

# The Multiple Benefits of Floodplain Easements

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**AMERICAN  
RIVERS**





American Rivers restores damaged rivers, protects wild rivers, and conserves clean water for people and nature.







# The Multiple Benefits of Floodplain Easements

[www.americanrivers.org/floodplaineasements](http://www.americanrivers.org/floodplaineasements)



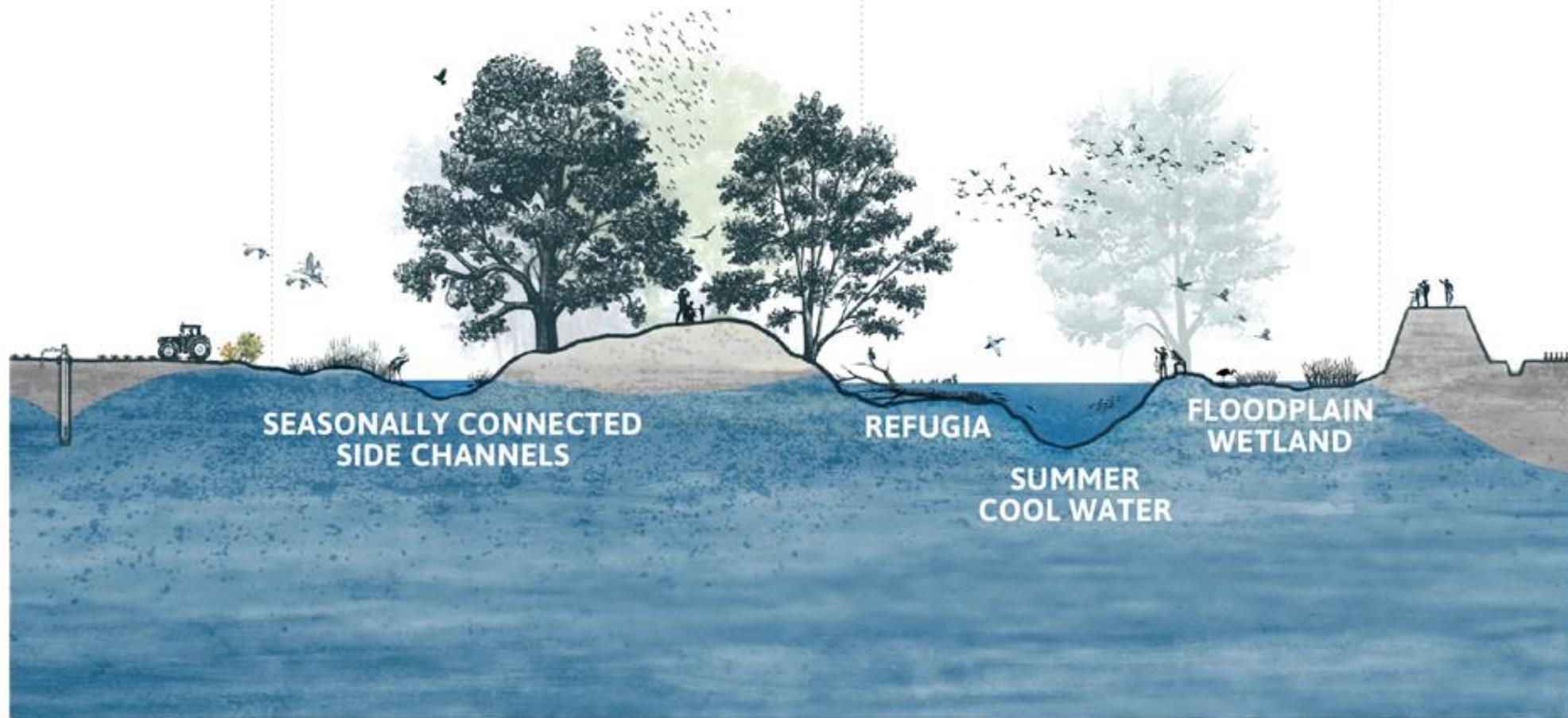
**AMERICAN  
RIVERS**

AGRICULTURE

RIPARIAN WETLANDS

COMPLEX CHANNEL HABITAT

HABITAT BENEFITS



**HUMAN BENEFITS**

↑ RAISED groundwater level

🌡️ CLIMATE MITIGATION with carbon storage

🎣 RECREATIONAL fishing + hunting

🚰 MORE RELIABLE water supply

🏠 SAFER FLOODS

🍷 POLLINATION of crops

💰 ECONOMIC DIVERSITY with eco-tourism

✂️ REDUCED regulation

🥂 IMPROVED water quality





## Dogtooth Bend Timeline:

- 1993: Levee breach
- 2011: Levee breach
- 2015/16: Levee breach
- 2016: USACE decides not to repair the levee





## Limited Options for Farmers dealing with flood-prone land:

- Wetland Reserve Program?
- Floodplain Easements?



# In the Upper Mississippi River Basin

Over the last decade

2,512

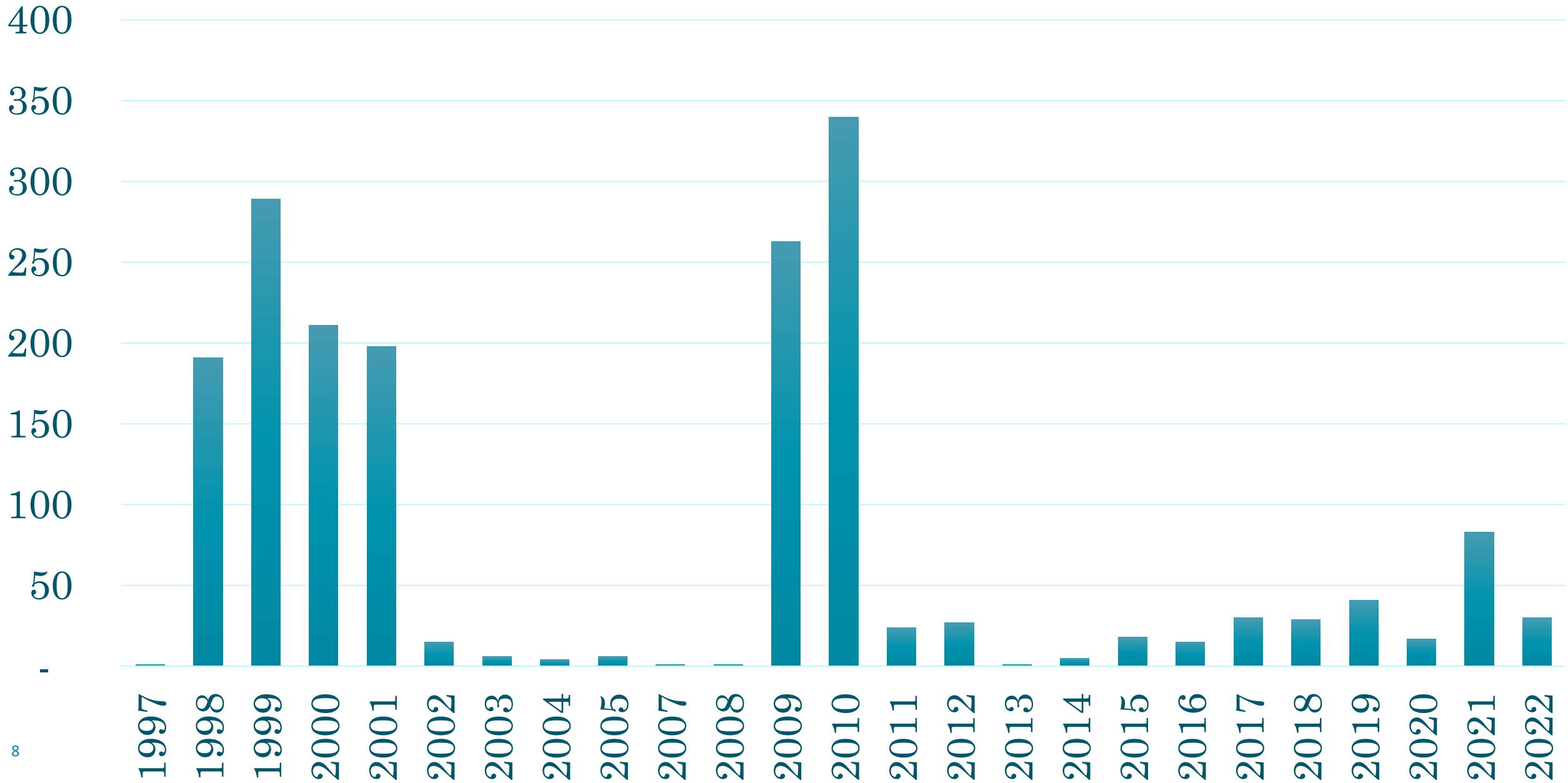
Agricultural disasters  
due to flooding

1

Number of times  
Congress has funded  
Floodplain Easements

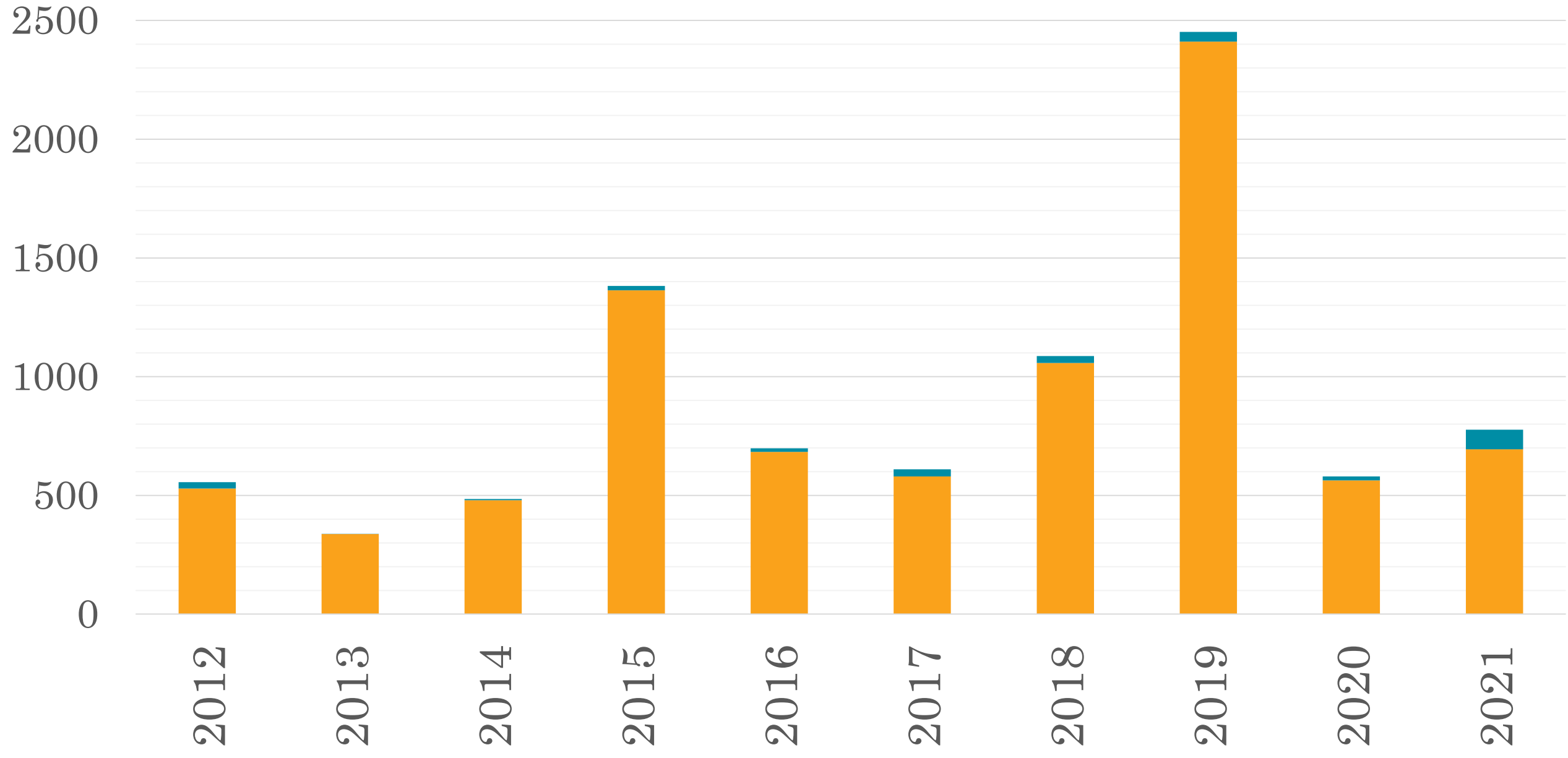


# Count of EWPP-Floodplain Easements Enrolled by Fiscal Year (All States)





- Number of Floodplain Easements Enrolled
- Number of Agricultural Disasters due to Flooding



## Farmer Requests for Floodplain Easements Greatly Exceed Awards in the Upper Mississippi River Basin

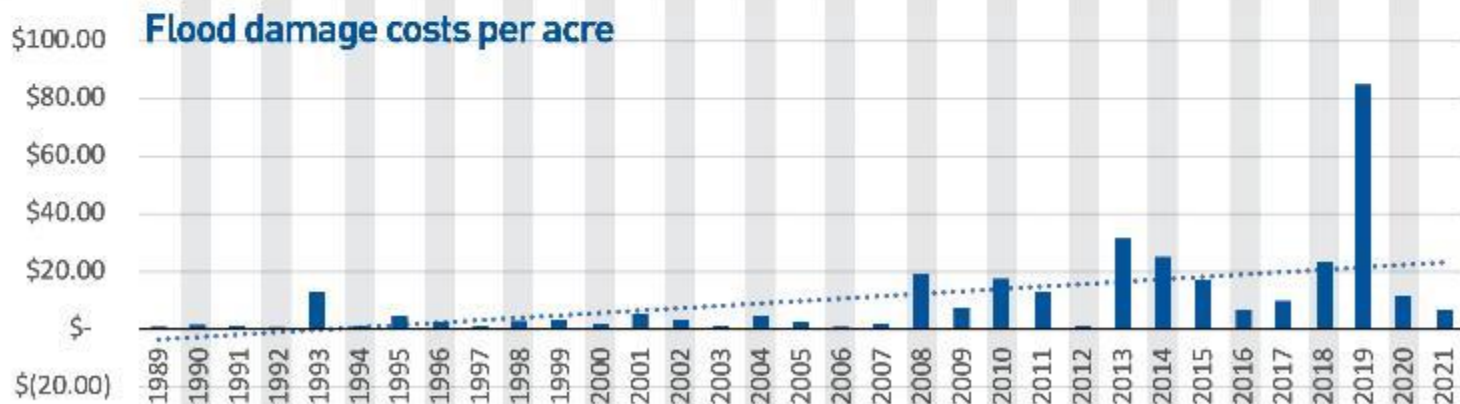
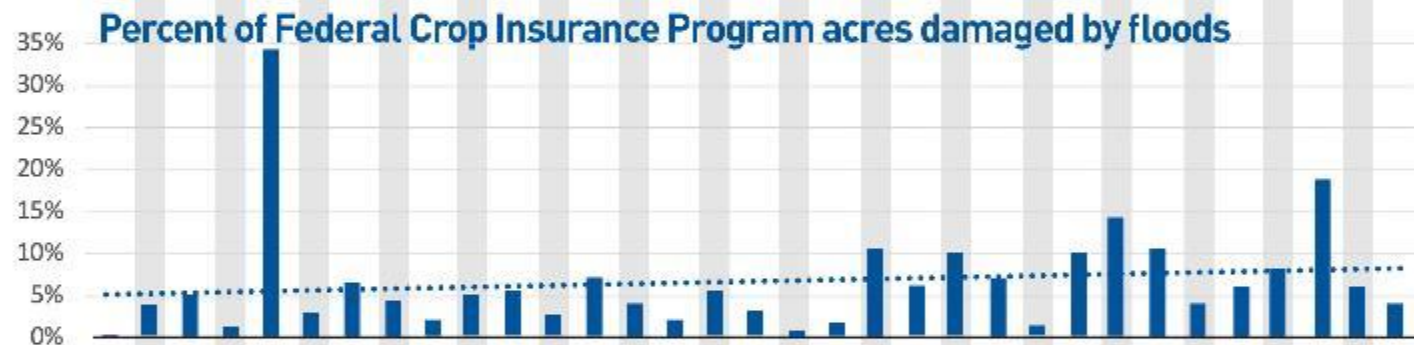
State	Total Applicants	Total Offered Acres	Awarded Applicants	Awarded Acres
Iowa	1,127	115,635	76	9,101
Illinois	362	10,829	30	4,685
Minnesota	44	3,376	7	4,846
Missouri	325	45,010	45	6,717
Wisconsin	352	24,193	54	6,365
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,210</b>	<b>199,043</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>31,714</b>

\* Data provided by NRCS from each state.

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# Agricultural Flood Damages are Escalating in the Upper Mississippi River Basin



Flooding is more frequent and more expensive.



# Upper Mississippi River agricultural producers are particularly hard hit by flooding

## American Rivers Study

**TABLE 2:** The UMRB sees more damages from flooding and excess rain/moisture than most other states for farmers enrolled in the Federal Crop Insurance program (USDA Risk Management Agency 2022).

10-Year Total Acres Damaged by Flood and Excess Rain/Moisture (millions of acres).		10-Year Total Flood & Excess Rain/Moisture Damage Subsidies (Indemnities minus Producer Paid Premium). Adjusted for Inflation.	
1. North Dakota	16.6	1. North Dakota	\$2.8 Billion
<b>2. Minnesota</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>2. Minnesota</b>	<b>\$2.5 Billion</b>
3. Illinois	16.6	3. South Dakota	\$1.7 Billion
4. Missouri	13.8	4. Iowa	<b>\$1.7 Billion</b>
5. Iowa	12.2	5. Missouri	<b>\$1.5 Billion</b>
...		6. Illinois	<b>\$1.5 Billion</b>
15. Wisconsin	4.1	14. Wisconsin	<b>\$688 Million</b>



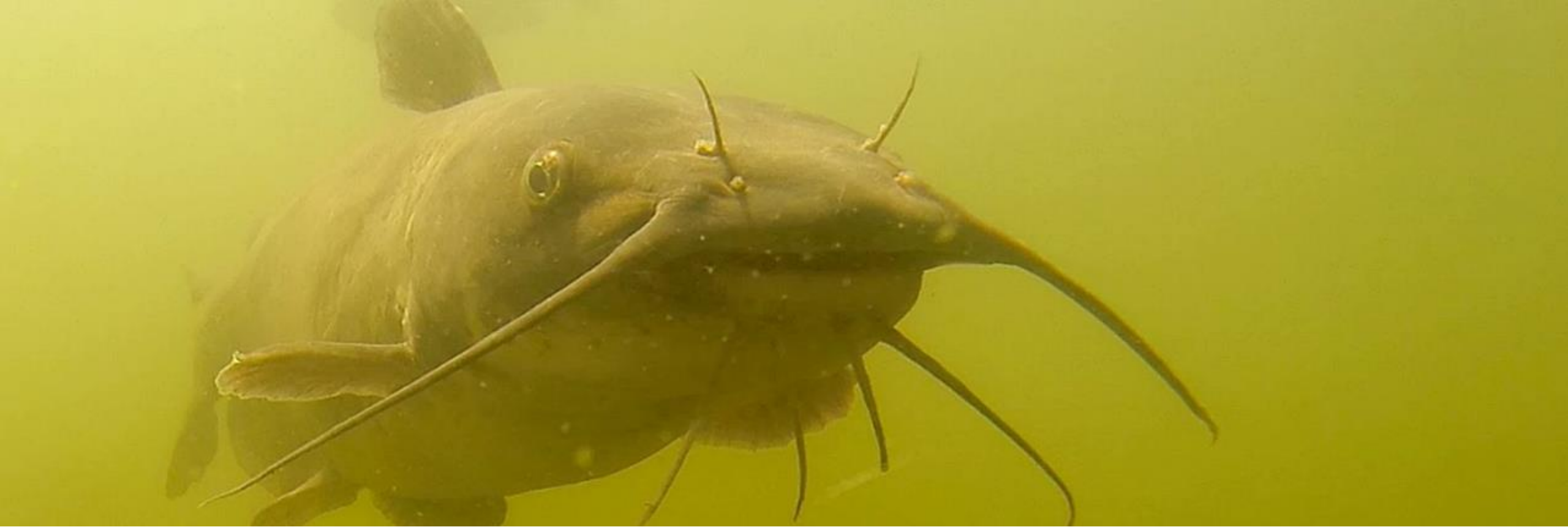


# Flooding is costing Taxpayers Billions

Flooding is more widespread than drought

Cause of Loss	Total Indemnities (CPI-Adjusted)	Subsidy (CPI-Adjusted)	Cumulative Acres Impacted
10-Year Total: Flood	\$8 Billion	\$7 Billion	61.6 Million
10-Year Total: Drought	\$10 Billion	\$9 Billion	50.6 Million





## It's not just about avoiding costs

Conservation easements on floodplains provide a lot of other benefits



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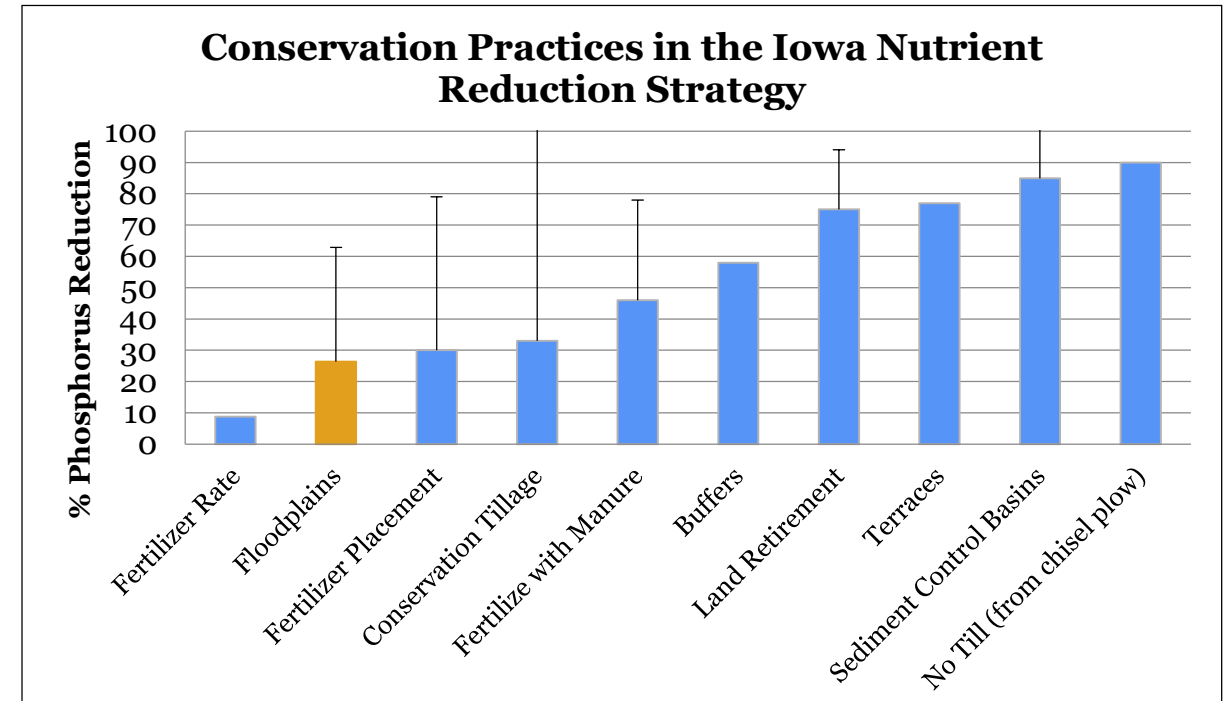
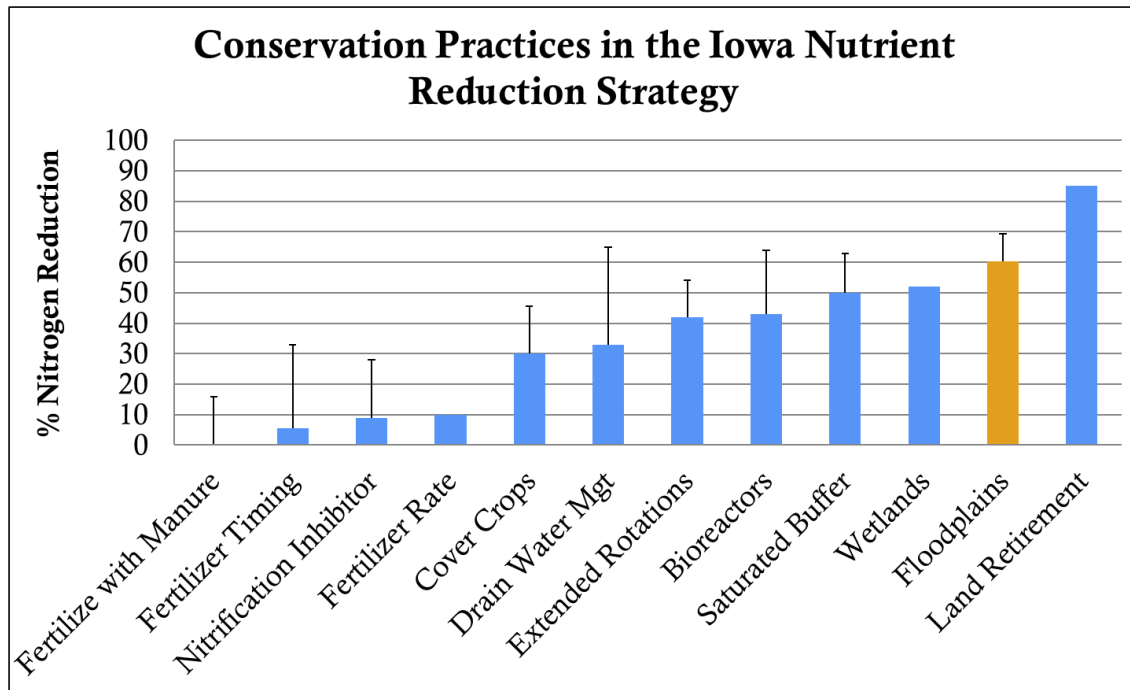
## Healthy Floodplains Increase Flood Water Storage

**Wetlands can store  
1 to 1.5 million gallons  
of water per acre**

That's the equivalent of a football field-sized swimming pool, 10-feet deep



# Healthy Floodplains Help Us Meet Nutrient Pollution Reduction Goals

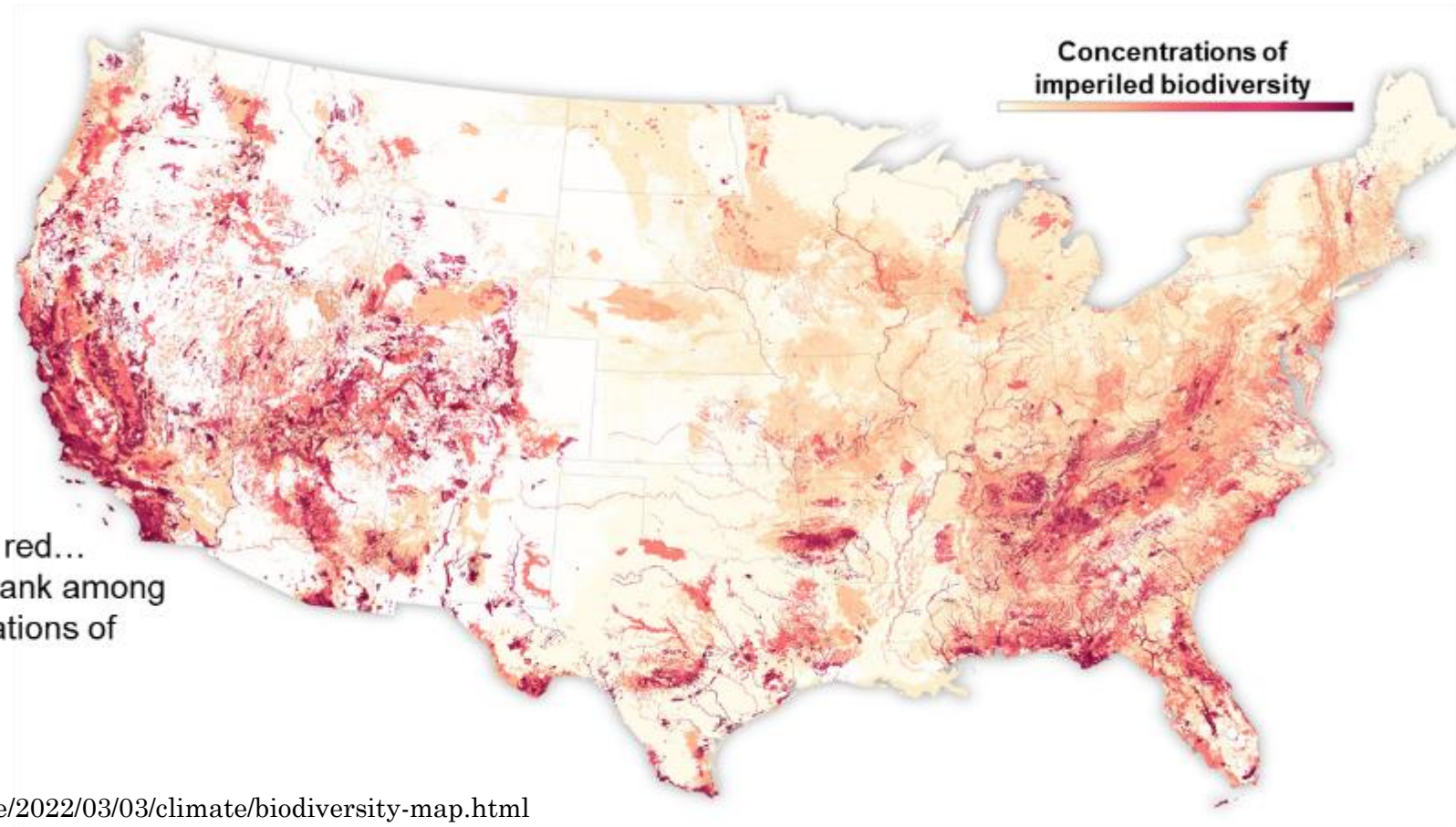


<https://www.mdpi.com/2073-4441/12/10/2762>





# Healthy Floodplains Will Protect Species Most at Risk of Extinction



<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/03/03/climate/biodiversity-map.html>

# Recommendations to enhance the Floodplain Easement Program

Conservation goals outlined in the EWPP-FPE are good, in general.



Mississippi River by Roy Plasscheart and LightHawk

- Move into Agricultural Conservation Easement Program and fund annually
- Annual enrollment opportunity for floodplain easements
- Prioritize repetitive loss properties





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