Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund

**OVERVIEW**

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, International Paper, Walton Family Foundation, and the Arbor Day Foundation announced a fourth round of funding for the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund. Eight new and one continuing bottomland hardwood forest, wetland, and aquatic habitat restoration grants totaling $3.3 million were awarded. The nine awards announced generated $2.8 million in match from the grantees, providing a total conservation impact of $6.1 million.

NFWF launched the LMAV Restoration Fund in 2017 to benefit wildlife and improve water quality within the Mississippi Alluvial Valley region of Arkansas, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee. The fund invests in on-the-ground projects that restore, enhance and maintain bottomland hardwood forests and wetlands and promote aquatic connectivity on private and public lands.

(continued)
Demonstration of Restoration and Monitoring Techniques for Bottomland Hardwood Habitats (AR, MS)
Grantee: Mississippi State University
Grant Amount: ........................................... $355,000
Matching Funds: ........................................ $355,000
Total Project Amount: ................................... $710,000
Restore bottomland hardwood forest habitats, monitor habitat condition and wildlife response to restoration treatments, and provide information, training, and technical assistance to landowners and resource managers to inform forest and wildlife management decisions. Project will restore 774 acres of bottomland hardwood forest within the Tallahatchie, Boeuf, and Tensas watersheds in Arkansas and Mississippi, benefitting waterfowl, swamp rabbit, and other forested wetland-dependent species.

Priority Bird Habitat Conservation in the West Gulf Coastal Plain/Ouachitas II (AR, LA, OK, TX)
Grantee: American Bird Conservancy
Grant Amount: ........................................... $213,996
Matching Funds: ........................................ $228,750
Total Project Amount: ................................... $442,746
Coordinate conservation delivery networks to restore forest and grassland habitats and monitor species response within the West Gulf Coastal Plain/Ouachitas geography of Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas. Project will provide technical assistance to private landowners to implement conservation practices benefitting Bachman’s sparrow, prairie warbler, and other forest and grassland-dependent bird species.

Restoring Forested Wetlands within Mississippi Alluvial Valley Priority Focal Areas (AR, LA, MS)
Grantee: The Nature Conservancy
Grant Amount: ........................................... $694,688
Matching Funds: ........................................... $395,000
Total Project Amount: .................................... $1,089,688
Restore and protect forested wetlands within high-priority areas in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley region of Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana. Project will reforest 4,800 acres of marginal cropland, restore 1,200 acres of hydrologic wetland function and protect 6,000 acres with conservation easements, benefitting Louisiana black bear, swamp rabbit, waterfowl, and neotropical migratory songbirds.

Connecting Forest Landowners with Markets to Improve Forest Health and Wildlife Habitat (LA)
Grantee: Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries Foundation
Grant Amount: ........................................... $245,000
Matching Funds: ........................................... $265,800
Total Project Amount: .................................... $510,800
Pilot market-oriented approaches to manage bottomland hardwood forests and improve wildlife habitat in Louisiana. Project will develop partnerships between local wood suppliers, forest products companies, landowners, and resource professionals to thin 583 acres of bottomland hardwood forest, improving forest habitat structure, understory condition, wildlife habitat, and water quality.

(continued)
Monitoring Waterfowl Response to Wetland Restoration in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley (AR, LA, MS)
Grantee: Ducks Unlimited
Grant Amount: ........................................ $225,000
Matching Funds: ...................................... $179,330
Total Project Amount: .............................. $404,330
Monitor waterfowl response to forest and shallow water wetland restoration on Wetland Reserve Easement sites within the Mississippi Alluvial Valley region of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi. Project will deploy unmanned aerial vehicles to investigate their utility to monitor waterfowl use of restored wetlands and use imagery analysis and machine learning to establish efficient and effective protocols to derive duck counts and general use behaviors at a project level scale.

Enhancing Hydrology and Restoring Forests in the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley - II (AR, MS)
Grantee: Ducks Unlimited
Grant Amount: ........................................ $343,000
Matching Funds: ...................................... $343,000
Total Project Amount: .............................. $686,000
Restore and enhance bottomland hardwood forests and wetlands on public and private lands within the Delta of Arkansas and Mississippi. Project will restore hydrology, enhance existing forests, and reforest areas to impact a total of 8,075 acres, including 7,095 acres of conservation easements, benefiting migratory waterfowl, Louisiana black bear, and other forested wetland-dependent species.

Forested Wetland Restoration in the Lower Mississippi River Floodplain - II (AR, KY, LA, MO, MS, TN)
Grantee: Mississippi River Trust
Grant Amount: ........................................ $780,000
Matching Funds: ...................................... $783,729
Total Project Amount: .............................. $1,563,729
Reforest and protect frequently flooded, marginal cropland on private lands through the adoption of USDA Wetland Reserve Easements in the active floodplain of the Lower Mississippi River. Project will restore and protect 10,285 acres of bottomland hardwood forest and wetlands to expand and enhance habitat and improve water quality, benefitting the Louisiana black bear, swamp rabbit, forest birds, waterfowl, and freshwater fish.

Engaging Underserved Landowners in Conservation and Woodland Management (AR, MS)
Grantee: KKAC Foundation
Grant Amount: ........................................ $375,000
Matching Funds: ...................................... $269,374
Total Project Amount: .............................. $644,374
Develop forest management plans and implement forest conservation practices to improve forest health and wildlife habitat on private lands in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley region of Arkansas and Mississippi. Project will engage historically underserved and minority landowners through workshops and field days to provide forestry technical assistance, address heirs property issues, and connect landowners with financial assistance resources to restore and manage 350 acres of forest habitat.

THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI ALLUVIAL VALLEY RESTORATION FUND IS ALSO CONTINUING SUPPORT FOR ONE EXISTING GRANT:

Forested Wetland Restoration in the Lower Mississippi River Floodplain (AR, KY, LA, MO, MS, TN)
Grantee: Mississippi River Trust
Grant Amount: ........................................ $96,304
Total Project Amount: .............................. $96,304
Reforest and protect frequently flooded, marginal cropland on private lands by adopting wetland reserve easements in the active floodplain of the Lower Mississippi River. Project will establish 7,500 acres of bottomland hardwood forest to expand and enhance habitat and improve water quality, benefitting the Louisiana black bear, swamp rabbit, forest birds, waterfowl, and freshwater fish.