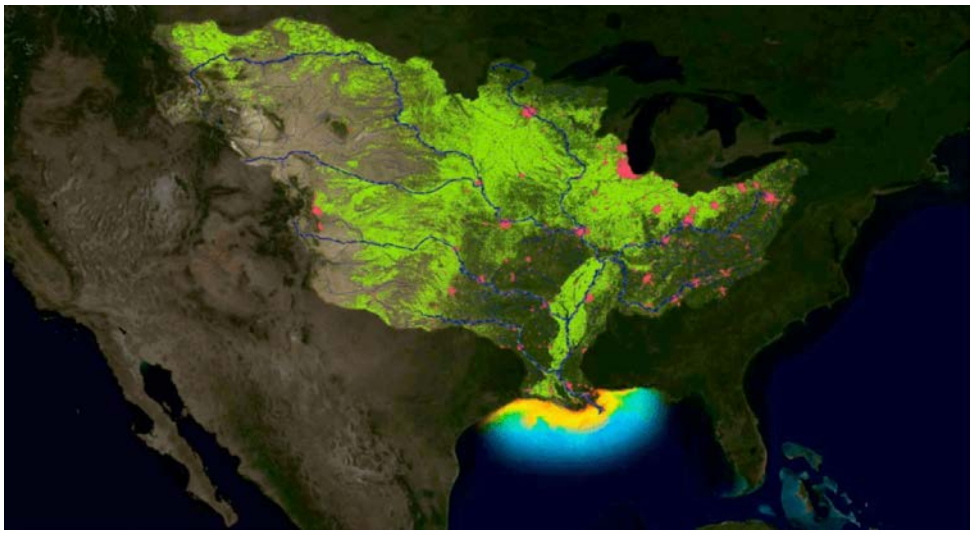
GO WITH THE FLOW!

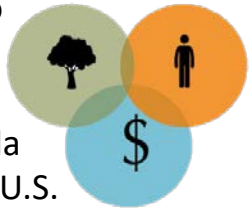
The Mighty Mississippi River Watershed Fact Sheet



This map generally illustrates how runoff from farms (green areas) and cities (red areas) drains into the Mississippi River, delivering nutrients into the Gulf of Mexico and fueling the annual hypoxic zone. *Credit: NOAA*.

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?

- 1.5 – 5.2 million gallons of water per second into the Gulf of Mexico
- Includes 31 U.S. states an parts of Canada
- Drains 40% of U.S. or 1.2 million square miles



MIGHTY CONNECTION

- Major commercial waterway: $405 billion and 1.3 million jobs
- Major recreational waterway: $21.4 billion
- Water supply for 18 million people
- 260 species of fish, 326 species of birds, and over 50 mammals

IT'S NOT JUST WATER!

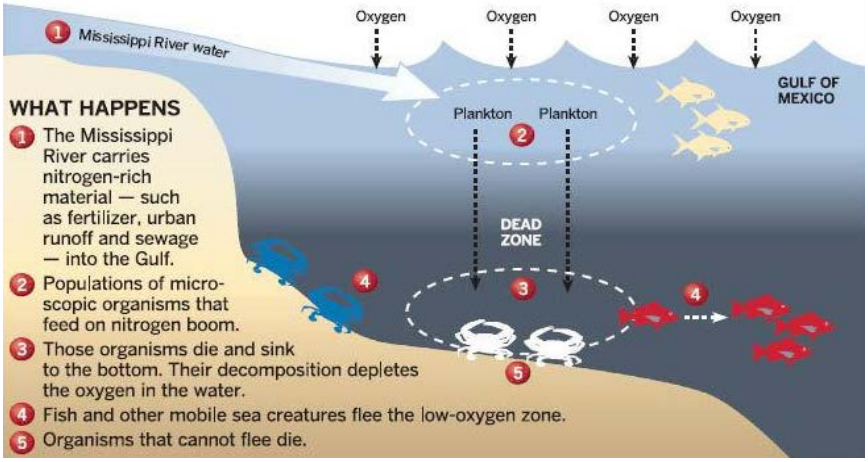
- Plastics and other litter
- Sediment
- Excess nutrients and chemicals from runoff

EVER-CHANGING SYSTEM

- Changed course many times throughout history
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began maintaining shipping channels in 1826
- Levee system is 2,203 miles with 43 dams
- Flood control spillways and floodways divert river from
- Baton Rouge and New Orleans, LA and help control water surges

HOW A "DEAD ZONE" IS CREATED IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

Nutrient-rich, freshwater runoff containing nitrogen and phosphorus from agricultural lands and sewage causes the summer **hypoxic zone** in the **Gulf of Mexico**. These nutrients, in combination with sunlight and warm water temperatures in the **Gulf**, can trigger **harmful algal blooms**.



Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Advocate graphic

Resources

National Park Service: https://www.nps.gov/miss/riverfacts.htm
Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative: https://www.mrcti.org/
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: https://web.archive.org/web/20100328040856/http://www.usace.army.mil/History/Documents/Brief/03-transportation/transport.html