

MRCTI
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Redefining What River Cities Can Do



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**In the Wake of Hurricane Ida, Mississippi River Mayors Unveil
Disaster Mitigation Projects Guided by
One of the Largest Resilience Studies in the Nation**

St. Louis, MO – Mayors from along the Mississippi River gathered virtually this week as part of the Mississippi River Cities & Towns Initiative (MRCTI) Annual Meeting. The conference has brought together nearly 50 mayors from ten states as well as global stakeholders to unveil the results of one of the nation's largest natural infrastructure disaster capacity studies. MRCTI partnered with Two Degrees Adapt, Cargill, Black & Veatch, One Architecture, and others to complete a study on where to deploy what kind of natural infrastructure assets at what scale to reduce disaster risk for some of the most vulnerable areas of the Mississippi River Corridor.

“The projects we announce today are guided by empirical data and the projects the data informs will shift risk from our cities into natural areas that are currently cut-off from the Mississippi River, but not for long. Here in the Quad Cities, several of our communities will benefit directly from adjacent projects designed to relieve flood stresses,” explained **Mayor Bob Gallagher of Bettendorf, IA and MRCTI Co-Chair**.

MRCTI has additionally partnered with Ducks Unlimited to design and deploy natural infrastructure projects throughout the Mississippi River Valley using the Two Degrees Adapt Disaster Capacity Study as a guide of where to place those projects at what level of intervention for maximum return now and in the longer term. Projects in the pipeline amount to 58,873 acres activated for flood mitigation.

“Here in South Louisiana, we just sustained a hurricane with higher wind speeds than Katrina. Though improvements to both built and natural barriers held well, a more systemic approach to resilience at corridor scale is needed to protect our communities over the longer term with increasingly persistent record storm events, said **Mayor Sharon Weston Broome of Baton Rouge, LA and MRCTI Co-Chair**.

Mississippi River Mayors and their partners released at this meeting natural infrastructure projects in the upper, middle, and lower River corridor that fall into three

categories: 1) *shovel-ready* meaning the project is designed and funded; 2) *pending* meaning the project is majority designed and funding identified; 3) *near-term* meaning the project is in the design phase, is larger scale, and funding is being evaluated.

“I am very excited about the new and innovative partnerships we as a collective of Mayors along the entire River have forged, said **Mayor Robert Eastern III of East St. Louis, IL**. My city and many of my neighbors of the metro-east St. Louis region will benefit from the shovel-ready project to increase the flood absorption

Generating multiple co-benefits from the natural infrastructure Mayors and partners plan to deploy is a paramount priority as Mayors seek to capture outcomes beyond just disaster mitigation.

“The Mississippi corridor must be protected, not only from severe weather, but to provide cleaner water and increase economic growth—it’s really that simple and important,” said **Mayor Jim Strickland of Memphis, TN and MRCTI Tennessee Chair**.

Partnering organizations see unique opportunities uniting with the cities of middle-America focused on the Mississippi River Corridor that are not present in other parts of the North America.

“The Mississippi River is so incredibly valuable to the planet and is the most important working River in the world,” said **Aditya Ranade, Managing Partner of Two Degrees Adapt** and lead investigator of the natural infrastructure disaster capacity study. “With so much of the global commodity supply chain and the American economy dependent on the ecological integrity of the Mississippi River Valley, the importance of this project could not be overstated.”

“Restoring and improving wetland and riparian habitat across the nation – and especially along the Mississippi River corridor – is at the heart of DU’s mission. There’s no doubt the Mississippi River is critical to the economic health of the nation, and by sharing our goals and pursuing outcomes with the Mayors of MRCTI, both the communities and the wildlife surrounding these areas will benefit greatly,” explained **Karen Waldrop, Ph.D., Chief Conservation Officer for Ducks Unlimited**.

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About the Mississippi Rivers Cities & Towns Initiative (MRCTI)

MRCTI is a coalition of 100 mayors from across the Mississippi River Basin, which spans nearly a third of the country. The Mississippi River provides drinking water to more than 20 million people and 50 cities. More than 60 billion gallons of fresh water is withdrawn from the river daily. The River’s resources support 1.5 million jobs and create \$496.7 billion in annual revenue.

<https://www.mrcti.org/>

About Ducks Unlimited Inc. (DU)

DU is the world's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to conserving North America's continually disappearing waterfowl habitats. Established in 1937, Ducks Unlimited has conserved more than 15 million acres thanks to contributions from more than a million supporters across the continent. Guided by science and dedicated to program efficiency, DU

works toward the vision of wetlands sufficient to fill the skies with waterfowl today, tomorrow and forever. For more information on our work, visit www.ducks.org.

About Two Degrees Adapt

Two Degrees Adapt promotes economic growth and asset resilience in spite of climate change by accelerating the deployment of climate adaptation technologies in the private and public sector. By mapping adaptation strategies to sectors and geographies as well as developing partnerships between the private and public sector Two Degrees facilitates the implementation of adaptation strategies which improve our cities and society, visit www.twodegreesadapt.com.