

River Connections: A Science and Strategy Workshop for the Mississippi River Watershed

Day 1 Agenda: May 19, 2026
Tulane University
2nd Floor, Lavin-Bernick Center, 29 McAlister Drive
New Orleans, Louisiana

8:00 – 9:00 am | Breakfast

Welcome

9:00 – 9:10 am | **Opening Remarks** Hridesh Rajan, PhD, Dean, Tulane School of Science and Engineering

9:10 – 9:20 am | **From Our Sponsor** Charlotte Beyer Hubbell

9:20 – 9:30 am | **Committee Welcome and Event Overview** Ehab Meselhe, PhD, PE, Charlotte Beyer Hubbell Chair, and Department Chair, Department of River-Coastal Science and Engineering, Tulane School of Science and Engineering

SESSION 1: Restoration and Conservation

9:30 – 9:55 am | **Turbulence on the Missouri River: A Restoration Odyssey** Robert Jacobson, PhD, Adjunct Professor, School of Natural Resources, University of Missouri

9:55 – 10:20 am | **Wetland Forest** Beth Middleton, PhD, Research Ecologist, United States Geological Survey (USGS) Wetland and Aquatic Research Center

10:20 – 10:45 am | **Protected Rivers** Lise Comte, PhD, Lead Scientist, Conservation Science Partners

10:45 am – 11:00 am | Break

SESSION 2: Floods and Droughts

11:00 – 11:25 am | **Drought Events and Saltwater Intrusion – MissDelta** Ehab Meselhe, PhD, PE, Charlotte Beyer Hubbell Chair, and Department Chair, Department of River-Coastal Science and Engineering, Tulane School of Science and Engineering

11:25 – 11:50 am | Daniel Wright, PhD, Arno Lenz Memorial Associate of Water Resource Engineering, Graduate Program Associate Chair at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Site Director, Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Convective Storms

11:50 am – 12:15 pm | **Climate Change** Will Veatch, USACE (tentative)

12:15 – 2:15 pm | Lunch and Student and Professional Poster Session

SESSION 3: Human Utilization of the Waterway

2:15 – 2:40 pm | **The Cost of Uncertainty: Changing Flow Patterns and the Business of Mississippi River Navigation** Faisal Mallum, PhD, Research Associate, University of New Orleans Transportation Institute and Adjunct Professor, Department of Planning and Urban Studies, University of New Orleans

2:40 – 3:05 pm | **Wild Lower Mississippi River as Experienced in Voyageur Canoe** John Ruskey, Author and Owner, Quapaw Canoe Company

3:05 – 3:30 pm | **Economic Benefits of Low-Flow Forecasts in the Lower Mississippi River** Daniel Lapidus, Senior Economist, RTI International

3:30 – 3:40 pm | Break

SESSION 4: Water Quality of the Mississippi River Basin

3:40 – 4:05 pm | Nutrients Matt Helmers, PhD, Director, Iowa Nutrient Research Center, Brent and Cindy Hart Professor in the College of Ag and Life Sciences, and Professor, Department of Ag and Biosystems Engineering, Iowa State University

4:05 – 4:30 pm | Sediment Marcelo H. Garcia, M.T. Geoffrey Yeh Endowed Chair in Civil Engineering, Director, Ven Te Chow Hydrosystems Laboratory and Professor, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

4:30 – 4:55 pm | Emerging Contaminants David Cwiertny, Professor, Civil and Environmental Engineering and Chemistry, Director of the Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contamination, University of Iowa

4:55 – 5:00 pm | Closing Remarks