

Our Mission

To bring together **diverse partners** and **best science** to expand options for achieving sustainable management and development of the world's great river basins.

We seek **shared solutions** to **common land- and water-use dilemmas**, recognizing the inescapable linkages that connect our economy, human well-being and ecosystem sustainability.

We view our **history and leadership role** in the **Mississippi River Basin** as an important regional asset, and a foundation for promoting the **global exchange of knowledge and expertise**.



Man in flooded grassland of the Pantanal © 2005 Scott Warren



Yangtze River © Ami Vitale



Strategic Goals

1. Achieve a sustainable management approach for the Mississippi River Basin.
2. Build capacity in five great rivers through partner collaboration to affect indicators in key sectors.
3. Exchange knowledge and expertise through a global network.

Operating Principles

- Support coordinated **Sustainable River Basin Management** across sectors within a given river basin.
- Serve as an **Honest Broker of Science and Policy** by bringing together diverse partners and best science.
- Focus on **Common Dilemmas and Tangible Outcomes** using proof-of-concept projects on specific great rivers.
- Deepen **Key Areas of Global Expertise** including sustainable agriculture, floodplain management, navigation infrastructure management and adaptive management.
- Work with others to develop a multi-directional **Global Network** to share knowledge and best practices.
- Shape and communicate a **Credible Expert Voice** to generate a broad understanding and support for sustainable management of great rivers throughout the world.

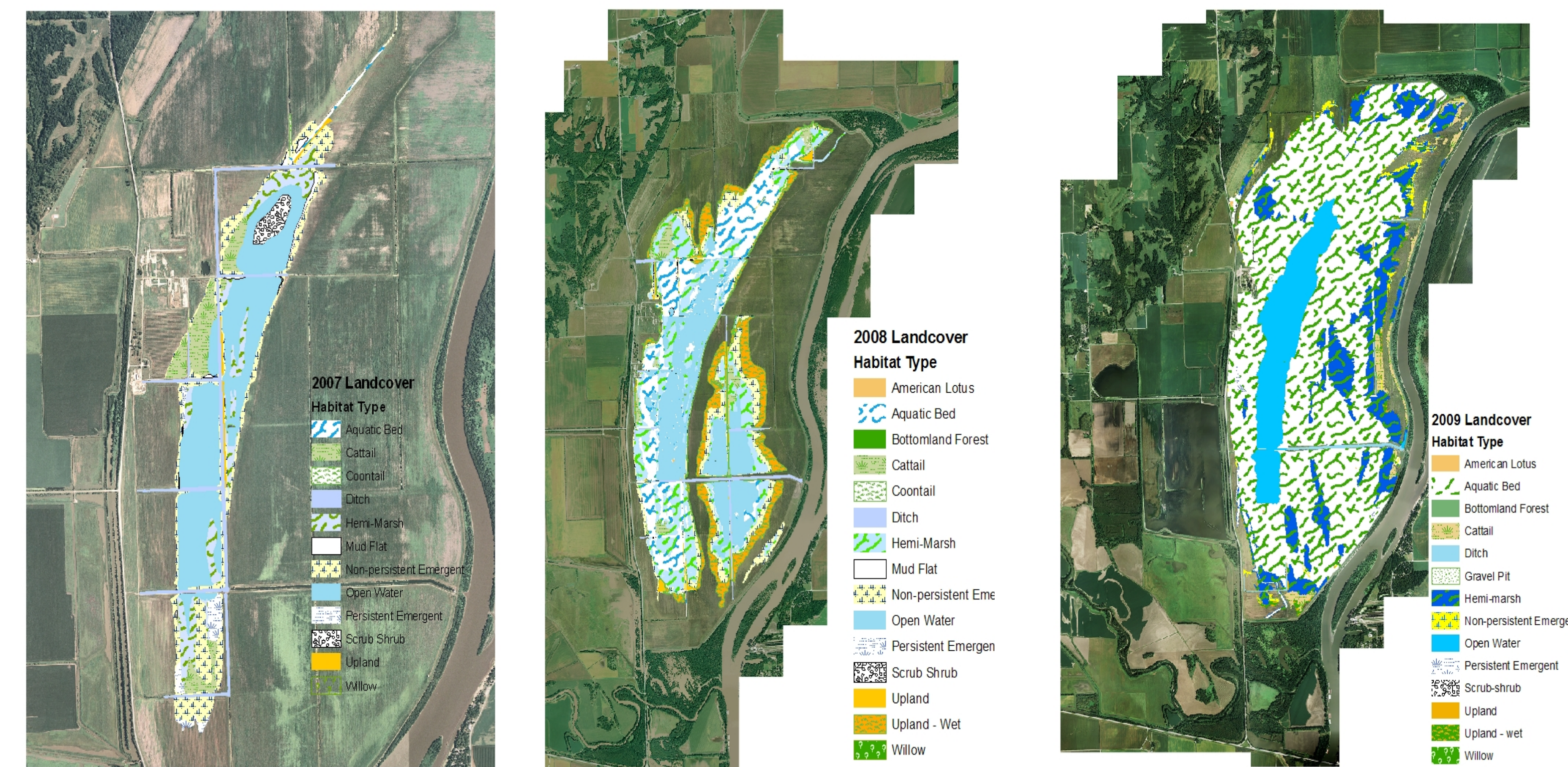
Our Work

Conservation challenge: Freshwater systems occur in modified conditions, influenced by a variety of human activities. The GRP identifies proof-of-concept projects that drive innovation and test strategies designed to maintain and improve freshwater biodiversity in great rivers through policies, programs and partnerships that influence basin-wide issues.

Example proof-of-concept project: The Emiquon Preserve—7,000 acres transformed from corn and soy bean fields to functioning floodplain along the Illinois River—was designed to test restoration and management strategies that can inform other projects locally and globally.

Wetland Monitoring at the Emiquon Preserve

- Illinois Natural History Survey **research compares vegetation within the preserve to historical accounts.**
- **Wetland habitats were consolidated into eight categories** (Table 1) to compare contemporary conditions to historical characteristics of Illinois River Valley (IRV) wetlands (1938–1942).
- **Compared to historical IRV:** non-persistent emergent, mud flat and scrub shrub were similar; floating-leaved aquatic vegetation and bottomland forest were lacking. Continued monitoring may reveal a balancing of habitat proportions as the wetland matures and hydrology varies.



Aerial map with overlay showing habitat development and distribution from 2007 to 2009 at the Emiquon Preserve.

Table 1. Comparison of wetland habitat characteristics at the Emiquon Preserve (2007–2009) and historical (1938–1942) Illinois River valley wetlands.

Habitat Category	Percent of wetland area				
	Historical ^a 1938–1942	2007	2008	2009	Average
Bottomland Forest	8.8	0.0	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Non-persistent Emergent	12.4	19.9	11.8	1.3	11.0
Open Water	38.7	41.8	25.5	12.3	26.5
Aquatic Bed	11.2	1.2	22.3	65.7	29.7
Floating-leaved Aquatic	14.9	0.0	<0.1	<0.1	<0.1
Mudflat	0.4	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.5
Persistent Emergent	12.3	24.6	23.6	18.5	22.2
Scrub Shrub	1.3	2.8	0.2	0.1	1.0

Notable Accomplishments, 2005-2010

GRP Launch – (2005) GRP launches with generous financial support from corporations, foundations and individuals. Since 2005, over \$60M has been raised in private support of the GRP program.



Barge on Mississippi River © Erika Nortemann/TNC

Navigation Partnership – (2005) GRP begins work with barge industry and later supports navigation improvement and ecosystem restoration funding in Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007. This leads to authorization of WRDA, including more than \$1.7 billion for restoration.

Blueprint – (2006) The GRP's support for the Upper Yangtze River Basin Assessment in China paves the way for the China Blueprint, which is helping to set conservation priorities throughout the country.

Water Funds – (2007) GRP partners with Brazil's National Water Agency to develop the first water producer program, financially compensating landowners for implementing conservation practices. The project expands to six other watersheds within South America.

Fish Monitoring - (2008) Chinese partners work with US Geological Survey and GRP to develop fish data collecting protocols on the Yangtze River based on those developed on the Upper Mississippi River. As a result, the Chinese government later provides \$1.9M to incorporate monitoring protocols into the Yangtze program.



Chinese scientists monitoring on Mississippi River © Erika Nortemann/TNC

Resource Assessment - (2010) Final preparation underway with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to develop the management plan for the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment. GRP takes the lead for TNC with work potentially resulting in creation of an environmental blueprint for the lower river.



Park ranger on patrol on Aguaro River in Venezuela © Hugo Arnal

Mississippi Visioning - (2010) Co-hosted by the USACE and the GRP, the 2010 America's Inner Coast summit reveals that diverse partners are interested in coming together to manage the river. GRP now provides shared leadership to a multi-stakeholder process to design a long-term vision.