

# America's Watershed Initiative

## 2014 Summit

Galt House

Louisville, KY

1 October 2014



# Introduction to the Mississippi River Watershed Report Card

- Overview

- Why a report card?
- What are we grading?
- The process of generating a report card
- The report card: what it is and what it isn't

# Why a report card?

- Starting in 2009, USACE and TNC partnered with Meridian Institute to conduct focus groups and interviews in the watershed
- A key goal of engagement was/is to keep a diversity of interests at the table
- AWI was proposed at the America's Inner Coast Summit in St. Louis (2010) with a goal of uniting the watershed

# Why a report card?

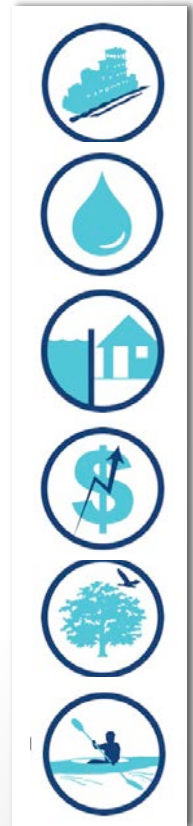
- There was consensus (in surveys by Meridian and among summit participants) that the system could not support the needs of all stakeholders if they continued to work in isolation
- There was, and is, a clear need for effective & coordinated governance of watershed resources
- Also clear that effective governance would have to follow the science – decisions must be data-driven

# Why a report card?

- Examples already existed for how to compile and assess large scale environmental data
  - The Oceans project of the Pew Charitable Trust
  - The Puget Sound Dashboard of Vital Signs
  - The Chesapeake Bay Report Card
- America's Great Watershed Initiative Summit in 2012
  - AWI officially launched
  - A Report Card for the Mississippi River watershed was discussed
  - **Stakeholders** set the goals for the watershed (what to monitor and measure)
  - AWI is not the people on stage, it's YOU

# What are we grading?

- A report card should measure what we value
- AGWI 2012 Summit identified six values as goals for the watershed:
  - to serve as the nation's most valuable river **Transportation** corridor
  - to maintain an abundant, clean **Water Supply**
  - to provide reliable **Flood Control** and risk reduction
  - to support the local, state, and national **Economy**
  - to support and enhance healthy, productive **Ecosystems**
  - to provide opportunities for world-class **Recreation**



# The Process

- Process is critical – the report card could not be generated by a few interested people
- Participation was, and is, actively sought
  - multiple workshops – not dominated by one basin
  - seeking diverse partners – not dominated by one sector
  - informed input – basin leaders and experts engaged
- The process is intended to yield a ***tool*** to move us toward effective and cooperative governance

# Geographic Diversity

## America's Watershed Initiative



Uniting people, land and water across 31 states  
**America's**  
**WATERSHED Initiative**

Within the Mississippi River Watershed boundaries there are 31 states and 41% of the land mass of the contiguous 48 states.



# Diversity of Interests & Issues



# The Product

- The report card is NOT the goal, it is an important tool that will help get to the goal of sustainable management of this amazing resource
- Today's version is a work in progress
  - some data are reliable and analyses are robust
  - some data may not be sufficient for what we want to measure
  - some analytical methods and/or methods for assigning grades still need improvement

# The Product

- Today's version continues the conversation started in 2009
- Grades have known meanings, but deep assessment is nuanced – we need your help in telling a clear, accurate and compelling story
- We are close to doing something historic. Let's finish what we have started!

# Thank You!

- Report Card Sponsors
- Faculty and Staff of the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
- Harald (Jordy) Jordahl and Barbara Allison
- The 2014 AWI Summit Sponsors
- You!

