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**GROUP SUES U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS FOR FAILING
TO RELEASE DOCUMENTS RELATING TO DESTRUCTION
OF WETLANDS IN THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN**

On behalf of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment, Great Rivers Environmental Law Center filed suit in federal district court in Washington, D.C., on Monday, December 29, 2014, against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers over the Corps' failure to release any information relating to several permits the Corps issued allowing permit applicants to destroy wetlands of the Mississippi River Basin.

The Missouri Coalition for the Environment ("MCE") seeks the documents in order to determine whether the permit applicants who were allowed to destroy wetlands actually followed through on their promises to preserve, restore and create compensatory wetlands to replace the public resources that were taken.

MCE filed requests for documents from the Corps under the Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") in March and November of 2013. The Corps released no documents for three proposed permits. "The Corps cannot withhold entire permit files before a permit is issued," said Bob Menees, Great Rivers' attorney for MCE. "People have the right to know what information is being considered by the Corps before issuing a permit so that people can effectively comment on the proposed action."

"If the Corps had nothing to hide about the projects it would have released the documents immediately," said Heather Navarro, Executive Director of MCE. "The Corps has allowed developments to destroy almost all of the Mississippi Rivers' wetlands without ensuring that new ones are created as required by the permit applications it keeps approving. These wetlands are vital for flood prevention, water quality and habitat."

The Mississippi River is one of America's most endangered rivers, having lost most of its wetlands and floodplains to development as well as being the repository for many industrial pollutants.

Great Rivers is a nonprofit public interest environmental law firm in St. Louis that provides free and reduced-fee legal services to those working to protect the environment and public health. Its web address is: www.greatriverslaw.org.

The Missouri Coalition for the Environment, a nonprofit, nonpartisan, 501(c)(3) state-level conservation organization, is a force for clean air, clean water and clean energy in Missouri. Since 1969 it has educated and activated Missourians to protect the land we all love. Its web address is: www.moenviron.org.