

Arkansas – Red River Sub-basin

Arkansas River

The Arkansas River is a major tributary of the Mississippi River. The Arkansas generally flows to the east and southeast as it traverses the U.S. states of Colorado, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas. The river's initial basin starts in the Western United States in Colorado, specifically the Arkansas River Valley where the headwaters derive from the snowpack in the Collegiate Peaks. Then it flows east into the Midwest via Kansas, and finally into the South through Oklahoma and Arkansas.

At 1,469 miles (2,364 km), it is the sixth longest river in the United States, the second-longest tributary in the Mississippi-Missouri system, and the 45th longest river in the world. Its origin is in the Rocky Mountains in Lake County, Colorado, near Leadville. The Arkansas River's mouth is at Napoleon, Arkansas, and its drainage basin covers nearly 170,000 sq. mi. In terms of volume, the river is much smaller than both the Missouri and Ohio Rivers, with a mean discharge of roughly 41,000 cubic feet per second.

The river is navigable by barges and large river craft to Catoosa, Oklahoma because of a series of locks and dams referred to as the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System. Above Catoosa, the Arkansas River waterway itself is navigable only by small craft such as rafts or canoes. The McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System begins at the Tulsa Port of Catoosa on the Verdigris River, and runs via an extensive Lock and Dam system to the Mississippi River.

Red River

The Red River, or sometimes the Red River of the South, is a major tributary of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers in the southern United States of America. The river gains its name from the red-bed country of its watershed. The Red River is the second largest river basin in the southern Great Plains. It rises in two branches in the Texas Panhandle and flows east, where it acts as the border between the states of Texas and Oklahoma. It is a short border between Texas and Arkansas before entering Arkansas, turning south near Fulton, Arkansas and flowing into Louisiana. The total length of the river is 1,360 miles (2,190 km), with a mean flow of over 57,000 cubic feet per second at the mouth.

The Red River's watershed covers 65,590 square miles and is the southernmost major right tributary of the Mississippi, and the southernmost major river system in the Great Plains. Its drainage basin is mostly in the states of Texas and Oklahoma, but also covers parts of Arkansas and Louisiana. The river basin is characterized by flat, fertile agricultural land, and there are only a few major cities. The drainage basin of the Red River is very arid and receives little precipitation. As a result, much of the river above the Texas-Oklahoma border is intermittent, and until the river is past its great bend south in Arkansas, the flow varies widely. The lower course of the river flows through a series of marshes and swamps, where its flow is dramatically moderated.