Middle Mississippi River Wetlands Field Station: Prairie Peninsula Domain (Alternate Site)

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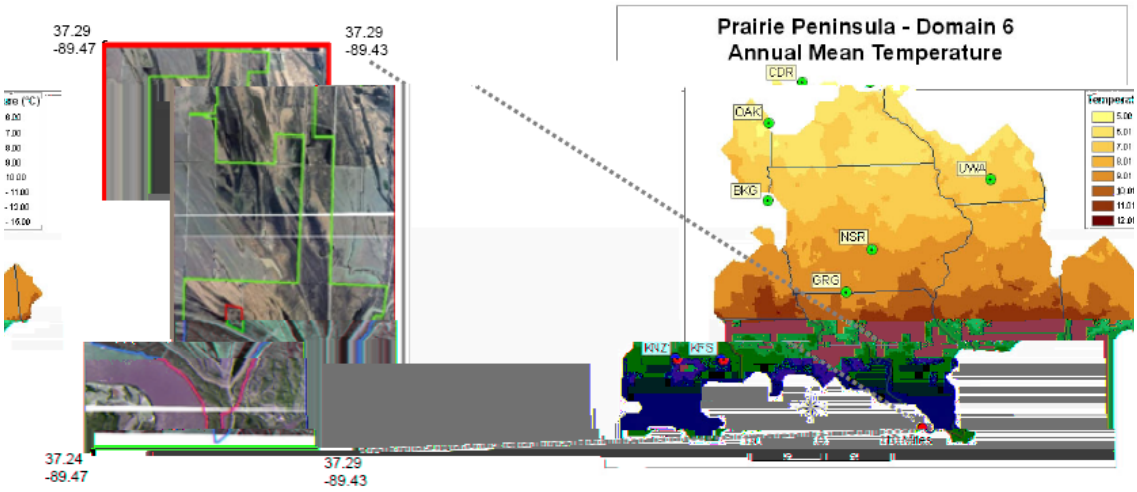
Web Page: under construction – available January 2007

Location within Domain:



History: Mississippi River floodplain that was in intensive row-crop agriculture until enrollment in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in 1998. Wetland cells were restored in 1998-2000 and planted in mixed bottomland hardwoods. Site was purchased by the American Land Conservancy in 2003 and donated to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) for development as a field station by Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Key Characteristics: 1,400 acres of large river floodplain, including ~1.5 km of river front, recently removed from agricultural production. Restored wetland cells were planted with mixed hardwoods and cypress, all within the past 8 years. Remnant patches of bottomland forest and some restored mesic prairie are also present. Extensive tracts of old field are still available for further restorations and/or manipulations. Site is typical of Midwestern, large river floodplain that has been retired from production, with restoration activities targeting historical conditions. Property is bordered on two sides by USDA Forest Service land, also available for research and monitoring activities. Existing resources are suited for addressing climate, land use, and invasive response themes.

Existing Infrastructure: Member of the Organization for Biological Field Stations (OBFS). This is a new site with an overlying theme of large river floodplain restoration and sustainable use, and a research focus on the influence of hydrologic variability and connectivity on floodplain structure and function. Site has 10 wetland cells, ranging in size from 2 to ~40 acres; 9 have water control structures and continuous water level and temperature monitoring. Two wells with large capacity pumps can be used to fill wetlands during dry periods. Continuous datasets since ~2000 for the Mississippi River at Cape Girardeau, including water chemistry, discharge, and are available from the USGS Open River Field Station (http://www.umesc.usgs.gov/field_stations/fs5/open_river.html), just across the river from the MMRWFS.

Facilities: Modest on-site housing, with electricity, running water, and climate control, for up to 6 persons, with expansion planned in the near future. Basic lab space and a large, 400 m2 indoor storage area for equipment, boats, and vehicles. Extensive network of mowed levees and trails allows access to all wetland cells; ATV available on site. Site is 5 km from Cape Girardeau and ~60 km from SIUC. Access to the property is controlled by SIUC and IDNR.