

Michael A. Reuter  
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Michael Reuter is the Director of Conservation Programs  
for The Nature Conservancy's Central U.S. Region.

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In this role, Michael provides leadership in the areas of conservation strategy and program development, public policy, and external affairs across the 12 states that comprise the region. Michael is particularly focused on leading advancement of the Mississippi River program extending from its headwaters and tributaries to coastal Louisiana. In this role, Michael works to influence land use and water management issues that will most significantly impact natural ecosystems in the Central United States during the next 10 years, including agriculture and energy development. He also plays a leadership role in the Conservancy's expanding freshwater conservation program, which includes directing the Great Rivers Partnership. The GRP was launched in January 2005 to better understand and preserve the Mississippi River system and share this information with other institutions to encourage the sustainable development and integrated management of great rivers around the world. Michael and GRP staff and colleagues have supported conservation efforts on the Yangtze River (China), the Paraguay-Parana River (Brazil), the Zambezi River (Africa), and the Magdalena River (Colombia). As part of this effort, Michael is working with partners to develop an international Great Rivers Center to engage leading ecologists, economists and sociologists in supporting the conservation and restoration of large, working rivers around the world.



Michael has focused on the conservation of great rivers throughout his career, starting in the late 1980s to develop programs to preserve and enhance the Illinois River Valley, and later spearheading the development of a coordinated effort to protect the Mississippi River system. He joined The Nature Conservancy in 1990. Because of the intensive agricultural nature of the landscape where Michael was raised and in which he works today, he has been dedicated to developing ways to conserve biodiversity in these working landscapes at larger scales. Michael negotiated the purchase of 7,527 acres at Emiquon from Wilder Corporation in 2000, the largest such acquisition in the history of Illinois and now the setting for one of the largest floodplain restoration projects in the United States. Michael currently serves on a variety of boards and committees, including the governor-appointed Illinois River Coordinating Council, the steering committee for the Field-to-Market Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, the organizing board for the International Society for River Science, the advisory board of the Institute for Principled Leadership in Public Service at Bradley University and the Illinois Valley Central Foundation board of trustees. He has received the Silver Eagle Award from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the One Conservancy Award from The Nature Conservancy. Michael holds a B.S. in agricultural economics from Iowa State University and a Master of Liberal Studies from Bradley University. He lives in Peoria, is married and has three children.