

MrBST Software Application

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In 1999, the six EPA Regional Administrators whose regions incorporate a portion of the Mississippi River Basin agreed to support the creation of a GIS-based tool that would give Agency managers the data they need to support decision making. The application was to support decision making for the entire Mississippi River watershed, which represents about 41 percent of the continental United States. The preliminary version of the MrBST (Mississippi River Basin System Team) application is currently under a Beta testing phase, and will be released as a full version subsequently.

The data layers that make up the current MrBST Version 1.0.1 application were selected based on three criteria.

- a) the data layer serves as a good base layer.
- b) the data layer provides consistent coverage across the Mississippi River Basin.
- c) the data layer addresses an issue of importance to the Agency.
- d) the data layer has already undergone some sort of peer review process, or has wide acceptance across Federal agencies as to its authenticity.

Water quality in the basin is depicted by the State submitted 303(d) (of the Clean Water Act) list of waterbodies scheduled for Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) calculations. Because the stated causes for listing waterbodies varied between the individual States in the basin, the MrBST GIS software application normalizes the data into general categories to contain all State designations. The actual raw data that the States collected to make their listing designations are not included in the application, and neither are other raw data sources such as STORET and NQAA. Upon review of the MrBST scope of work in the early planning stages, EPA scientists recommended against building in queries of raw data, instead opting for sticking with products that have undergone some sort of peer review.