

## **Facts for Consideration**

### **RESOLUTION PROTECTING THE NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT AQUATIC NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI RIVER ECOSYSTEM**

- A comprehensive fisheries and habitat status and needs assessment has never been conducted on the Lower Mississippi River.
- Since 1989 Congress has funded an Environmental Management Program on the Upper Mississippi River (19 million in FY04).
- For the last 10 years the "Breaux Bill" has provided 6-8million dollars annually for coastal restoration in Louisiana.
- The Corps of Engineers has budgeted 8 million dollars in FY04 to perform the first phase of the Louisiana Coastal Assessment Study.
- The Governors of Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee along with the Secretary of the Army for Civil Works support funding the Lower Mississippi River Resource Assessment.
- This project has not been funded since FY00 and funding has not been proposed in FY05.
- Flood control interests oppose this funding.
- Conservation Initiative State-Level Planning meetings have been conducted in 5 of the 6 states which have identified hundreds of potential habitat restoration and improvement projects within the leveed flood plain.
- The Lower Mississippi Conservation Committee is publishing a Fisheries Guide to the Lower River to promote public use and appreciation of these resources.

A 2004 Economic Profile of the Lower River Region revealed that tourism, outdoor recreation and harvest of natural resources generate 13.5 billion, 791 million and 436 million dollars annually in the 113 counties in the region.