

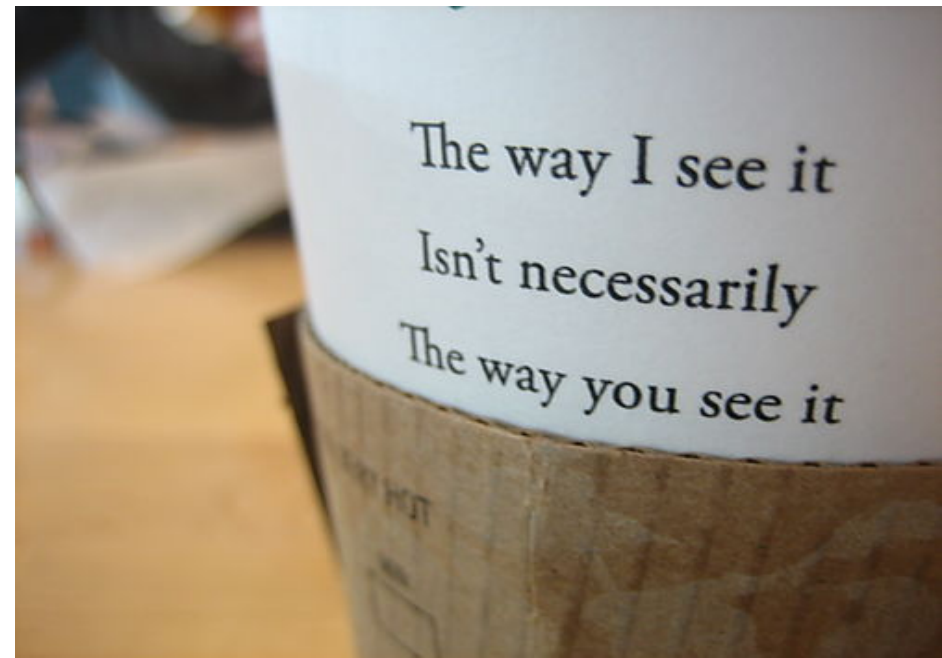
conversant

The background of the slide features several overlapping, semi-transparent geometric shapes with various patterns. These include a large circle with a chevron pattern, a circle with a grid of dots, a circle with horizontal stripes, and a circle with a wavy line pattern. The overall color scheme is a range of reds and maroons.

17 October 2017 | Working on Complex Collaborations

Presented by Anne Murray Allen

A1 The world today is increasingly uncertain and complex.



A2 Today's intractable problems will not be solved by a single individual, organization, or government.



A3 With complex challenges, the focus is not on problem solving, but rather finding leverage points.



A4 Working with complex challenges requires unprecedented levels of collaboration.



Complex Collaborations

Teams or groups united by a shared purpose, working interdependently in ways and circumstances that go beyond the more traditional mental models of ‘teamwork.’

Comprised of individuals with no boss in common, juggling multiple roles and memberships. Often geographically dispersed.

Successful teams embrace the uncertainty and rely on the many relationships required to see the system as a whole and to act powerfully together to have impact.

In Summary

Teams working on complex collaborations tend to be:

- Geographically dispersed
- Working virtually some/most of the time
- Self-governing
- Dynamic in membership (people join and peel off as needed)
- Part time to the effort due to other responsibilities they carry

Complex Systems defined

- High *unpredictability*
- High degree of *interdependencies and connections*
- Cannot be seen and adequately understood from any one point of view
- Interactions and effects that are *dynamic* with elements not understood in isolation of a larger whole

The background features three large, overlapping circles. The leftmost circle has a diagonal line pattern. The middle circle has a dense grid of small circles. The rightmost circle has a zigzag or chevron pattern. All circles are light gray and semi-transparent.

Examples?

Under these circumstances,
what do you imagine becomes
crucial for success?

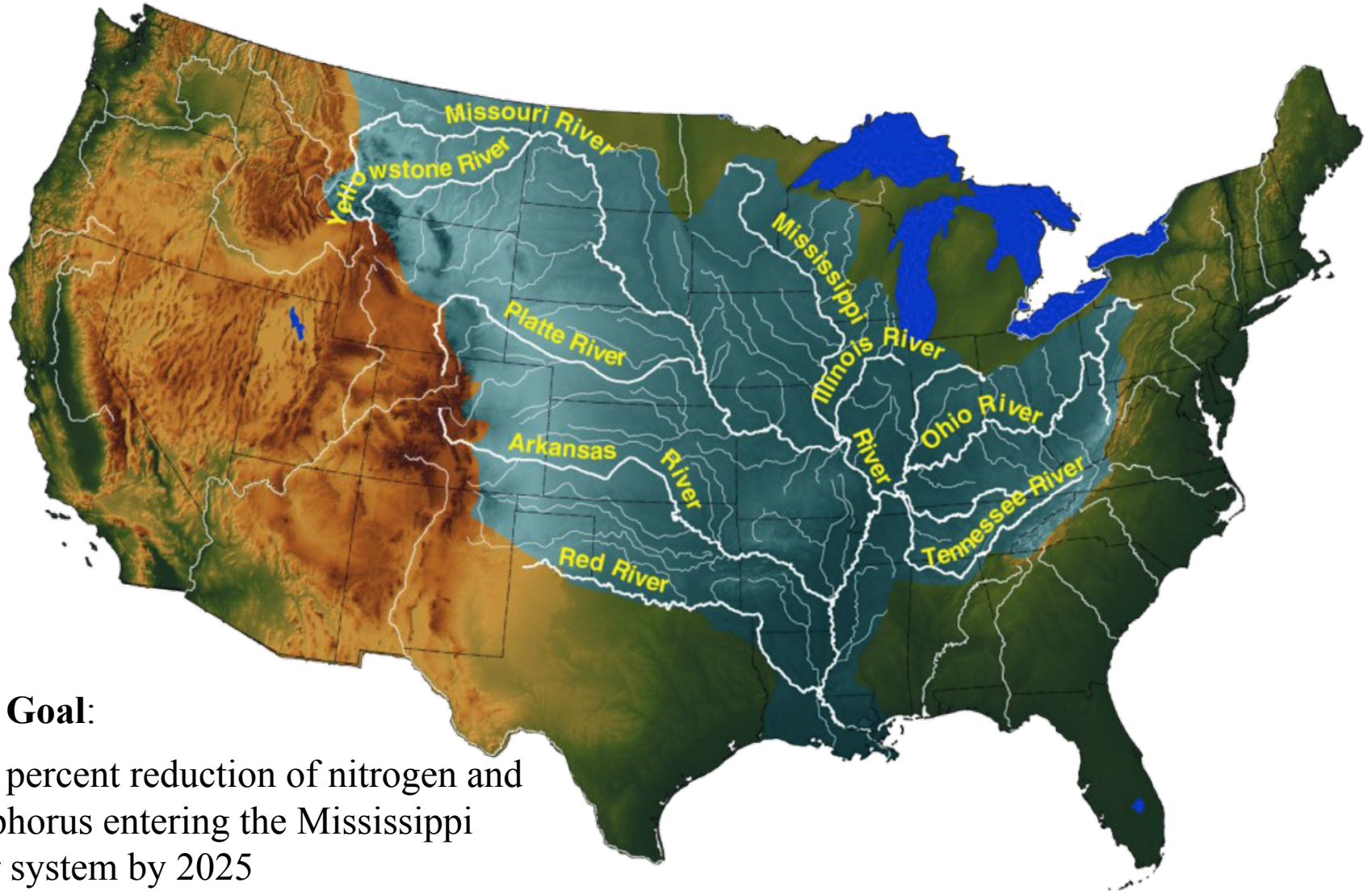
Conditions that support Complex Collaborations

1. Interdependence and alignment to a common worthy purpose.
2. Group reflective processes.
3. Minimum critical spec approach to rules and processes.
4. Powerful launch.
5. Leadership that removes roadblocks vs. controlling and driving.

Surprise Findings

- ✓ The most important aspects of social interaction are the conditions of non-rational solidarity.
- ✓ All members of complex collaborations want to be seen as equally legitimate contributors
- ✓ Team performance occurs in a state of confidence, joy, and even enthusiasm.
- ✓ Once committed to purpose, all members yearn for affective attachment and the sense of shared accomplishment.

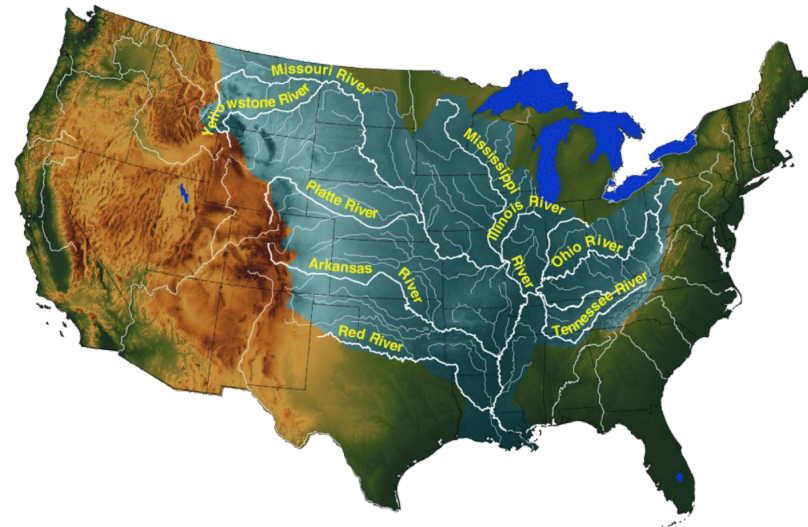
MsB Nutrient Reduction



TNC Goal:

A 20 percent reduction of nitrogen and phosphorus entering the Mississippi River system by 2025

Key Approaches



Collaboration is key

Conservation success hinges on the collaborative spirit of cities, farmers, agribusiness, policy makers and other watershed stakeholders

Focus first on ‘seeing the system’ as a whole

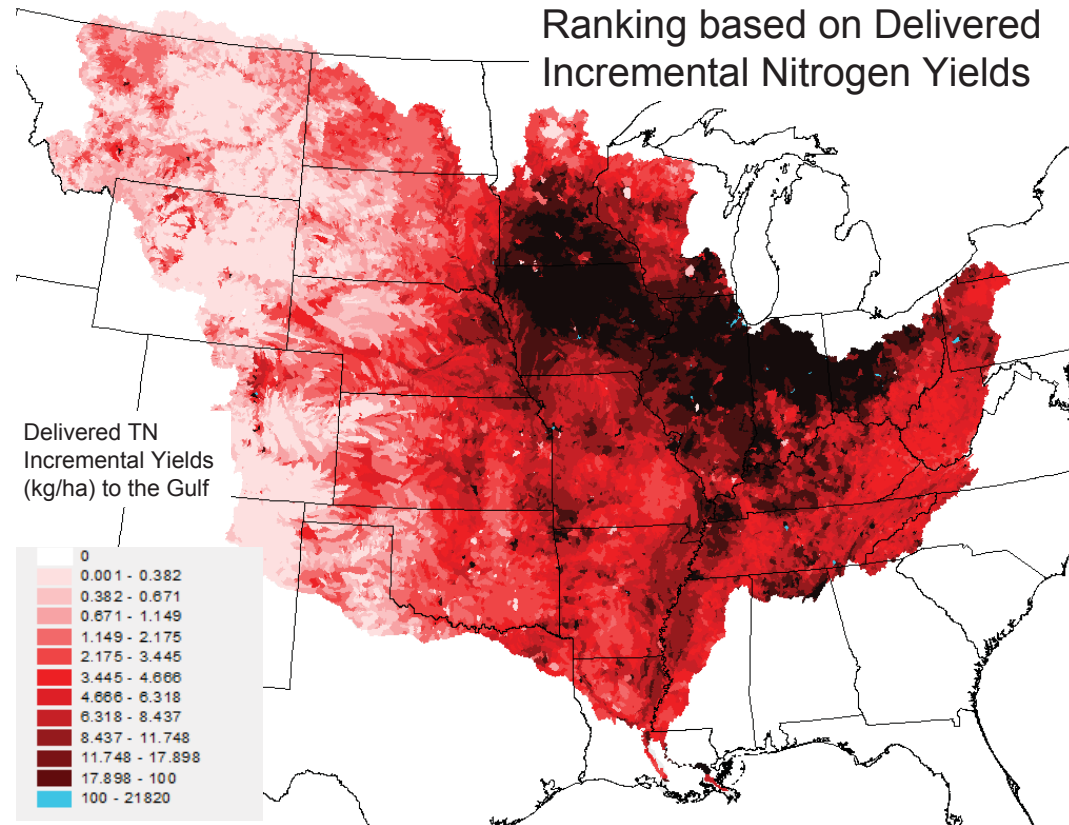
Developed a system map we could all align on and chose the leverage points to work on *collectively*

Align, Act, Adjust

A virtuous cycle of learning and accomplishment utilizing a common framework

MsB focusing on the Levers that Drive Systemic Nutrient Pollution

1. Ability to *fund* systemically
2. Ability to strategically *target* geographies and solutions
3. Ability to *recruit* numerous high-quality champions and advisors



Key Results (to date)

All State TNC Chapters sharing resources to move the levers

- Money raised for the Basin-wide strategies targeting high leverage solutions.
- Conservation expertise directed to where it's most needed

External partnerships have grown

- Ag Industry engaged and contributing
- New funders investing
- Collaboration with other NGO's

Team growth and expansion

- High emotional energy and 'buzz' at team gatherings. No one wants to miss meetings!
- Expanding membership as work progresses
- Training all new members on collaborative conversations and shared leadership
- Learning captured for use across TNC



Durkheim

“The feeling which [the group] has for [the individual] enhances the feeling which he has for himself.

Because he is in moral unison with his fellow men, he has more confidence, courage, and boldness in action.”

Final Thoughts or Questions?