

Foreword

“The face of the water, in time, became a wonderful book — a book that was a dead language to the uneducated passenger, but which told its mind to me without reserve, delivering its most cherished secrets as clearly as if it uttered them with a voice. And it was not a book to be read once and thrown aside, for it had a new story to tell every day.”

— Mark Twain, *Life on the Mississippi*

Ken Olson and Lois Wright Morton have written a book on the wonderful stories of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. They interpret the language of the rivers and their management through the keen eyes of a soil scientist and a sociologist. More importantly, they interpret the two rivers’ complex human and natural relationships in terms that both scientists and non-scientists can understand.

The demand for soil and water resources is ever increasing, and wise land use planning involves diverse and often conflicting goals. These issues require both technical expertise and a human touch. Drs. Olson and Morton provide exactly that, with historical background, unique perspective, clear understanding, and sharp insight to confront current problems and discover new opportunities these two great rivers present.

Public and private landowners and managers of the Mississippi and Ohio river landscapes will benefit greatly from the intensive research and presentation of case studies. Other beneficiaries might include soil scientists, sociologists, conservationists, wetland specialists, human and physical geographers, urban planners, public health specialists, economists, geomorphologists, geologists, hydrologists, agronomists, foresters, and river lovers in general.

A book of this scope and detail is not to be read once and thrown aside, but to be reviewed and studied over time. For as the young steamboat cub pilot Mark Twain stated, these rivers indeed have “a new story to tell every day.”

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