APPENDIX H—WATER RESOURCES

The following table lists river miles and areas of water bodies in Alabama and Mississippi that cross non-U.S. Forest Service Federal mineral ownership (non-USFS FMO).

Table H-1. River Miles and Areas of Water Bodies Crossing Non-USFS Federal Mineral Ownership

Non USFS FMO	River Miles (miles)	Area if Water Bodies (acres)
Mississippi	48.41	33,140
Alabama	26.54	2,190

BLM-administered surface tracts and FMO occur within river basins throughout Alabama and Mississippi. There are a total of 14 river basins in the State of Alabama: the Tennessee, Upper Tombigbee, Lower Tombigbee, Black Warrior, Coosa, Cahaba, Tallapoosa, Chattahoochee, Choctawhatchee, Chipola, Perdido-Escambia, Alabama, Mobile, and Escatawpa River Basins (ADEM 2004). In the State of Mississippi there are a total of 10 river basins: the Big Black River, Coastal Streams, Mississippi River, North Independent Streams, Pascagoula River, Pearl River, South Independent Streams, Tennessee River, Tombigbee River, and Yazoo River Basins (MDEQ 2005). A brief description of each of these major river basins follows.

STATE OF ALABAMA

Tennessee

The Tennessee River Basin is one of the largest river systems passing through Alabama. Parts of this river basin occupy seven states in the southeastern United States. The Alabama portion of the Tennessee River Basin is located along what is known as the “Great Bend,” which is an Indian term that early settlers used to describe the southern bend of the Tennessee River as it reached into Alabama. The Tennessee River Basin in Alabama drains roughly 13 percent of the state’s 51,705 square miles. The basin is home to the Alabama cavefish, a rare freshwater fish (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

The Tennessee River begins near Holston and French Broad Rivers near Knoxville, Tennessee. After flowing along a 652-mile course, the river empties into the Ohio River near Paducah, Kentucky. The Tennessee River cuts westward across northern Alabama as it flows through the Cumberland Plateau physiographic province to Muscle Shoals in northwestern Alabama. The river falls 137 feet in 37 miles at Muscle Shoals, which serves as the dividing line between the Upper and Lower Tennessee. In 1933 the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) constructed the Wilson Dam on the river near Muscle Shoals (Rivers of Alabama 2005). There are 10 locks and dams located along the Tennessee River (TVA 2005).

Upper Tombigbee/Lower Tombigbee

The Tombigbee River begins in Prentiss and Tishomingo Counties in northeastern Mississippi. The Upper Tombigbee flows through Mississippi to Alabama and crosses the state line at Aliceville Lake in Pickens County. The river then continues in a southeasterly direction to Demopolis, Alabama, and merges with the Black Warrior River, one of its largest tributaries. The Upper Tombigbee River Basin occupies

approximately 9,000 square miles and includes sections of the Fall Line Hills, Pontotoc Ridge, and Black Prairie districts of the East Gulf Coastal Plain physiographic province (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

The Lower Tombigbee River Basin is the portion of the basin below the confluence with the Black Warrior River. This section of the basin flows 175 miles and drains 4,659 square miles in seven Alabama counties before merging with the Alabama River to form the Mobile River (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Black Warrior

The Black Warrior River Basin drains approximately 6,276 square miles of land in Alabama. The principal forks of the Black Warrior River are the Sipsey, Mulberry, and Locust, which begin in northern Alabama and converge to form the Black Warrior. The Black Warrior River falls across large shoals before reaching Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The Black Warrior River mainstem occupies five counties in Alabama: Jefferson, Walker, Tuscaloosa, Hale, and Greene (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

The river flows across the fall line, a geologic barrier separating the high and hilly Cumberland Plateau from the flat and loping East Gulf Coastal Plain. The Upper Black Warrior River is above the fall line and flows through sandstones, shales, and limestones of the Cumberland Plateau and streambeds. The elevations range from 1,100 feet on the northern slopes to 600 feet near Tuscaloosa and the Fall Line Hills. The Lower Black Warrior River flows below the fall line through the upper Coastal Plain, with elevations between 150 and 300 feet. Approximately 75 percent of the Black Warrior River Basin is above the fall line, and approximately 25 percent flows below the fall line. The river ends at the east bank of the Tombigbee River just north of Demopolis (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

The Sipsey Fork, a National Wild and Scenic River, is a tributary of the Black Warrior River. Approximately 61 miles of the river within the William B. Bankhead National Forest are permanently protected (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Coosa

The Coosa River Basin begins in northwestern Georgia before flowing to and entering the State of Alabama. The main tributaries of the Coosa River include the Conasauga, Coosawattee, Oostanaula, and Etowah Rivers. The Coosa River's mainstem flows for approximately 286 miles before arriving north of Montgomery. Approximately 255 miles of the Coosa River's mainstem rests in Alabama, which is 89 percent of the total river miles. The Coosa River watershed covers about 10,200 square miles, of which about 4,500 square miles (46 percent) are in Georgia and 5,400 square miles (53 percent) are in Alabama (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

The Coosa River Basin occupies five different physiographic regions. The majority of the Coosa River Basin is split between the Valley and Ridge and Piedmont provinces. Approximately 34 percent of the river basin occurs in the Valley and Ridge physiographic province, with altitudes ranging from 600 to 1,600 feet; 34 percent is in the Piedmont province; 4 percent is in the Blue Ridge province; 8 percent is in the Cumberland Plateau in Alabama, with altitudes of 1,500 to 1,800 feet; and 2 percent is in the Coastal Plain province (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Cahaba

The Cahaba River is one of the longest free-flowing rivers in the State of Alabama. The Cahaba flows for about 190 miles and occupies approximately 1,163,574 acres. The Cahaba River Basin flows through

portions of eight counties: Jefferson, St. Clair, Shelby, Bibb, Perry, Dallas, Tuscaloosa, and Chilton (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

The Cahaba River begins at the Cahaba Mountain northeast of Birmingham, at an elevation of approximately 1,200 feet. The Cahaba River has an average slope of 15 feet per mile for the first 25 to 30 miles, then drops to a slope of 2.5 feet per mile for about 44 miles, and finally flattens to a slope of 0.6 feet per mile. Elevation in the Cahaba River Basin ranges from 1,100 feet in Shelby County to 100 feet at the confluence with the Alabama River (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

The Cahaba River Basin is located in two physiographic regions of the State of Alabama. The Upper Cahaba River Basin lies in the Valley and Ridge province, and the Lower Cahaba River Basin lies in the East Gulf Coastal Plain province. The majority of the basin (84 percent) lies within the Valley and Ridge province. The remainder of the basin (14 percent) lies in the East Gulf Coastal Plain Province (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Tallapoosa

The Tallapoosa River originates in Paulding County, Georgia, which is located 40 miles west of Atlanta. Originating at an elevation of about 1,145 feet, the river flows southwest for about 195 miles into Alabama and then flows west after meeting Uphapee Creek for 40 miles to join the Coosa River near Wetumpka. The 235-mile river drains a basin area of 4,680 square miles. Approximately 3,960 square miles lie in the State of Alabama, accounting for 85 percent of the land area (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

The Tallapoosa River falls at a rate of 12 feet per mile for its first 15 miles. The river then descends to 3.4 feet per mile. From Thurlow Dam to its mouth, the Tallapoosa River falls at a rate of 1.6 feet per mile. The Tallapoosa River's width varies from 250 feet to 700 feet along its course, and the river has banks that are 20 feet high along the floodplain (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Approximately 71 percent of the Tallapoosa River Basin lies in the Piedmont physiographic province. Another 29 percent of the river basin lies in the Coastal Plain province, with elevations between 50 and 850 feet (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Chattachoochee

The Chattahoochee River begins in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Georgia. The Chattahoochee River mainly flows southwest through Georgia until it reaches Alabama. From the towns of Lannett, Alabama and West Point, Georgia, the Chattahoochee River is shared between the two states on a river course toward the Gulf of Mexico. The river flows along Alabama's boundary for 160 miles until it reaches the southeastern corner of the state before flowing into Florida (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

The Chattahoochee River Basin has a total drainage area of 8,770 square miles. The Alabama portion of the Chattahoochee River in Alabama covers an area of 2,830 square miles, or 32 percent of the total Chattahoochee River Basin. This section of the Chattahoochee River Basin is about 35 miles across at its widest point. Principal tributaries of the river are the Uchee, Cowikee, and Abbie Creeks. There are 13 hydroelectric dams in the Chattahoochee Basin; however, all of the tributaries to the Chattahoochee are free-flowing. Major aquifers in the Alabama portion of the Chattahoochee River Basin are the Libson, Nantafalia-Clayton, Providence-Ripley, and Tuscaloosa (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Principal cities in Alabama located along the Chattahoochee River are Lanett, Phenix City, Eufala, and Dothan. The watershed of the Chattahoochee River flows through counties in Alabama: Chambers, Lee, Russell, Barbour, Henry, Houston, Randolph, Macon, and Bullock (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

The Chattahoochee River Basin occupies three physiographic regions. In the upper Chattahoochee River Basin, the headwaters occupy the Blue Ridge Province and then flow into the Piedmont Province. At the Alabama/Georgia border the Piedmont Province transitions into the Southern Coastal Plain Province (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Choctawhatchee

The Choctawhatchee River begins in Dale County near Newton, Alabama. The river flows for approximately 138 miles and empties into Choctawhatchee Bay in Florida. The Choctawhatchee River Basin encompasses approximately 4,748 square miles. The majority of the basin, about 66 percent, or 3,400 square miles, occurs in Alabama. About 50 miles of the mainstem of the river is located in Alabama. The Alabama portion of the Choctawhatchee River Basin comprises 2 million acres and lies in portions of 10 Alabama counties: Bullock, Barbour, Coffee, Geneva, Covington, Houston, Crenshaw, Dale, Henry, and Pike. The entire Choctawhatchee River Basin lies within the physiographic region of the East Gulf Coastal Plain Province, which drains about 25 percent of the state (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Chipola

The Chipola River flows through the States of Alabama and Florida. Its total length is 125 miles through the two states. The Chipola River Basin is part of the Chattahoochee watershed (allrefer.com 2005).

Perdido-Escambia

The Perdido-Escambia River Basin flows through Baldwin and Escambia counties in Alabama and Escambia County, Florida. The Perdido River forms the boundary between the States of Alabama and Florida. This river basin encompasses a total area of 1,250 square miles. Before flowing into the Gulf of Mexico, the Perdido River forms Perdido Bay. The Perdido River flows approximately 44 miles before reaching Perdido Bay just north of Lillian, Alabama. Major cities within the Perdido-Escambia River Basin are Perdido, Bay Minette, Robertsdale, and Summerdale. The Escambia River also flows through Alabama and Florida. The Escambia River flows into Escambia Bay, an arm of Pensacola Bay. Large tributaries of the Escambia River include Patsaliga Creek, Big Escambia Creek, and the Sepulga River (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Alabama

The Alabama River is formed by the confluence of the Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers, 15 miles north of the city of Montgomery. The Alabama River begins at the fall line, and the Alabama River Basin lies almost entirely within the flat topography of the Coastal Plain Province. At the City of Montgomery, the Alabama River slopes at 0.82 foot per mile; below the fall line the slope is approximately 0.34 foot per mile. The Alabama River's total length is 315 miles; it drains approximately 22,168 square miles. The Alabama River Basin comprises an area of 6,023 square miles (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Much of the Alabama River has been altered by three U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dam projects that were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. Approximately 233 miles of the river are impounded by the Robert F. Henry, Millers Ferry, and Claiborne lock and dams (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Large tributaries of the Alabama River include Turkey, Little River, Pintlala, Limestone, Pursley, Pine Barren, Mulberry, Boguechitto, Cedar, Big Swamp, and Catoma Creeks. The river has a carrying capacity of 100,000 to 150,000 cfs. The Alabama River flows through nine Alabama counties: Elmore, Autauga, Montgomery, Lowndes, Dallas, Wilcox, Monroe, Baldwin, and Clarke (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Mobile

The area where the Mobile River meets Mobile Bay can be described as a delta. The land area between the Mobile River on the west edge of the delta and the Tensaw River on the east edge is marshland. About one-third of the area also is a vast network of waterways and river basins. More than 250 separate waterways, such as rivers, bays, creeks, bayous, lakes, cutoffs, branches, and sloughs, have been identified and charted (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Mobile Bay is the receiving basin for the sixth largest river system in the United States. The river drains the fourth largest watershed in the United States in terms of flow volume. Approximately 65 percent of Alabama's land area drains its waters into Mobile Bay. Mobile Bay is approximately 32 miles long and 23 miles wide. The average depth of the Bay is about 10 feet (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

Escatawpa

The Escatawpa River Basin is approximately 15 miles wide and 100 miles long. The length of the Escatawpa River is 80 miles. The Escatawpa River begins in southwest Alabama, less than 1 mile from the Alabama/Mississippi border in Washington County, Alabama. The Escatawpa River flows south from Alabama into Mississippi. The main tributaries of the Escatawpa River flow through Washington and Mobile counties in Alabama (Rivers of Alabama 2005).

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Big Black River Basin

The Big Black River Basin is approximately 155 miles in length and 22 miles in width and is located in west-central Mississippi. The river basin covers an area of approximately 3,400 square miles. The Big Black River Basin has approximately 6,638 total miles of perennial and intermittent rivers and streams. The Big Black River flows entirely within Mississippi; it begins in Webster County and flows southwest for approximately 300 miles to its mouth at the Mississippi River near Vicksburg (MDEQ 2004).

Tributaries to the Big Black River include Big Bywy Ditch, Zilpha Creek, Apookta Creek, Doaks Creek, Bear Creek, Bogue Chitto Creek, and Fourteen Mile-Bakers Creek. The Big Black River Basin occupies 13 counties and 24 municipalities. According to the 2000 census, about 220,000 people live in the Big Black River Basin. Larger cities in the basin include Jackson, Clinton, and Canton (MDEQ 2004).

Coastal Streams Basin

The Coastal Streams Basin is located in southern Mississippi. The Basin begins in Lamar County and extends south, with Pearl River as its western boundary and the eastern boundary, mainly consisting of the Alabama state line. The Coastal Streams Basin drains an area of about 1,545 square miles and empties into the Gulf of Mexico. A total of 2,442 miles of perennial and intermittent rivers and streams occur in the Basin (MDEQ 2004).

The Coastal Streams Basin includes the Mississippi Sound and the following barrier islands: Cat, Ship, Deer, Horn, Round, and Petit Bois Islands. The topography of the Costal Streams Basin ranges from pine forests and low rolling hills in the upper part to low-lying flatlands and salt marsh along the coast (MDEQ 2004).

Major cities located in the basin include Biloxi, Gulfport, Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Ocean Springs, and Pascagoula. The Coastal Streams Basin's population is estimated at 426,231. The Coastal Streams Basin is mainly rural, with an average population density of 137 people per square mile (MDEQ 2004).

Mississippi River Basin

The Mississippi River Basin is a large river system, comprised of 2,350 river miles, that drains 31 states before reaching the Gulf of Mexico. The Mississippi River Basin consists of 1.2 million square miles. Approximately 12 million people live in the river basin in approximately 125 counties along the river (EPA 2003).

The Mississippi Alluvial Plain (MAP) encompasses the land on the banks of the Mississippi River in six states and is the original floodplain of the Mississippi River. The part of the MAP system that lies within the State of Mississippi extends the entire length of the state. Just south of Memphis, Tennessee, the plain fans out to encompass all of the land between the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers. The flat lowland area in northwest Mississippi located in the MAP Region, known as the Delta, is widely recognized as a fertile and productive farmland. This region of the Mississippi River Basin is mostly a flat, broad, floodplain. Land in the Delta comprises alluvial deposits of sand and clay (MDEQ 2004).

North Independent Streams Basin

The North Independent Streams Basin is located in north Mississippi. The basin consists of streams that mainly drain into Tennessee. The North Independent Streams Basin occupies seven counties in northern Mississippi. Major streams in the North Independent Streams Basin include the Tuscumbia River, Horn Lake Creek, Muddy Creek, the Wolf River, and the Hatchie River. The basin comprises a total of 1,956 miles of perennial and intermittent rivers and streams (MDEQ 2004).

The North Independent Streams Basin is composed of portions of four physiogeographic subregions: the Loess Bluffs, Red Clay Hills, Flatwoods, and Pontotoc Ridge. Most of these regions are made up of low to high rolling hills, mainly forested (MDEQ 2004).

The two major cities located in the North Independent Streams Basin are Southhaven, Tennessee, and Corinth, Alabama. The population of the counties within the basin was estimated in 2000 at approximately 182,000 (MDEQ 2004).

Pascagoula River Basin

The Pascagoula River Basin is the second largest basin in the State of Mississippi. It is approximately 164 miles long and 84 miles wide. The basin has a total of approximately 14,777 miles of perennial and intermittent rivers and streams. The Leaf and Chickasawhay Rivers are the two main headwater streams in the Pascagoula River Basin. The Pascagoula River Basin occupies 22 counties and drains an area of approximately 9,600 square miles before draining into the Gulf of Mexico. The Pascagoula River system is the last unimpeded large river system in the lower 48 states. The Black Creek, which is located in the Pascagoula River Basin, is the only National Wild and Scenic River in the State of Mississippi (MDEQ 2004).

Near the Gulf Coast, the topography of the Pascagoula River Basin is low-lying flatlands, forested wetlands, and marshlands. Inland, the Pascagoula River Basin consists of gently rolling hills and broad, flat floodplains. The major urban areas in the basin are Meridian, Laurel, Hattiesburg, and Pascagoula.

The Pascagoula River Basin has an estimated population of 716,925. The Pascagoula River Basin is mainly rural, with an average population density of about 75 people per square mile (MDEQ 2004).

Pearl River Basin

The Pearl River Basin is located in east-central and southwest Mississippi and southeastern Louisiana. The river basin starts in Philadelphia, Mississippi, and flows through central Mississippi to the coast. The Pearl River is approximately 490 miles long and drains an area of 8,760 square miles. The Pearl River Basin occupies 24 counties in east-central and southern Mississippi. The river basin has a total of approximately 16,300 miles of perennial and intermittent rivers and streams (MDEQ 2004).

Major tributaries to the Pearl River include the Yockanookany River, Bogue Chitto River, and Strong River. The Pearl River originates in Neshoba County by the confluence of Bogue Chitto, Nanawaya, and Tallahaga Creeks. The Pearl River flows southwest for approximately 146 miles to the Ross Barnett Reservoir in Jackson, and then flows 217 miles in a southerly direction to the West Pearl and Pearl Rivers. These channels continue for 44 and 48 miles, respectively, and empty into Lake Borgne in Louisiana and the Mississippi Sound. The West Pearl River flows entirely within the State of Louisiana. The lower 61 miles of Pearl River form part of the boundary between the States of Mississippi and Louisiana (MDEQ 2004).

Much of the upper part of the Pearl River Basin consists of gently rolling to hilly terrain. In the southern part of the basin the land is flatter as low, rolling, forested hills give way to lowlands and marshes near the coast. The only large urban area in the Pearl River Basin is Jackson, Mississippi (MDEQ 2004).

South Independent Streams Basin

The South Independent Streams Basin is located in southwest Mississippi. The Basin consists of streams that drain into the Mississippi River below the Big Black River and streams that drain into Louisiana, west of the Pearl River Basin. The Basin occupies 4,418 square miles and comprises 11 counties in Mississippi. There are 7,499 miles of perennial and intermittent rivers and streams in the Basin. Major streams in the South Independent Streams Basin include the Homochitto River, Bayou Pierre, the Tangipahoa River, and the Amite River (MDEQ 2004).

Most of the South Independent Streams Basin region is made up of low, rolling hills and is largely forested. On the western side of the Basin, high bluffs dominate the topography as the land meets the Mississippi River. The two largest cities in the basin are Natchez and Vicksburg, which are located on the Mississippi River. The population within the South Independent Streams Basin was estimated in 2000 at 439,933 (MDEQ 2004).

Tennessee River Basin

The Tennessee River Basin covers an area of 417 square miles in the northeast Mississippi. The Tennessee River Basin is composed of Pickwick Lake, a portion of the Tennessee River, a portion of Bear Creek, and the Yellow Creek segment of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. Other smaller water bodies in the Tennessee River Basin include Indian Creek, Cripple Deer Creek, and Little Cripple Deer Creek. The Tennessee River Basin has a total of 646 miles of perennial and intermittent rivers and streams in Mississippi (MDEQ 2004).

The Mississippi portion of the Tennessee River Basin lies within the Fall Line Hills of the East Gulf Coastal Plain. The topography of the river basin is gently rolling hills, sharp ridges, and broad alluvial

floodplains over rocks of sedimentary origin. Portions of the river basin landscape are in Tishomingo State Park and are characterized by rock formations and fern-filled crevices (MDEQ 2004).

The only major urban area of the basin is the city of Iuka. The Tennessee River Basin occupies four counties in Mississippi: Alcorn, Itawamba, Prentiss, and Tishomingo. The Tennessee River Basin is sparsely populated, with fewer than 30,000 persons inhabiting the area. According to the 2000 census, approximately 27,630 people live in the river basin within Mississippi's boundaries (MDEQ 2004).

Tombigbee River Basin

The Tombigbee River Basin is located in northeastern Mississippi. The Tombigbee River Basin covers approximately 6,100 square miles in Mississippi and 7,600 square miles in Alabama. The Mississippi portion of the Tombigbee River Basin consists of 56 watersheds and is approximately 190 miles in length and 48 miles in width. The Tombigbee River begins in Itawamba County, Mississippi, from the convergence of Big Brown Creek and Mackeys Creek. A significant hydrologic feature of the Tombigbee River Basin is the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. The waterway uses a series of dams and manmade canals to connect the Tennessee River in Tennessee to Mobile Bay in Alabama. The Tombigbee River Basin in Mississippi has approximately 11,690 miles of perennial and intermittent rivers and streams. Major tributaries to the Tombigbee River and the waterway include Town Creek, Chuquatonchee Creek, Chiwapa Creek, Luxapallila Creek, and the Buttahatchee, Sucarnoochee, and Noxubee Rivers (MDEQ 2004).

The topography of the Tombigbee River Basin ranges from hilly to gently rolling, with elevations in the headwaters from 500 to 600 feet above sea level, to flat and gently rolling topography in the central and south portion, with elevations from 100 to 300 feet. The Tombigbee River Basin is mostly forested. The major urban populations in the river basin are in Tupelo, Columbus, and Aberdeen. The Tombigbee River Basin occupies 19 counties in Mississippi. According to the 2000 census, approximately 382,109 people live in the river basin (MDEQ 2004).

Yazoo River Basin

The Yazoo River Basin is located in the northwest and west-central part of Mississippi. The basin covers 13,355 square miles in 30 counties. The basin is approximately 200 miles long and approximately 100 miles wide. The Yazoo River Basin eventually drains the Yazoo River into the Mississippi River near Vicksburg, Mississippi. The Yazoo River Basin has 24,554 miles of rivers and streams. The Yazoo River begins in Leflore County from the convergence of its main headwater tributaries, the Tallahatchie River and the Yalobusha River. Major rivers in the Yazoo River Basin include the Coldwater, Little Tallahatchie, Tallahatchie, Yocona, Yalobusha, Big Sunflower, and Yazoo Rivers (MDEQ 2004).

The Delta portion of the Yazoo River Basin is a geographic feature and is part of the alluvial plain of the Mississippi River. The only outlet to the Mississippi River for the basin is the Yazoo River mainstem at Vicksburg in central Mississippi. The Yazoo River Basin includes a hilly upland in north and north-central Mississippi and an extensive, flat lowland area in the north and west. Major cities in the Yazoo River Basin include Grenada, Batesville, Oxford, Holly Springs, and New Albany. The Yazoo River Basin has an estimated population of 625,524 and encompasses approximately one-fifth of Mississippi's population. The river basin is mainly rural, with an average population density of approximately 45 persons per square mile (MDEQ 2004).