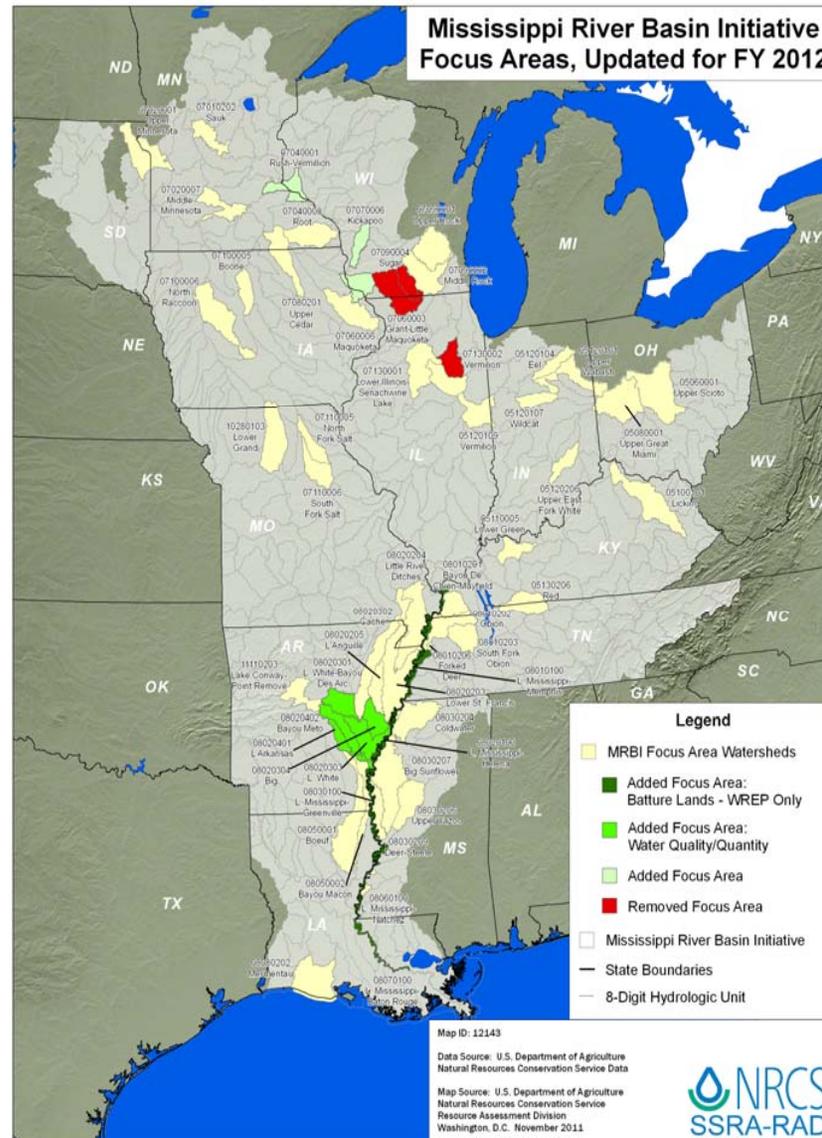




Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

- Must submit separate proposals for CCPI, WREP and CIG.
- MRBI is not a grant program.
 - No technical assistance funds, including for monitoring, will be provided to partners through the MRBI-CCPI, MRBI-WREP or MRBI-CIG agreement.
 - State Conservationist may enter into separate agreements for technical assistance through normal mechanisms.

Watersheds Focus Areas



FY 2012 Focus Area Watershed Additions:

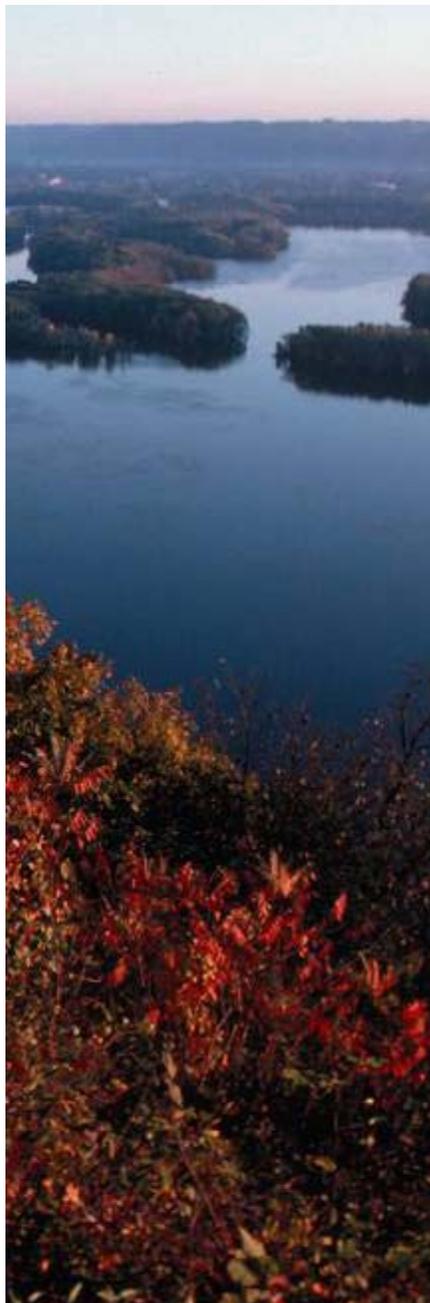
- Rush Vermillion (WI & MN)
- Kickapoo (WI)
- Grant-Little Maquoketa (WI & IA)

Water Quality/Quantity Focus

- Lower White-Bayou Des Arc (AR)
- Bayou Meto (AR)
- Lower Arkansas (AR)
- Lower White (AR)
- Big (AR)

Batture Lands – WREP Only

- Lower Mississippi-Memphis (AR, KY, MO & TN)
- Lower Mississippi-Helena (AR & MS)
- Lower Mississippi-Natchez (LA & MS)
- Lower Mississippi-Baton Rouge (LA)
- Lower Mississippi-Greenville (AR, LA & MS)



DESIGNATED FOCUS AREAS FOR THE MRBI FY 2012 (8-DIGIT HUCS)

State(s)	Watershed	Hydrologic Unit Code
Arkansas/Missouri	Cache	08020302
Arkansas	Lake Conway-Point Remove	11110203
Arkansas	L'Anguille	08020205
Arkansas/Missouri	Lower St. Francis	08020203
Arkansas	Bayou Meto	08020402
Arkansas	Lower White	08020303
Arkansas	Lower White-Bayou Des Arc	08020301
Arkansas	Lower Arkansas	08020401
Arkansas	Big	08020304
Arkansas/Kentucky/Missouri/ Tennessee	Lower Mississippi – Memphis	08010100
Arkansas/Mississippi	Lower Mississippi – Helena	08020100
Arkansas/Louisiana/Mississippi	Lower Mississippi – Greenville	08030100
Illinois	Lower Illinois-Senachwine Lake	07130001
Illinois	Vermillion (Upper Mississippi River sub-basin)	07130002
Illinois/Indiana	Vermillion (Upper Ohio River sub-basin)	05120109
Indiana	Eel	05120104
Indiana	Upper East Fork White	05120206
Indiana	Wildcat	05120107
Indiana/Ohio	Upper Wabash	05120101
Iowa	Boone	07100005
Iowa	Maquoketa	07060006
Iowa	North Raccoon	07100006
Iowa/Minnesota	Upper Cedar	07080201
Kentucky/Tennessee	Bayou De Chien-Mayfield	08010201
Kentucky	Licking	05100101
Kentucky	Lower Green	05110005
Louisiana	Mermentau	08080202
Louisiana	Lower Mississippi – Baton Rouge	08070100
Louisiana/Arkansas	Bayou Macon	08050002
Louisiana/Arkansas	Boeuf River	08050001



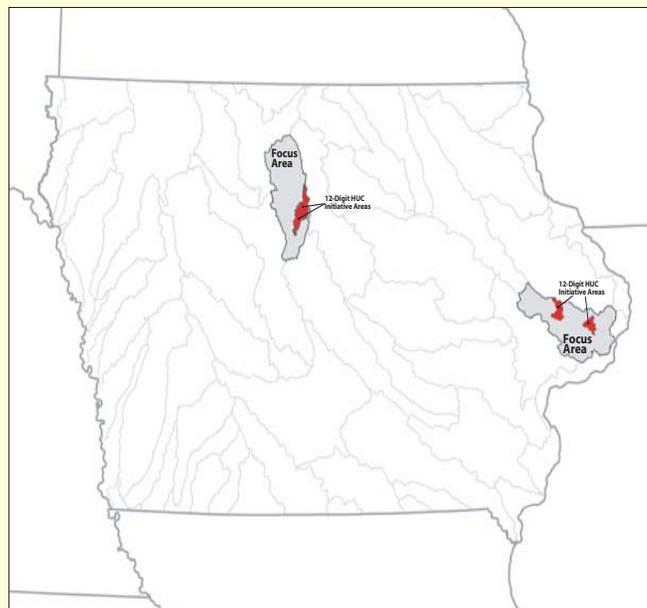
DESIGNATED FOCUS AREAS FOR THE MRBI FY 2012 (8-DIGIT HUCS), continued

State(s)	Watershed	Hydrologic Unit Code
Louisiana/Mississippi	Lower Mississippi – Natchez	08060100
Minnesota	Middle Minnesota	07020007
Minnesota	Root	07040008
Minnesota	Sauk	07010202
Mississippi	Big Sunflower	08030207
Mississippi/Louisiana/Arkansas	Deer-Steele	08030209
Mississippi	Upper Yazoo	08030206
Missouri/Iowa	Lower Grand	10280103
Mississippi	Coldwater Creek	08030204
Missouri	North Fork Salt	07110005
Missouri	South Fork Salt	07110006
Missouri/Arkansas	Little River Ditches	08020204
Ohio/Indiana	Upper Great Miami	05080001
Ohio	Upper Scioto	05060001
Tennessee	Forked Deer	08010206
Tennessee/Kentucky	Obion	08010202
Tennessee	South Fork Obion	08010203
Tennessee/Kentucky	Red River	05130206
South Dakota/Minnesota	Upper Minnesota	07020001
Wisconsin/Illinois	Upper Rock	07090001
Wisconsin	Kickapoo	07070006
Wisconsin	Middle Rock	07090002
Wisconsin/Iowa	Grant-Little Maquoketa	07060003
Wisconsin/Minnesota	Rush-Vermillion	07040001



Watershed Selection

- Proposals must address one or more 12-digit HUC watersheds within a designated 8-digit HUC focus area.
 - Multiple 12-digit HUCs must be contiguous
- 12-digit HUCs list is available on the NRCS MRBI website



http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/stelprdb1045823.pdf



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

Partners may, through the partnership agreements:

- Facilitate the submission of program applications
- Encourage cooperation and promote innovation
- Provided additional technical and financial assistance
- Recommend tailored practice lists or wetland activities
- Recommend program flexibilities (CCPI)
- Provide other resources, including monitoring and evaluation



CCPI

- FY 2012 financial assistance funding will be made available to eligible producers located within the approved project areas through:
 - EQIP – up to \$9 million
 - WHIP – \$500,000
 - CSP – 140,000 acres
- CCPI uses the funds, policies, and processes of these programs to deliver assistance to eligible producers to implement approved core and supporting practices, enhancements, and activities under MRBI.
- Partners are not required to provide financial or technical assistance but will receive higher priority consideration.



Selection and Review

State Conservationist will review proposals for:

- Potential cooperation or duplication of efforts
- Adherence to program requirements
- Benefits of implementation
- Local issue or concerns

Provide recommendation to the Chief

MRBI - WREP

- FA Funding Availability: Up to \$25 million.
- Enter into multi-year agreements with partners
 - Not to exceed 4 years including Fiscal Year 12
- Target and leverage resources to carry out high priority wetland protection, restoration, and enhancement activities; improve wildlife habitat and water quality
- WREP is a component of WRP
 - Land and landowners must meet all eligibility criteria
 - May enroll in options available under WRP
 - Compensation will be based on WRP values
 - Financial assistance funds delivered directly to landowners who apply for WRP through local NRCS office
 - Acquisition, restoration and management must conform to WRP guidelines
 - Landowners must be able to provide a clear title



MRBI - WREP

- WREP requires partners to contribute a match of:
 - In-kind only contributions of at least 20 percent of the restoration costs,
 - Cash-only contribution of at least 5 percent of the restoration costs, or
 - A combination of in-kind and cash contributions of at least 20 percent of the restoration costs.
- Partners who provide additional financial or technical assistance will receive higher priority consideration even if those activities do not count toward the match contribution.
- Additional non-match FA/TA may be for monitoring or management; acquisition, design or implementation services; outreach; landowner incentives; and others activities.



MRBI - WREP

Landowners must:

- Participate in a project area defined by an approved agreement
- Meet WRP program eligibility requirements
- Protect, restore, or enhance wetlands
- Be evaluated and ranked by NRCS and selected based on most likely to achieve program objectives
- Enroll in a permanent easement, 30-year easement, or 30-year contract (on tribal land only), or 10-year Restoration Agreement

Land must:

- Meet WRP program eligibility requirements
- Be capable of achieving successful, cost-effective restoration





Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

- NRCS Chief will make final selection based on ranking criteria
- Applicant will be notified of selection or non-selection



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

Upon proposal selection, NRCS will enter a Partnership Agreement with the requesting partner(s). This agreement will:

Identify roles of partner(s) and NRCS:

- Monitoring and evaluation responsibilities
- Format and frequency of reports
- Plan of work
- Project budget
- Project schedule
- Other requirements



Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG)

- Announcement: January 2012
- Pre-Proposal Application Period Deadline: January 31, 2012
- Applicant Review Notification: February 29, 2012
- Full proposal package to NRCS NHQ by April 6, 2012
- In FY 2012, NRCS is making available up to \$5 million to support CIG.
- The maximum award amount for any project will not exceed \$1 million. CIG will fund single and multi-year projects, not to exceed 3 years.



Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG)

- The Announcement of Program Funding (APF) will be available at www.grants.gov and at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/cig/index.html>
- Applications may be submitted electronically through www.Grants.gov or nrcscig@wdc.usda.gov
- Applications may be submitted via USPS at the following address:
Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service
Conservation Innovation Grants Program
P.O. Box 2890, Room 6227-S
Washington, D.C. 20013-2890



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

January 3, 2012	Release of Requests for Proposals (CCPI, WREP & CIG)
February 2012	CIG Pre-Proposals Selected
March 19, 2012	Closure of Requests for Proposals
April 2012	Full CIG proposals due
April, 2012	Selection of Project Areas (12-digit HUCs)
May, 2012	Enter into Agreements with Partners in Project Areas, and Conduct signup with Landowners/Producers
All funds obligated by July 1	Obligate funds through Agreements and Contracts; Begin Conservation Practice Implementation



Summary of Changes from the FY 2011 RFP

- Clarified language in many places.
- RFP open period expanded from 60 to 75 days.
- Funding level is up to:
 - \$11.4 million for CCPI
 - \$25 million for WREP
 - \$5 million for CIG.
- Clarified when the projects will start. They must obligate funds in 2012.
- There is now a single point of contact to send the proposals to (Martin Lowenfish) and partners are encouraged to submit electronically.
- WREP has a partner contribution which can include in-kind.
- Project length is now four years instead of five.



CCPI, WREP or CIG Questions?



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

- **Nutrient Management:**
 - Promote adaptive nutrient management strategies to achieve enhanced nutrient management results
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:**
 - Seek options for NRCS monitoring and evaluation practice offerings to include simpler, practical edge-of-field techniques
 - Continue collaboration with EPA, USGS, and others on monitoring and evaluation to compile consistent data that can be used to express outputs towards nutrient reductions within select MRBI small watersheds
- **Outcomes:**
 - Establish clear, achievable, and measurable performance expectations and environmental outcome measures for MRBI



Monitoring and Evaluation Conservation Practice Standard 799

- Barriers to Implementation
- Lessons Learned
- What Partners Can Do to Help



Monitoring and Evaluation Conservation Practice Standard 799

- Purposes of Standard:
 - Provide site specific field data for input into models to predict practice/system performance.
 - Sample and measure practice performance to treat soil, water, air, plant, animal and energy resources.
 - Collect and evaluate data for adaptive management to treat the soil, water, air, plant, animal and energy resources.



Monitoring and Evaluation Barriers to Implementation

Monitoring and Evaluation Practice (799) is available through EQIP to landowner participants for edge-of-field monitoring.

- Landowner concerns:
 - Uneasiness of producer being responsible for the monitoring (i.e. If monitoring doesn't take place landowner is still responsible under the contract)
 - Participant is responsible for 25-50% of the cost of monitoring
 - Federal to federal matching funding will not work
 - Practice payment is a tax liability for participant
 - Producer is responsible for payments to the partner (who conducts the monitoring)



Monitoring and Evaluation

Barriers to Implementation

- Other Barriers:
 - Concerned about regulatory repercussions if monitoring finds issues
 - Monitoring is limited to only three years under EQIP
 - Baseline data may be problematic and years sampling may be insufficient
 - Training is needed for NRCS and Partners



Monitoring and Evaluation

Lessons Learned

- Need:
 - To identify monitoring goals (at differing scales) and expectations with NRCS personnel, potential partners and producers
 - Consistent goals and objectives if monitoring results are to be compared across the watershed
 - To provide real-time examples of monitoring, cost lists, type of data collected, record keeping and data storage
 - A data software package for data entry by partners
 - Training for NRCS employees



Monitoring and Evaluation

What Partners Can Do

- If possible, have a monitoring coordinator to ensure monitoring plan is being implemented properly
 - This can increase the probability of a successful project.
- Have a good idea of what should be in the monitoring plan rather than expect NRCS to develop the plan for them
- Provide resources to monitor using a three-tiered approach:
 - Edge-of-field
 - In-stream
 - 12-digit HUC



Edge-of-field Water Quality Monitoring and Evaluation (Continued)

Partners (17 partners – including 9 universities)

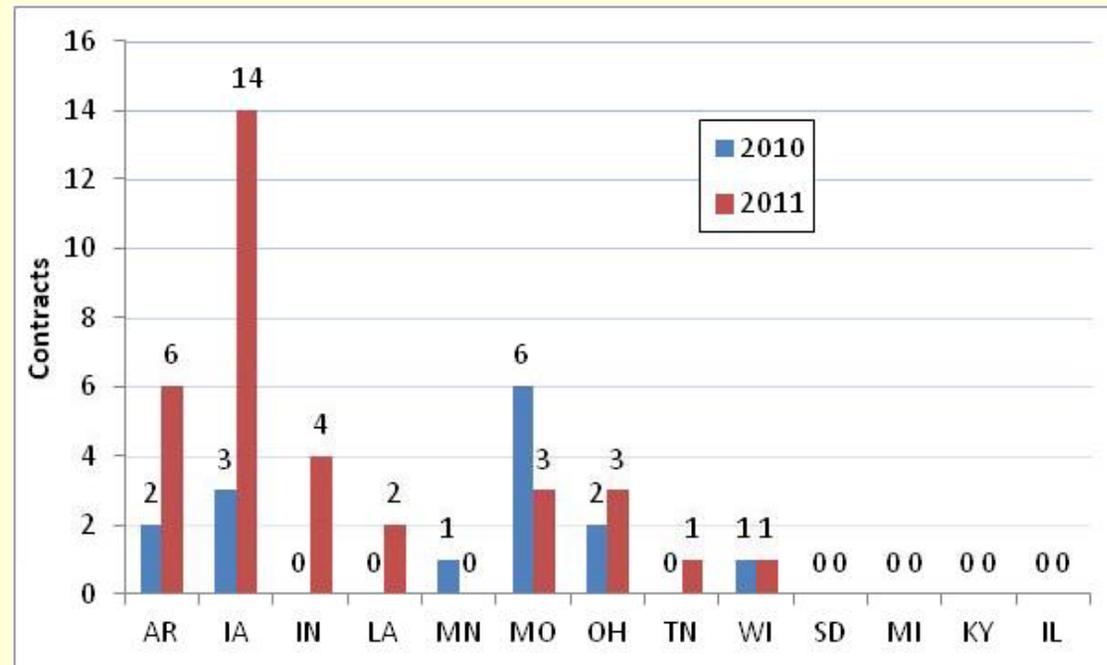
- Austin Peay State University
- Arkansas State University, Jonesboro
- Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Iowa
- Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
- Iowa State University Extension Service
- University of Arkansas
 - Fayetteville
 - Pine Bluff
- University of Louisiana, Monroe
- University of Missouri - Columbia
- Agricultural Research Service
- United States Geological Survey
- Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality
- Dane County Land Conservation Department
- Sauk River Watershed District
- Delaware Soil & Water Conservation District
- Iowa Soybean Association
- The On-Farm Network



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative

EQIP Contracts Including CPS 799 Fiscal Years 2010 & 2011

- 49 contracts



Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative





Thank you for your participation!

http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/farbill/initiatives/?&cid=nrcsdev11_024120

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