

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
Parkade Center, Suite 250, 601 Business Loop 70 West
Columbia, Missouri 65203

12-22-2014

Mike Burden
Sustainability Coordinator
W112 Virginia Ave. Garage
University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211

Salutations,

In regard to STARS documentation, the USDA-NRCS and the University of Missouri have been collaborating on assessment of conservation practices in the Mississippi River Basin. As a USDA-NRCS National Landscape Initiative, the Chief of the USDA-NRCS has authorized voluntary water quality monitoring with private landowners in specified watersheds in the basin. Since 2010, MU Professor Dr. Ranjith Udawatta has planned and conducted water quality monitoring under various regimes.

Indeed, I concur with the following statement provided by MU:

MRBI - The University of Missouri Center for Agroforestry (UMCA) is involved in the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watersheds Initiative, funded by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). UMCA is working with NRCS and other partners such as the Missouri Department of Natural Resources to implement voluntary conservation practices on agricultural farms that improve water quality, restore wetlands, enhance wildlife habitat and sustain agricultural profitability in the Mississippi River Basin. Water quality concerns leading to the hypoxia issue in the Gulf of Mexico have led NRCS to identify the Mississippi River Basin as a top priority to address this issue. UMCA team is engaged in quantifying the benefits of conservation practices by using edge-of-field monitoring on 10 sub-watersheds on farms throughout northern Missouri. Results indicate substantial reduction in nutrient (N and P) loading into streams and rivers from sub-watersheds where conservation practices are installed. The total impacted area would be approximately 2000 acres.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Hefner".

Steve G. Hefner
Missouri NRCS State Water Quality Specialist, Columbia, MO

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