



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Between the
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
And the
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
And the
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY



I. Purpose

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is between the Department of the Interior (Interior), acting through its Secretary; the Department of Agriculture (Agriculture), acting through its Secretary; and the Department of the Army (Army), acting through the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. The purpose of this MOU is to establish a framework for collaborative efforts to identify and create opportunities to work together as partners to accomplish shared, compatible, and priority conservation, restoration, outdoor recreation, environmental education, and sustainable economic objectives in support of the National Blueways System as a whole, and specific designated National Blueways.

II. Background

Thanks to growing awareness of the link between healthy communities and healthy watersheds, one of the objectives of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO), launched by President Barack Obama in 2010, calls on Federal agencies to use a comprehensive and collaborative approach to conserving rivers and other waters by employing a combination of land and water management strategies at the watershed level and using tools such as Integrated Water Resources Management to pursue this approach in cooperation with stakeholder-driven watershed-based partnerships.

On May 24, 2012, Secretary Ken Salazar issued Secretary's Order 3321 establishing the National Blueways System, which designates the Connecticut River and Watershed as the Nation's first National Blueway, and directs Interior to align the implementation of all plans and programs in Interior with the National Blueways System; coordinate among bureaus to support designated National Blueways; and pursue partnerships outside Interior in support of the National Blueways System and designated National Blueways.

A National Blueway is a designation for nationally significant rivers and their watersheds that recognizes the economic, recreational, ecological, and cultural value of healthy river systems. A Watershed designated as a National Blueway employs integrated land and water management techniques to conserve and restore a river from its headwaters to its mouth, and across its entire watershed. A large scale is needed, such as the Connecticut River and Watershed National Blueway, to successfully address 21st century challenges posed by changing patterns of resource

use and climate. National Blueways are intended to achieve a balance between scope, scale, and national significance while facilitating grassroots stewardship and local leadership from communities, organizations, and agencies within the watershed, and also remaining relevant and manageable at the local scale.

A National Blueway is envisioned, planned, and adaptively managed by a diverse stakeholder partnership among the communities, tribes, organizations, and agencies that are responsible for, invested in, and committed to the river, watershed, and its array of resources. A National Blueway designation facilitates communication, cooperation, and collaboration to leverage resources and magnify the favorable outcomes of land and water management actions. The large scale of a National Blueway provides a shared context for locally based organizations and agencies to come together in support of a common vision, goals, and actions within the watershed.

There are opportunities for the Federal Government to efficiently coordinate management of their resources in order to maximize program effectiveness across shared objectives. This MOU establishes a framework whereby the Federal Government can better integrate its existing or future investments in rivers and watersheds to achieve shared objectives within the National Blueways System and designated National Blueways.

III. Authorities

The Interior authorities for this MOU include the following: the Take Pride in America Act, Public Law 101-628; the Outdoor Recreation Act, Public Law 87-714; the Cooperative Watershed Management Program of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, Public Law 111-11; the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956, 16 U.S.C. 742 et seq.; the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, 16 U.S.C. 661 et seq.; the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965, 16 U.S.C. 4601-4 et seq.; the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, 16 U.S.C. 1271-1287; and the National Trails System Act of 1968, 16 U.S.C. 1241 et seq.; The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, 43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq.

The Agriculture authorities for this MOU include the following: the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (Public Law 74-46 as amended through Public Law 110-246); the Food Security Act of 1985, as amended (Public Law 99-198 as amended through Public Law 110-246); the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-313 as amended through Public Law 110-246) which includes Rural Forestry Assistance (16 U.S.C. 2102), Forest Stewardship Program (16 U.S.C. 2103a), Watershed Forestry Assistance Program (16 U.S.C. 2103b), Forest Legacy Program (16 U.S.C. 2103c), Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (16 U.S.C. 2103d), and Urban and Community Forestry Assistance (16 U.S.C. 2105); and the Wyden Amendment (Public Law 105-277 as amended).

The Army authorities for this MOU include the following: the Flood Control Act of 1944, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460d); Federal Water Project Recreation Act of 1965 (16 U.S.C. 4601-12, et seq.); and Section 313 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1990 (33 U.S.C. 2320).

IV. Objectives

It is the intent of the parties to this MOU to establish a general framework and identify agency leaders to work collaboratively among Federal Agencies and with external stakeholders nationally and within designated National Blueways to create and enhance partnerships among the Federal agencies to leverage the suite of agency programs and magnify the impact of existing multi-agency investments in the National Blueways System. The activities under these partnerships will be consistent with agency priorities, objectives, and mission, and will be deployed in a manner that attracts the attention and participation of state and municipal partners, organizations, and individuals to invest additional human and financial resources into the National Blueways System.

For purposes of this MOU, the parties agree that the broad objectives for the National Blueways System include the following:

- Conserving, protecting, and enhancing the natural diversity and abundance of fish and wildlife species, and the ecosystems upon which these species depend;
- Restoring and maintaining the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters;
- Integrating and adaptively managing the land and water resources, including agricultural and working lands and waters, within the National Blueways System consistent with applicable laws;
- Providing opportunities for scientific research, environmental education, outdoor recreation, cultural preservation, and sustainable economic opportunities within National Blueways to the extent compatible with agency missions, goals, objectives, and priorities.

V. Implementation Strategies

The parties to this MOU will work to implement the stated objectives using agency programs and initiatives as a part of a collaborative effort to leverage, focus, and magnify the impact and use of those programs and related available resources to accomplish shared and compatible objectives in support of designated National Blueways and the National Blueway System. Specifically, to the extent possible in accordance with applicable laws, policies, budgetary limitations, and consistent with agency priorities, the parties to the MOU will do the following:

1. Encourage interagency sharing of a broad range of specialized professional expertise, program capacity, and other appropriate resources among the parties in order to overcome barriers facing any individual agency and create opportunities for collaborative action to achieve National Blueways System goals.
2. Employ voluntary and incentive-based measures within the National Blueways System to promote integrated and adaptive land and water management, including working lands

and waters, to achieve more natural riverine flows, functions, and aquatic species passage consistent with applicable laws.

3. Promote resiliency and representation of terrestrial and aquatic species and habitats within the National Blueways System by enhancing connectivity within the conservation estate in area, elevations, latitudes, aspects, and processes at a scale that is sustainable given anticipated changes in climate and land use.
4. Ensure robust consideration of projects and proposals associated with designated National Blueways when deliberating on the award of agency grants, enrollment in programs, agency initiatives, and/or other agency assistance.
5. Use and promote a watershed approach to river conservation that integrates land and water conservation and addresses morphology, hydrology, and ecology of the river and its watershed to enhance the effectiveness of restoration and conservation efforts.
6. Promote and integrate habitat connectivity, representation, redundancy, and resiliency into the design of conservation, restoration, and recreation initiatives, to address the effects of climate and land use changes.
7. Communicate, collaborate, and cooperate with diverse stakeholder partnerships of public and private organizations to further the objectives of this MOU and the National Blueways System and designated National Blueways.
8. Seek opportunities to use the broad range of programs, improve capacity, and facilitate participation by allowing additional administrative flexibility in the allocation and use of agency financial assistance and technical assistance funding, to expand the ability to forge internal and external partnerships to achieve the objectives herein.
9. Within 180 days of designation, the parties with land and/or water managing authorities within the watershed will work together to develop, sign, and submit a Memorandum of Understanding or similar agreement for the specific National Blueway to the signatories of this MOU and the National Blueway System Committee that was created under Interior's Secretarial Order 3321. Future MOUs or similar agreements are intended to facilitate communication, cooperation, collaboration, and resource prioritization consistent with agency priorities and to the extent allowable in light of legal, budgetary, and policy limitations. National Blueway-specific MOUs or similar documents will outline watershed-specific objectives, implementation strategies, projects, and initiatives, along with short- and long-term desired outcomes for the river and watershed as an integrated land and water management system. In an effort to increase capacity, leverage resources, and magnify the outcomes, the recruitment of additional Federal partners as parties to the National Blueway-specific MOUs is encouraged as a means of achieving additional and enhanced outcomes and quality public service.

Disclaimer

1. While the actions identified in this MOU are deemed desirable and considered necessary to achieve the aforementioned objectives, the actual contribution will be dependent on agency priorities, laws and policies, and contributions toward core objectives, and subject to the availability of resources for these purposes.
2. This MOU is not a fiscal obligation document. Nothing in this MOU obligates the parties to enter into contracts or other funding instruments to carry out the purposes of this MOU.
3. Nothing in this MOU is intended to authorize or affect the use of private property or is intended to be the basis for the exercise of any new regulatory authority. This MOU shall not affect or interfere with any Federal, state, local, and tribal government jurisdiction or applicable law including interstate compacts relating to water or the laws of any state or tribe relating to the control, appropriation, use, or distribution of water or water rights.
4. This agreement and the obligations of the parties to this MOU hereunder shall be subject to the availability of funding, and nothing herein contained shall be construed as binding the parties to this MOU to expend in any one fiscal year any sum in excess of appropriations made by Congress or administratively allocated for the purpose of this MOU for the fiscal year, or to involve the parties to this MOU in any contract or other obligation for the further expenditure of money in excess of such appropriations or allocations.
5. This MOU is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

VII. Special Provisions

1. No voluntary transfer or assignment of this agreement or any part thereof or interest therein, directly or indirectly, shall be made unless such transfer or assignment is first approved by all of the parties hereto in writing.
2. Additional Federal agencies and departments may be added to this MOU upon approval of the National Blueways Committee after executing a copy of Exhibit I, certifying acceptance of the intent, objectives, implementation strategies, and provisions outlined in this document.
3. Participating departments and/or agencies may designate a representative from each agency or department to serve on the National Blueways System Committee who will strive to support the National Blueways System and seek opportunities to enhance communication, cooperation, and collaboration to leverage available agency resources and magnify the impact of desired outcomes, consistent with agency objectives and priorities.

4. This MOU shall become effective on the date of the last signature as indicated below and the same will apply to all National Blueways once they are designated and included in the National Blueways System.

VIII. Expiration

This MOU shall be in effect for a term of five (5) years and will automatically renew for periods of five (5) year intervals unless participation is terminated by the signatories to this MOU.

This agreement may be terminated in whole or in part hereof at the option of any party to this MOU after thirty (30) days from the date written notice of termination is given.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have hereunto subscribed their names as of the date indicated.

U.S. Department of the Interior

Date: JAN 23 2013

By: Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Date: JAN 17 2013

By: [Signature]
Secretary of Agriculture

Department of the Army

Date: JAN 1 2013

By: [Signature]
Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works

EXHIBIT - I

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between the

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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I. Purpose

This addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of the Interior (Interior); the Department of Agriculture (Agriculture); and the Department of the Army adds the (Department/Agency) to the aforementioned MOU. The purpose is to expand the federal partners working together to accomplish shared, compatible, and priority conservation, restoration, outdoor recreation, environmental education, and sustainable economic objectives in support of the National Blueways System (NBS). Departments and/or agencies may be added to the MOU by completing and executing Exhibit – I and certifying acceptance of the intent, objectives, implementation strategies, and provisions outlined in the NBS Master MOU.

II. Background

Thanks to growing awareness of the link between healthy communities and healthy watersheds, one of the objectives of the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO), launched by President Obama in 2010, calls on Federal agencies to use a comprehensive and collaborative approach to conserving rivers and other waters employing a combination of land and water management strategies at the watershed level using tools such as Integrated Water Resources Management to pursue this approach in collaboration with locally driven watershed-based partnerships.

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the National Blueways System, coordinate among bureaus to support designated National Blueways, and pursue partnerships outside Interior in support of the National Blueways System and AGO.

III. Department/Agency Authorities (Insert appropriate authorities here)

IV. Expiration

This MOU shall be in effect for a term of five (5) years and will automatically renew for periods of five (5) year intervals unless participation is terminated by the signatories to this MOU.

This agreement may be terminated in whole or in part hereof at the option of any party to this MOU after thirty (30) days from the date written notice was given.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have hereunto subscribed their names as of the date indicated.

Department/Agency Name:

Date: _____ **By:** _____

Title: Department/Agency - Secretary/Director



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News Release

AMERICA'S GREAT OUTDOORS: White River and its Watershed in Arkansas and Missouri Recognized as Second "National Blueway"

Designation to Boost Tourism, Expand Recreational Opportunities and Fuel Local Economies

01/09/2013

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LITTLE ROCK, AR— Deputy Secretary of the Interior David J. Hayes today announced that the White River, along with its watershed, has been named the nation's second National Blueway. Hayes was joined by Senator Mark Pryor, Congressman Tim Griffin, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army Terrence "Rock" Salt, Deputy Undersecretary of Agriculture Ann Mills, as well as state, local, and conservation leaders at a ceremony in Little Rock, Arkansas, to make the announcement. Deputy Secretary Hayes said that the collaboration taking place in the White River watershed is a model of successful river conservation for the 21st century.

"The National Blueway designation recognizes that strong, diverse partnerships are the best way to address the modern-day threats to our nation's most important rivers, and the White River is an outstanding example of that approach," said Hayes. "The river is the recreational and economic lifeblood of communities from the Ozarks to the Mississippi. River users and river lovers of all stripes have banded together to protect the White River watershed and maintain this magnificent resource for the region — and for the nation."

"The designation of the White River watershed as a National Blueway demonstrates the Obama Administration's continued commitment to the protection of public and working lands that are crucial to the growth and revitalization of rural America," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. "The resources made available through this designation will support and promote needed conservation efforts and bolster valuable economic growth and job creation in years to come."

In May 2012, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar established the National Blueways System, a new designation for rivers and watersheds of national significance designed to promote and conserve the economic, recreational, and natural values of healthy river systems from source to outlet and across watersheds. The initiative is part of President Obama's America's Great Outdoors Initiative to establish a community-driven conservation and recreation agenda for the 21st century. The designation does not establish a new protective status or regulation, but rather is intended to recognize and support existing local and regional conservation, recreation, and restoration efforts by coordinating ongoing federal, state, and local activities.

Flowing for over 700 miles from its headwaters in the Ozarks to its mouth at the Mississippi River, the White River drains a watershed spanning 17.8 million acres across 60 counties in Arkansas and Missouri. It is home to 1.2 million people who rely on the economic impact that recreation, tourism, agriculture, and commerce along the river provide to watershed communities. The White River is an important part of the wildlife-related economies of Arkansas and Missouri, which statewide accounted for \$1.8 billion and \$2.8 billion in 2011, respectively. Public and private landowners in the watershed have already conserved more than 3.2 million acres of their land for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The White River National Blueway was nominated for this designation by 26 diverse stakeholder groups including the National Wildlife Refuge Association, The Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, The Conservation Fund, Audubon, the Arkansas Canoe Club, the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, the cities of Augusta and Clarendon, local businesses, and federal partners from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of the Interior, and the Lower Mississippi Valley Joint Venture.

"We know through experience that by aligning federal, state and local agencies along with nonprofit and private interests, we can together accomplish great things for the people and wildlife of Arkansas and Missouri," said National Wildlife Refuge Association President David Houghton.

In support of the new White River National Blueway, senior leaders from partnering federal agencies announced new projects that will enhance the river's natural resources and create economic opportunities for the region.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that in FY 2013, working with the Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts to establish priorities, it will commit more than \$22 million to soil and water conservation in counties located within the White River Watershed through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Approximately \$13 million of those funds will be directed to pasture land to provide soil and water conservation needs that arose from the drought in 2012. Additionally, the USDA Forest Service manages more than 1 million acres of federal forest land within the boundary of the Blueway, and is engaging in dozens of projects aimed at improving habitat within the watershed.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently approved a 101,110-acre expansion to the Cache River National Wildlife Refuge—named for one of the White River's main tributaries—that will protect valuable floodplain habitat through conservation easements and acquisitions from willing landowners.

"The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service seeks to build on the great conservation work by our state, federal, conservation, and sportsmen partners," said U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Dan Ashe. "Today's recognition formalizes something all of us already know—that the White River watershed is special. We are committed to passing on to future generations the chance to hike, paddle, hunt, fish, and otherwise enjoy this

exceptional watershed."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced that they are moving forward with the Lower Cache River Basin Restoration Project, which will restore flows to meanders cut off by flood control work and will increase fish and wildlife habitat.

"In keeping with President Obama's commitment to the America's Great Outdoors initiative, the Corps is proud to be a part of the National Blueways initiative, which recognizes and supports stakeholder partnerships," said Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy. "The Corps' Lower Cache River Basin Restoration project is part of this effort."

For maps and photographs of the White River, [click here](#).

For a copy of the Designation of the White River National Blueway, [click here](#).

For a copy of Secretary's Order Number 3321 establishing the National Blueways System, [click here](#).

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