



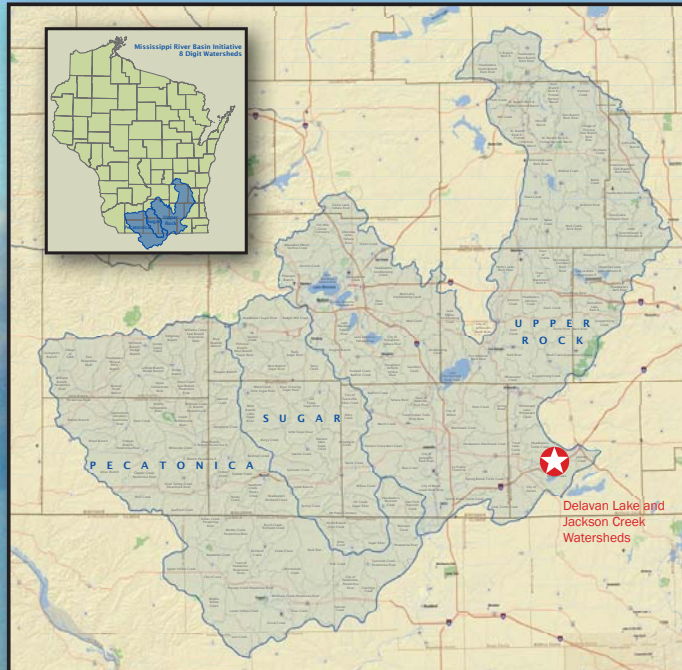
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

# Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI)

To improve the health of the Mississippi River Basin, including water quality and wildlife habitat, the Natural Resources Conservation Service has developed the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative (MRBI). Through this new Initiative, NRCS and its partners will help producers in selected watersheds in the Mississippi River Basin voluntarily implement conservation practices that avoid, control, and trap nutrient runoff; improve wildlife habitat; and maintain agricultural productivity.

These improvements will be accomplished through a conservation systems approach to manage and optimize nitrogen and phosphorous within fields to minimize runoff and reduce downstream nutrient loading. NRCS will provide producers assistance with a system of practices that will control soil erosion, improve soil quality, and provide wildlife habitat while managing runoff and drainage water for improved water quality.

The Initiative will build on the past efforts of producers, NRCS, partners, and other State and Federal agencies in the 13-State Initiative area to address nutrient loading in the Mississippi River Basin. Nutrient loading contributes to both local water quality problems and the hypoxic zone in the Gulf of Mexico. The 13 participating States are Arkansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, South Dakota, Tennessee, and Wisconsin.



Pictured above from left to right: Brian Smetana, Walworth County Land Use & Resource Management Department, Greg Igl, NRCS District Conservationist, and Maggie Zoellner, Kettle Moraine Land Trust.

Through MRBI, NRCS has entered into a cooperative partnership agreement with the Kettle Moraine Land Trust to provide financial and technical assistance to agricultural producers located within the Delavan Lake and Jackson Creek watersheds in Walworth County for the purpose of implementing conservation practices related to reducing soil erosion and improving surface water quality.

In 2010, a special EQIP sign-up was conducted which provided over \$100,000 in financial assistance to agricultural producers located in these watersheds to implement conservation practices such as Nutrient Management, Residue Management (No-Till), Cover Crop, and Grassed Waterways.

Cooperative efforts between NRCS, Kettle Moraine Land Trust, and Walworth County Land Use & Resource Management Department will continue for the next two years through MRBI; with the goal of improving water quality by reducing sediment and nutrient loads within streams located in the Delavan Lake and Jackson Creek watersheds.

MRBI will be implemented by NRCS through the following NRCS initiatives and programs:

- Cooperative Conservation Partnership Initiative
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program
- Conservation Stewardship Program
- Wetlands Reserve Enhancement Program
- Conservation Innovation Grants

Contact your local NRCS Service Center or online at [www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov) for more details.