



News Release

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Corps' Mississippi Valley Division and National Audubon Society sign regional agreement to strengthen environmental partnership

Vicksburg, Miss., April 7, 2009 – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) and the National Audubon Society signed an agreement to strengthen collaboration and communication aimed at restoring and protecting habitat and water quality along the Mississippi River, one of this nation's greatest natural and economic assets.

The regional Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) unites ecosystem restoration experts from the environmental and natural resource staff of MVD's six districts with those of Audubon's Mississippi River Initiative to collaborate on key conservation initiatives within the 12 states and 370,000-square-mile geographic boundary of MVD that stretches from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico.

Corps and Audubon staff have already begun exploring sustainable management of important habitats such as the Atchafalaya River system in Louisiana; Mississippi River diversions to restore wetlands and strengthen storm protection below New Orleans; and conservation education projects at places such as the Mississippi and Missouri River confluence near St. Louis.

“A strengthened relationship between the Corps and Audubon is absolutely essential,” said Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh. “And the MOU will foster even greater collaborative achievements as both organizations strive to preserve our Nation's environment.”

“Together, we can meet the broad array of challenges to keep this vital working river a river that works,” added Audubon Vice President Roger Still. “We can advance the restoration of Mississippi Delta habitats that ensure a sustainable future for the people of coastal Louisiana. We can make certain the Mississippi remains as a globally significant migratory flyway for birds, and that it supports other important wildlife species. And we can protect water quality along entire length of the river.”

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Corps and Audubon representatives will meet in May for joint planning and implementation efforts.

“This agreement must be more than a piece of paper,” Walsh said. “The importance of this great river to our nation’s economy and to our natural heritage demands that we work together for a balanced, sustainable future.”

The MOU was announced aboard the Motor Vessel Mississippi before members of the Mississippi River Commission. The panel is making its annual high-water inspection tour as part of its mission to advise Congress and the administration of President Barack Obama on the management of the Mississippi River.

Col. Michael Wehr, District Engineer for the Corps’ Vicksburg District, assisted with the signing ceremony. The Vicksburg District will lead in implementing the agreement.

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Now in its second century, Audubon connects people with birds, nature and the environment that supports us all. Our national network of community-based nature centers, chapters, scientific, education, and advocacy programs engages millions of people from all walks of life in conservation action to protect and restore the natural world.

The Mississippi Valley Division encompasses 370,000 square miles, 28 million people, and portions of 12 states (from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico) bordering the 2,348 mile-long Mississippi River. The division comprises six interdependent districts with a regional headquarters in Vicksburg and district offices in St. Paul, Minn.; Rock Island, Ill.; St. Louis, Mo.; Memphis, Tenn.; Vicksburg, Miss.; and New Orleans, La.