

## MANAGEMENT ISSUES



The Upper Mississippi River is an enormous and complex natural resource. To further complicate the situation, there are at least 262 government agencies or bodies of government that have active roles in the management of the Mississippi River. The list includes six federal agencies, 23 state agencies and 233 local government bodies.

With all this "government" an obvious question is: "Do all these different agencies with different missions and responsibilities work with each other?" This is one instance that the complexity of the Mississippi River has been a benefit. Because this is such a big and vast resource, these agencies are constantly working together to pool human and financial resources, to work toward a common goal and to try to resolve conflicts when the missions do not mesh. Most of these partnerships are formal, with the participants meeting on a regular basis. However, many of these partnerships are informal, and the agreements are made with a handshake.

Cooperation is not always easy with the mixed goals of these agencies, but for the good of the river we negotiate and arrive at mutually agreeable decisions. In the future, because the human and financial resources of the agencies are limited and the demand is increasing for the river's natural resources, cooperation between agencies will be even more essential to maintain or enhance the natural resources on the Upper Mississippi River.