

Flooding Timeline - Missouri Coalition for the Environment

Display Date	Headline	Text	Media	Media Credit	Media Caption
1844	Mississippi/ Missouri River Flood	<p>“This appears to have been the greatest flood in the lower Missouri and central Mississippi ever known before or since. The entire bottoms in the vicinity of St. Louis were covered with water to a width of several miles.”</p> <p>-Hiram Martin Chittenden, Steamboat Navigation on the Missouri River</p>			Depicted here is Vicksburg, Mississippi, under water. Credit: U. S. Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division.
1849	The Swamp Land Acts of 1849 and 1850	<p>Passage of the Swamp Lands Act to drain wetlands and convert them to other uses, primarily agriculture, is seen as the response to the devastating flood in 1844.</p>			
1879	Mississippi River Coalition Formed	<p>Formed in 1879, the Mississippi River Coalition (MRC) was an executive body that reported to the U.S. Secretary of War. It's purpose was to correct, confine, and deepen the Mississippi River channel to</p>			
1927	Mississippi River Flood	<p>Depicted is the riverfront at Cape Girardeau, Missouri on April 20, 1927. The river stage was at 40 feet. Credit: "The Floods of 1927 in the Mississippi Basin", Frankenfeld, H.C., 1927 Monthly Weather</p>		Archival Photography by Steve Nicklas, NOS, NGS	
1928	Flood Control Act of 1928	<p>The Flood Control Act of 1928 gave the Federal Government authority over the containment of the Mississippi River and established the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project. This Act was a</p>			
1928	Mississippi River and Tributaries Project	<p>Created under the Flood Control Act of 1928, provides for control of flooding from MS River and its tributaries, improvement of navigation of such, and improvements to harbors. It also provides for bank stabilization along the MS River, as well as for various environmental causes that contribute to the health of the river and to its use in recreational activities</p> <p>It is still functioning as of 2016 under the</p>			
1928	The Mission of the Mississippi River Coalition is Changed	<p>The Flood Control Act of 1928 changes the mission of the Mississippi River Coalition to focus on the implementation of the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project. The Coalition now functions as an aspect</p>			
1937	The Right of Rivers	<p>"Rivers were here long before man, and for untold ages every stream has periodically exercised its right to expand when carrying more than normal flow. Man's error has not been the neglect of flood-control measures, but his refusal to recognize the right of rivers to their floodplain..."</p>			

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1937	Mississippi River Flood	Depicted is flood stage at Cairo, Illinois, on February 2, 1937. A three feet bulkhead built by CCC labor is on top of the levee. Credit: U.S. National Archives and Records			
1938	The Flood Control Act of 1938	The Flood Control Act of 1938 authorized construction of the Wappapello Dam and subsequent creation of Lake Wappapello on the St. Francis River, 120 miles southeast of St. Louis. The purpose of			
1947	Mississippi River Flood	Depicted is a stretch of lower Mississippi River. A man stands on his rooftop in front of a neighbor's house waiting to being rescued. Credit: U.S. National Archives			
1947	The Monarch-Chesterfield Levee District is created	The Monarch-Chesterfield Levee in the Missouri floodplain is created as an agricultural levee to protect farmland.			
1950	The River and Harbor Act	The River and Harbor Act covers both the Lower Mississippi River Basin and the Upper Mississippi River Basin. In the Lower Mississippi River Basin the Act modified and expanded the scope of the Flood Control Act of 1928 and used \$20 million of appropriated funds for the use of flood protection and drainage improvements in St. Francis River Basin of Missouri and Arkansas. It also allocated emergency funding in case of more flooding. In the Upper Mississippi River Basin the Act authorized and funded flood			
1951	Mississippi River	St. Louis, MO			
1951	Missouri River	Kansas City, MO			
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1954	Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act	This Act provides funding and planning for flood control/prevention per the oversight of the Department of Agriculture.			
1958	The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act is Modified	Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954 is modified to require that a fish and wildlife report be incorporated into any flood control/prevention project undertaken. With this modification fish and wildlife development legally becomes an aspect of			
1969	Ludicrous Land Use	"History has proven time and again that absolute and unbridled freedom of individual choice has resulted in improvident and ludicrous land use patterns which have obstructed the free flow of surface waters and thereby necessitated inordinately expensive public works or equally expensive disaster relief measures." -Judge Richard S. Lowe,			
1973	Mississippi River Flood	In the spring of 1973 the Mississippi River reached its highest level in more than 150 years. Unprecedented flooding occurred throughout the river basin. Depicted is a highway in Alexandria, LA. Credit:			

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1974	Despite the Lessons of the Past	“Floods will continue to cause damage as long as we build upon flood-prone lands. And despite the lessons of the past, that is precisely what we continue to do. We continue to compete with streams and rivers for land that is historically, albeit intermittently, theirs – the floodplain.” -		
1976	Watershed Resources Development Act of 1976	The Watershed Resources and Development Act of 1976 allocated \$400,000 to flood protection projects on the upper Mississippi River and allocated \$300,00 to flood control projects at the New Madrid Floodway in Southeast Missouri. It authorized a Great River Study, to be undertaken by the Upper Mississippi River Basin Commission, to research and create a river systems management plan and authorized the Army Corps of		
1980	Monarch-Chesterfield Levee Upgraded	The Federal Emergency Management Administration upgrades and certifies the Monarch-Chesterfield Levee District for 100-year level flood protection as the area becomes more developed, including the		
1981	Deciding Where to Build	“Most flood problems occur because man has chosen poorly in deciding where to build.” - Floodplain Management Handbook, US Water Resources Council		
1982	Mississippi River Flood	Depicted is Interstate 44 at the Highway 141 exit near Valley Park, Missouri nearly submerged. Credit: National Oceanic and	NOAA	
1986	Mississippi River Watershed Resources Development Act of 1986	St. Louis, MO The Watershed Resources Development Act of 1986 authorized the Corps of Engineers to commence flood control projects in Missouri, Illinois, and Mississippi. It required the Army Corps of Engineers to allocate funds for mitigation of wildlife/fish losses prior to construction/commencement of flood control projects. This was known as the establishment of the Environmental Protection Mitigation Fund.		
1988	Chesterfield is Incorporated	The Act also amended Watershed Protection Acts to require agricultural benefits as a goal of some watershed The city of Chesterfield is incorporated. Portions of Chesterfield are located in the floodplain of the Missouri River. This area is now known as Chesterfield Valley but was formerly called Gumbo Flats.		
1988	The Watershed Resources Development Act of 1988	The Watershed Resources Development Act of 1988 included a provision for the maintenance of Mississippi River headwaters reservoir levels at specified limits.		https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/STATUTE-102/pdf/STATUTE-102-Pg4012.pdf

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1993	Mississippi River Flood	US Army Corp of Engineers photo of the Missouri River's damage to US Highway 63, Jefferson City, Missouri, near the Missouri Capitol building during the "Great Flood of 1993". National Guardsmen created sandbag levees in the parking lot, but the building was still several feet above the water line. Unfortunately, the same could not be said of much of Jefferson City's northern area, and such scenes were			
1993	The High Costs of Natural Disasters	"The time has come to face the fact that this Nation can no longer afford the high costs of natural disasters. We can no longer afford the economic costs to the American taxpayer, nor can we afford the social costs to our communities and individuals." - James L. Witt Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency, Testimony before Congress	http://fas.org/irp/agency/dhs/fema/sparing.pdf	FAS	Sharing the Challenge-Floodplain Management into the 21st Century, Interagency Floodplain Management Review
1994	More Upgrades to the Monarch-Chesterfield Levee Are Planned	In the aftermath of the flood of 1993, upgrades to Monarch-Chesterfield Levee are planned as the area has developed into a completely urban center.	https://www.stlbeacon.org/lantern/public/resources/content/32199/images/chesterfield%20valley%20development%2060_29544.original.jpg	STL Beacon	Development in Chesterfield Valley since the flood: Blue structures existed before the flood; yellow structures were built after the flood.
1995	Mississippi River Missouri Woke Up	St. Louis, MO "For years the Government spent billions of Federal dollars trying to keep water away from people. Missouri woke up and started moving people out of harm's way..." - Governor Mel Carnahan of Missouri	https://www.fema.gov/media-library-data/20130726-1440-20490-5918/fema268.pdf	FEMA	Protecting Floodplain Resources - A Guidebook for Communities, Federal Interagency Floodplain Management Task Force, June 1996,
1996	Far Less Money	"When portions of floodplains are left in or restored to a nearly natural state, not only do they reduce the number and severity of floods, but they also can help handle stormwater runoff and minimize nonpoint water pollution, for far less money than it would take to build facilities to correct these problems." - Addressing Your Community's Flood Problems – A Guide			
1996	Watershed Resources Development Act of 1996	The Watershed Resources Development Act of 1996 required study to reevaluate the St. Louis Harbor Project at Chain of Rocks Canal and extended the jurisdiction of the Mississippi River Commission. It protected counties at the Missouri and Mississippi river confluence from having their participation in national flood			

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1998	A Systemwide Perspective	"The Nation has also failed to view flooding from a systemwide perspective. Communities and the federal government have spent huge sums on levees, dams, river channelizations and land drainage works to shunt floodwaters downstream, which often exacerbates flood-related problems for downstream farmers and communities." - Higher Ground: A Report			
1999	Building in Floodplains	"Despite spending \$25 billion in federal levees and dams, national flood losses continue to rise. The reasons are clear; at the same time more people are building their homes and businesses in floodplains, farmers and home developers are increasing the rate at which water moves off the landscape, into feeder streams, and towards riverside communities. Poor land-use decisions have put more people at risk by allowing development in harm's way and by eliminating the natural flood control functions of wetlands and floodplains." - In			
2000	More Unnecessary Losses	"...the nation faces continuation of the dismal cycle of losses, partial protection, further induced (though marginal) development, and more unnecessary losses. Action can and should be taken to change this situation, by emphasizing the wide array of nonstructural approaches that are available to mitigate flood losses, and by finding ways in which they can be combined with existing structural projects to yield a more balanced approach." -			
2011	Mississippi/Ohio River Flood				
2011	Missouri River Flood	Depicted is Fortescue, Missouri looking toward Big Lake (which is obliterated). The Missouri River is 5+ miles wide. The BNSF railroad which is the main coal line for the Kansas City latan powerplant has been breached. Credit: US Army Corps of St. Louis, MO			
2013	Mississippi River				
2016	Mississippi River				
2016	Major Disaster Declaration	Federal Major Disaster declaration approved by President Obama, implemented by Governor Jay Nixon.			