**IMPORTANT NOTE:** This information is **not to be released or distributed until 10 a.m. Central Time on October 14, 2015**. A photo to accompany this story appears on page 2; please provide credit for this photo, which is listed below the image.

**Ohio & Tennessee River Basins Receive a C in**

**New Mississippi River Watershed Report Card**

The newly released [Report Card](http://www.americaswatershed.org/reportcard) produced by [America’s Watershed Initiative](mailto:http://americaswatershed.org/) (AWI) includes specific information and grades for the five main river basins that make up the 31-state Mississippi River Watershed, including the Ohio and Tennessee river basins. In the Report Card, five goals for the Ohio and Tennessee are measured—water supply, flood control and risk reduction, the economy, ecosystems, recreation and transportation. Overall, the Ohio and Tennessee river basins received an average grade of “C” for these six goals.

The Ohio River and Tennessee River basins are home to 29 million people and cover parts of 14 states. The landscape is dominated by forests, agriculture, pastures for livestock and major cities. River flow is regulated through a series of locks and dams on the Ohio, Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, helping to make it one of the most important transportation corridors in the United States. The basin is rich in coal, gas and water energy industries. In addition to providing numerous recreational opportunities throughout the basin, at least five million residents receive their drinking water from the Ohio River.

This basin has had an increase in wetland areas, had high employment in river dependent industries compared to the national average, experienced low delays at locks, and has relatively low water stress. However, the basin also had declining participation in outdoor activities and hunting and fishing licenses. It also has poor infrastructure condition and maintenance, and nearly 3 percent of water supply systems reported violations.

Because the Ohio River Basin is in the high rainfall area of the northeastern United States, it supplies most of the water flow to the Mississippi River system. The Ohio River Basin, including the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, is an important transportation corridor for the industrial eastern United States and a source of abundant hydropower. The low scores for transportation infrastructure and maintenance warn of catastrophic failures, which could have substantial negative impacts to industry here. The high population and industrial uses may contribute to relatively low water quality in this basin.

The complete analysis for the Ohio and Tennessee river basins in the Report Card—along with information about the other four basins that make up America’s Watershed—is available online at [AmericasWatershed.org/ReportCard](http://www.AmericasWatershed.org/ReportCard).

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The Ohio River. Credit Mark Godfrey