

The Mississippi River Trust (MRT) works with members of Congress, government agencies and other decision-makers to promote conservation policies that are innovative and cost-effective. Our work benefits both public and private lands in the Lower Mississippi River region.

Among our most important policy initiatives are:

- Supporting provisions of the federal Farm Bill that promote the conservation of bottomland hardwood forests, wetlands, and other habitats on private lands. Such programs include Wetland Reserve Easements and the Conservation Reserve Program. Of the approximately 2.7 million acres presently enrolled in Wetland Reserve Easements nationally, nearly 700,000 acres have benefitted populations of wetland-dependent wildlife in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi. The program's continued reauthorization in the Farm Bill can, and should, continue to serve fish and wildlife resources throughout the nation, and especially in the Lower Mississippi River region.
- Supporting adequate federal funding for conservation programs and conservation agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Federal spending on natural resource, environmental and conservation programs as a portion of the federal budget has dropped from four percent in 1982 to about one percent today.
- Supporting the creation and expansion of public lands, especially National Wildlife Refuges, as well as new interpretative facilities.
- Working to develop tax incentives for the recovery of threatened and endangered species on private lands as well as tax policies that encourage the use of conservation easements on private lands. The MRT is working with the Land Trust Alliance and other organizations to ensure that we maintain tax incentives that bolster voluntary land conservation while protecting the heritage and livelihood of farmers and other landowners.