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## News Release

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### **Salazar Highlights 11 Projects in Midwestern and Southern States as America's Great Outdoors Rivers**

*Interior will leverage resources to support river initiatives in every state and District of Columbia*

WASHINGTON – Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today identified river projects in 11 Midwestern and southern states to serve as models of the America's Great Outdoors Rivers to conserve and restore key rivers across the nation, expand outdoor recreational opportunities and support jobs in local communities.

The 11 river projects are part of a list of 51 ongoing projects that the Secretary is highlighting nationwide, one in each state and the District of Columbia. Ranging from the restoration of the Milwaukee River in Wisconsin to the establishment of the Pascagoula River Blueway in Mississippi, today's projects were selected to provide examples for how communities across America can restore and reconnect with the rivers in their backyards.

“Across the country, we are working hand in hand with states, tribes, local communities and other partners to revitalize our nation's rivers and expand the opportunities for people to fish, swim, boat, and otherwise connect with the great outdoors,” Salazar said. “These on-going projects demonstrate how the federal family can be an effective conservation partner for community-led efforts to improve our rivers, which are the lifeblood of our communities and our economies.”

A map and more detailed descriptions of the river initiatives highlighted by Salazar can be accessed [here](#). Additional river projects across the nation will be announced in the coming days.

#### **The America's Great Outdoors Rivers identified today are:**

##### **Arkansas: Cache River – [Cache River Restoration](#)**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Fish and Wildlife Service are working with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, state and local government agencies like the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and other organizations like the City of Clarendon and The Nature Conservancy to restore important river and riparian habitat along the Cache River, which

includes wetlands of international importance. This project will expand recreational and conservation opportunities adjacent to the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge.

**Illinois: Pecatonica River – [Pecatonica River Water Trail](#)**

In response to the increased need for recreational opportunities, the National Park Service is working with federal, state and local agencies, non-governmental organizations, and volunteer groups to expand recreational access and restore wetland and riparian habitat, including the construction of two fishing docks and restoring one acre of wetland, along 58 miles of the Pecatonica River.

**Indiana: Wabash River – [Healthy Rivers Initiative](#)**

The Healthy Rivers Initiative, the largest conservation initiative ever undertaken in Indiana, is a partnership among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies and organizations working with willing landowners to permanently protect 43,000 acres of floodplain habitat for fish and wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation along the Wabash River – a unique natural resource containing many of Indiana’s rarest fish, mussels, birds, and plants.

**Iowa: Big Sioux River – [Klondike Dam Fish Passage Project](#)**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with state and local agencies to construct a rock ramp to facilitate year-round fish passage over the Klondike Dam, which will open 1,840 miles of stream for native fish migrations, eliminate the public safety hazard associated with a low-head dam, and provide recreational kayaking rapids.

**Louisiana: Tensas River – [Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge Paddling Trail](#)**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with partners to designate a paddling trail along the Tensas River on the Tensas River National Wildlife Refuge, which contains one of the largest remaining contiguous tracts of bottomland hardwood forest in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley.

**Michigan: Detroit River – [Detroit River Urban Park and Restoration](#)**

The Detroit River Urban Park and Restoration project will foster urban youth appreciation and stewardship by engaging youth in education, recreation and conservation activities that build upon extensive conservation work implemented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, City of Detroit, Detroit Riverfront Conservancy, and numerous other partners.

**Minnesota: Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers – [Mississippi National River and Recreational Area National Water Trail](#)**

The National Park Service is working with local agencies and non-governmental organizations to host 10,000 students for a day-trip on the Mississippi River. Today, Secretary Salazar acknowledged the high quality and sound management of this resource with the National Water Trail designation for the section of the Mississippi River and Minnesota River within the Mississippi National River and Recreational Area, which provides a unique, urban, outdoor experience, with its many historic, cultural and natural sites.

**Mississippi: Pascagoula River – [Pascagoula River Water Trail](#)**

The National Park Service is collaborating with state and local agencies and organizations to promote the conservation, stewardship, and public use of the Pascagoula River, the last large unimpeded river system in the contiguous United States.

**Missouri: Mississippi and Missouri Rivers – [Mississippi and Missouri Rivers Confluence Restoration](#)**

The Missouri and Mississippi Rivers Confluence Restoration project is a partnership among over 40 agencies and organizations, including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, focused on voluntary habitat conservation through conservation easements, private land habitat restoration, public land acquisition, education, and outreach, which will benefit migratory birds and other wildlife, including the endangered Pallid Sturgeon.

**Ohio: Chagrin River – [Sulphur Springs Assessment and Restoration Project](#)**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with state agencies and non-governmental organizations to restore Sulphur Springs to allow for the reintroduction of the state's threatened native Ohio brook trout and other coldwater habitat species, and to educate the public on the importance of coldwater habitats.

**Wisconsin: Milwaukee River – [Restoring Connectivity in the Milwaukee River Watershed](#)**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with other federal and state agencies to reconnect river and riparian habitat along 218 miles of the Milwaukee River, and to provide education and outreach opportunities to about 1.3 million residents in the Milwaukee metropolitan area.

“America has more than 3.6 million miles of rivers and streams, and nearly every American lives within a mile of a river or stream, making them some of the nation's most important recreational and ecological assets,” Salazar added. “America's Great Outdoors Rivers will help fulfill President Obama's vision for healthy and accessible rivers as we work to restore and conserve our nation's treasured waterways.”

Rivers are economic engines for many local communities, supporting recreation and tourism industries by providing opportunities for boating, fishing and hunting, hiking, camping, swimming, and numerous other outdoor activities. Salazar noted that the outdoor industry creates an estimated 6.5 million jobs in the United States and pumps an estimated \$730 billion a year into our nation's economy.

Salazar unveiled America's Great Outdoors Rivers in January as part of President Obama's overall America's Great Outdoors Initiative to work with communities across the country to establish a conservation and recreation agenda for 21st century and to reconnect people, especially young people, to the great outdoors.

The goals of America's Great Outdoors Rivers include protecting and restoring America's rivers for people and wildlife and enhancing river recreation that supports jobs in tourism and outdoor recreation.

Under the initiative, Salazar issued a Secretarial Order in February establishing a [National Water Trails System](#), creating a network of designated water trails on rivers across the country that will

help facilitate outdoor recreation, especially around urban areas, and provide national recognition to existing, local water trails. He designated the Chattahoochee River Water Trail, which encompasses 48 miles of river within the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area in Georgia, as the first National Water Trail.

In March, Salazar, Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack, and Secretary of Commerce John Bryson signed a memorandum of understanding implementing the National Fish Habitat Action Plan to assist state and local governments, landowners, and community groups in protecting and restoring waterways and fisheries.

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