

Why are we working hard to develop the LWV- Upper Mississippi River Region ILO?

Some issues are best understood and dealt with on a regional level that transcends political boundaries. That's especially true for water issues. As you can see from the map below, what goes into the Upper Mississippi River is determined by decisions, actions, and choices made in a very large area.



As an example, let's examine just one issue: nutrient pollution.

“Nutrient pollution is a major threat to water quality. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus carried in runoff from city streets and farm fields or flowing out of wastewater treatment plants can fuel algae blooms that decrease oxygen needed by aquatic plants and animals. Nutrients washed down the Mississippi River have created a ‘dead zone’ in the Gulf of Mexico that stretches for thousands of miles. At home, nutrient pollution can also lower property values, hinder recreation, and degrade drinking water quality.” (From the EPA IL Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy)

How could an LWV-Upper Mississippi River Region ILO help fix such a problem?

- By educating ourselves and our fellow citizens in over 75 different communities in 4 states to learn what we can do on an individual, community, regional, and national level to fix the problem
- By capitalizing on the LWV relationships we have made with the legislators and regulators at every level of government to advocate for the legislation and/or regulations needed to fix the problem
- By using our 501.c.3 status and pooling time and resources to apply for grants to help support our educational efforts and projects
- By facilitating dialogue and collaborative efforts with LWVs in other sections of the country and along the Middle and Lower Mississippi River Regions through our mutual connections to the LWV-US.
- By facilitating discussion, study and action among pairs or groups of LWVs in particular water sheds (as an example, the LWV of Jo Daviess County, IL and the LWV-Dubuque share the Apple Plum Water Shed)
- By creating opportunities and means to exchange information
- By capitalizing on our ability to develop regional positions on river resource issues and serve as an advocate of the Upper Mississippi River states' collective interests before Congress and federal agencies.
- By facilitating and fostering cooperative planning and coordinated management of the region's water resources
- By encouraging our governmental and educational institutions to share data and collaborate

How will an Upper Mississippi River ILO benefit your LWV?

- It will facilitate sharing education and advocacy models and materials developed among our local LWVs in the ILO saving your LWV time and money.
- It will allow us to showcase and mutually adopt successful programs developed by local or state LWVs within the ILO to help us all focus our efforts and become more effective.