

Mississippi River Water Quality and the Clean Water Act: Progress, Challenges, and Opportunities

**National Research Council
Water Science and Technology Board**

Committee Membership

David Dzombak, *Chair*, Carnegie Mellon University

H.H. Cheng, University of Minnesota

Robin Craig, Florida State University

Otto Doering, III, Purdue University

William V. Luneburg, Jr., University of Pittsburgh

G. Tracy Mehan, III, The Cadmus Group, Inc.

James Park, consultant, Loami, Illinois

Nancy Rabalais, Louisiana Universities Marine Consortium

Jerald Schnoor, University of Iowa

David Soballe, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Edward Thackston, Vanderbilt University (Emeritus)

Stanley Trimble, University of California, Los Angeles

Alan Vicory, Ohio River Valley Sanitation Commission

Study Director: Jeffrey Jacobs, NRC Water Science and Technology Board

10-state Mississippi River Corridor



Statement of Task

1) *Mississippi River Corridor Water Quality Problems*

Identify key water quality problems through 10-state MR system and northern Gulf of Mexico.

2) *Data Needs and System Monitoring*

Identify and discuss key water quality data needs with regard to CWA reporting requirements.

Statement of Task

3) Water Quality Indicators and Standards

Identify and discuss key challenges associated with establishing water quality indicators and standards in the 10 MR states.

Statement of Task

4) Policies and Implementation

Identify and discuss challenges in administering CWA authorities and programs

How could collaborative efforts within federal agencies, between federal agencies, and between the 10 MR states, be strengthened to enhance implementation of CWA provisions?

Statement of Task

Note:

- Committee was not charged to consider possible changes in CWA
- Committee discussed and decided to work within framework of existing CWA

Key Recommendations

- Better coordination among all 10 MR states is necessary to realize improvements in MR water quality and in monitoring activities.
- LMR states should work toward a better cooperative mechanism, similar to UMRBA.
- EPA should better coordinate efforts of the 10 MR states in water quality monitoring and planning.
- EPA should take the lead in coordinating data gathering and establishing a data sharing system for the entire river.

Key Recommendations

- USDA should target land and water conservation programs (CRP, EQIP, CSP) at critical areas.
- EPA and USDA should strengthen cooperative activities, e.g., EPA can help identify land to receive priority attention.

Key Recommendations

- EPA should develop water quality criteria for nutrients in the MR and northern Gulf.
- EPA should ensure that states establish standards and TMDLs to protect MR and Gulf from excessive nutrient pollution.
- EPA also should develop a TMDL, or its functional equivalent, for the MR and the northern Gulf.
- EPA should emulate the EPA-state cooperative model for Chesapeake Bay water quality and nutrient management.