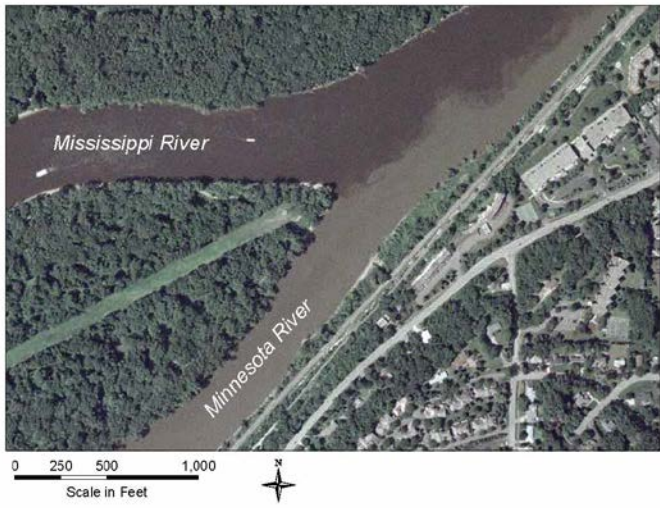
US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

Information Paper

Integrated Watershed Study: Minnesota River Basin in Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota, and Iowa



Confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, St. Paul, Minnesota

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Location/Description

The Minnesota River originates in southwestern Minnesota at the Minnesota-South Dakota border. It drains 16,770 square miles in Minnesota, South Dakota, North Dakota and Iowa. It flows 335 miles to join the Mississippi River at Mendota, Minnesota, just south of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Since European settlement, native prairie has been replaced by agriculture and urban development. The hydrology of the basin has been significantly altered, leading to increased erosion, impaired water quality, substantial sediment and nutrient loads, and degraded aquatic ecosystems in the Minnesota River, Mississippi River, and the Gulf of Mexico.

The integrated watershed study will produce a watershed management plan and decision support system to aid water and land managers in the basin. These tools will enable examination of existing conditions, forecasting of future conditions and simulation of alternatives to identify ecologically sustaining and economically and socially desirable management actions. The system will address watershed, water quality and ecosystem restoration needs at the small and major watershed scales. The study will integrate the efforts of local, State, Federal and tribal agencies. Significant public involvement will be conducted to ensure that the plan reflects the diverse perspectives of interested stakeholders.

Status

The Corps and the State of Minnesota Environmental Quality Board entered into a feasibility cost share agreement for the study on September 29, 2008. An interagency study team has been formed to coordinate the initial study activities and oversee technical analysis of the basin. The study team will build hydrologic models of several sub-watersheds within the Minnesota River basin to study how various land and water management measures could be used effectively throughout the basin to reduce erosion, sedimentation, and flooding and improve water quality and habitat. Initial detailed modeling efforts will focus on portions of the Norway Lake, Sevenmile Creek and Cobb River sub-basins. Additional sub-basin data collection and modeling will begin as funding allows.

Authority

The study is authorized by a resolution of the Committee on Public Works of the U.S. House of Representatives, May 10, 1962, to determine the advisability of further improvements in the Minnesota River basin for navigation, flood risk management, recreation, low-flow augmentation, and other related water and land resources.

Fiscal

Estimated Federal cost	$4,820,000
Estimated non-Federal cost	$4,820,000
Total estimated cost	$9,640,000
Federal funds allocated to date	$1,163,000