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**News Release****Flood Survey Open for American Bottom in Madison County**

*Homeowners, businesses, and property owners are invited to take the survey and provide input into watershed plan for the area*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****May 9, 2017**

**Madison County, Ill.** – A Flood Survey is being conducted to identify flooding issues in the American Bottom watershed in Madison County, the low-lying area which includes Granite City, Pontoon Beach, Mitchell, Madison, and Venice. Small areas within the boundaries of Edwardsville, Hartford, and Fairmont City are also in the watershed.

The public is invited to take the survey and provide input to Madison County about flooding in the American Bottom. The survey is available online at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/americanbottomflood](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/americanbottomflood), and takes just seven to ten minutes to complete.

The survey will also be mailed to 2,000 randomly selected addresses in the watershed. Additional paper copies of the survey will be available at Madison County's Planning and Development department in Edwardsville, and at HeartLands Conservancy in Mascoutah. The deadline to return the survey is June 30.

This survey is a major input to the American Bottom Watershed Plan. This plan is a way to strategically address stormwater, flooding, and water quality issues in southwestern Madison County.

"We have already heard from many community officials and residents about flooding problems in their communities," said Steve Brendel, Stormwater Coordinator with the Madison County Planning & Development department. "While solving flooding problems will not happen overnight, the American Bottom Watershed Plan will identify flood and water quality problems and start to prioritize future efforts to tackle those issues."

"Flooding has tremendous costs including health impacts, road closures, and damage to homes and infrastructure," says project manager Janet Buchanan of Heartlands Conservancy. "This watershed plan, still in its early stages, is a tremendous opportunity to create a long-term vision to reduce the impacts of flooding and improve water quality for American Bottom residents. And the Flood Survey allows people to provide input towards the planning effort and get on our contact list for more information."

The watershed planning process is being undertaken by a partnership between Madison County and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with HeartLands Conservancy as the lead consultant.

The survey results and information from stakeholder meetings will help shape the recommendations in the watershed plan that address flooding, stormwater, erosion, and water quality, among other issues.

“Watershed plans can be used to leverage funding to address many different issues, including flooding,” Buchanan added. “With input from county residents, we can direct attention to projects and land management issues that matter to people and have the greatest impact.”

This effort is part of Madison County’s overall stormwater management effort. In 2016, Madison County completed a watershed plan for the Upper Silver Creek watershed, and two further watershed plans are underway for the Cahokia Creek watersheds. As a result of the Upper Silver Creek plan, the Illinois EPA awarded HeartLands Conservancy a \$500,000 grant to implement projects that address water quality and stormwater issues identified in the plan in Madison County.

The final results of the American Bottom Flood Survey will be published in a report in late 2017. This report will be emailed to survey respondents who provide an email address, and will be available at Madison County Planning and Development.

For more information about the American Bottom Watershed Plan, visit [www.heartlandsconservancy.org/americanbottom.php](http://www.heartlandsconservancy.org/americanbottom.php).

For more information about the Flood Survey or the American Bottom Watershed Plan, please contact Janet Buchanan at HeartLands Conservancy at 618-566-4451 ext 25 or email [janet.buchanan@heartlandsconservancy.org](mailto:janet.buchanan@heartlandsconservancy.org).

For more information about Madison County Planning and Development, visit [http://www.co.madison.il.us/departments/planning\\_and\\_development/index.php](http://www.co.madison.il.us/departments/planning_and_development/index.php).

#### **ABOUT HEARTLANDS CONSERVANCY**

HeartLands Conservancy, a nonprofit serving Southwestern Illinois since 1989, is devoted to the conservation of land, the preservation of green spaces in our communities, sustainable and environmentally friendly community planning, and engaging our neighbors with nature. We are investing in the nature of Southwestern Illinois. Visit: [www.HeartLandsConservancy.org](http://www.HeartLandsConservancy.org) for more information.

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