

MICRA

Goals, Objectives, and Priorities

2014 - 2018

MICRA works to preserve, protect, and restore interjurisdictional fishery resources and aquatic habitats in the Mississippi River Basin.

GOALS

- I. Coordinate basin-wide management of interjurisdictional fishery resources and aquatic habitats among the responsible management entities. *[INTERNAL COMMUNICATION]*
- II. Increase awareness, support, and funding for basin-wide management of interjurisdictional fishery resources and aquatic habitats. *[EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION]*

OBJECTIVES

1. Coordinate implementation of interjurisdictional fishery and aquatic resource management programs throughout the basin. *[IJ FISH]*
2. Identify priority habitat restoration needs for the Mississippi River Basin, coordinate with national and regional aquatic habitat initiatives, and provide a forum for information and technical exchange. *[AQUATIC HABITAT]*
3. Coordinate prevention and control measures for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) to ensure sustainable native aquatic ecosystems within the basin. *[AIS]*
4. Develop and implement a communication plan for disseminating information to target audiences. *[COMMUNICATION]*
5. Secure funding for long-term operational needs and implementation of basin-wide programs. *[FUNDING]*

OBJECTIVE 1: Coordinate implementation of interjurisdictional fishery and aquatic resource management programs.

PRIORITIES:

1. Identify and prioritize basin-wide resource management issues of concern in the Mississippi River Basin.
 - a) MICRA Delegates meet every 3-5 years to review priorities and discuss emerging issues of concern within the basin.
 - b) Standing committees review priorities and discuss emerging issues of concern within the basin every 3-5 years.
 - c) Executive Board updates the MICRA priorities document every 5 years.
2. Use standing technical committees and temporary working groups as needed to provide for the development of coordinated strategies to address priority issues and identify basin-wide research needs.
 - a) Support continued efforts for coordinated basin-wide management of paddlefish and sturgeon species
 - b) Develop standardized methods for documenting and reporting harvest data for paddlefish, sturgeon, and other commercially harvested species of concern.
 - c) Develop basin-wide commercial harvest databases for paddlefish and sturgeon, including roe harvest and roe buyers.
 - d) Conserve native freshwater mussels through continued support of the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society.
 - e) Develop standardized methods for documenting and reporting harvest data for mussel resources.
 - f) Develop guidelines and procedures for use in future multi-state resource management and research efforts.
 - g) Share and refine sampling techniques for species of concern.
 - h) Develop basin-wide management plans for species of concern.
3. Build consensus for compatible regulations and policies for priority interjurisdictional fishery and aquatic resources issues.
 - a) Develop compatible harvest regulations for sport and commercial species of concern.

- b) Develop a basin-wide policy on the control and introductions of fish diseases.
 - c) Develop a basin-wide policy for importation, introduction, and control of exotic and transgenic species.
 - d) Develop a policy to define and preserve the genetic integrity of native species and selected naturalized stocks.
 - e) Develop a policy for the maintenance and enhancement of indigenous species.
4. Determine the socio-economic value of fishery resources and related recreation in the Mississippi River Basin.
- a) Work with USFWS to determine the economic value of the basin's fishery resources and related recreation.
 - b) Work with USFWS to develop a report that includes an estimated return on dollars invested to manage fishery resources in the basin. (Report would be similar to the USFWS 2011 publication 'Net Worth: The Economic Value of Fisheries Conservation' that focuses on contributions to the U.S. economy in terms of jobs created and conservation stimulated commerce.)
 - c) Work with USFWS to develop methods of extracting use and socio-economic value information for fishery resources and related recreation for the sub-basin units (reported for the basin as a whole) from the USFWS 5-year national survey of fishing, hunting, and recreational use. (Similar to how information for the Great Lakes is broken out and reported now.)

OBJECTIVE 2: Identify priority habitat restoration needs for the Mississippi River Basin, coordinate with national and regional aquatic habitat initiatives, and provide a forum for information and technical exchange.

PRIORITIES:

1. Complete development of the MICRA Aquatic Habitat Action Plan.
2. Establish a MICRA Habitat Committee for information exchange, communication, and coordination between entities responsible for aquatic habitat management in the basin.
3. Coordinate priorities in the MICRA Aquatic Habitat Action Plan with the

National Fish Habitat Partnerships.

4. Seek opportunities to fund and implement priority needs identified in the MICRA Native Species Habitat Action Plan.

OBJECTIVE 3: Coordinate prevention and control measures for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) to ensure sustainable native aquatic ecosystems within the basin.

PRIORITIES:

1. Host the Mississippi River Basin Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species for coordination of basin-wide efforts to prevent introductions of AIS and manage introduced AIS populations.
2. Promote streamlining of the Lacey Act Injurious Wildlife Listing process and establishment of a federal screening process to evaluate risk of non-native species prior to importation.
3. Promote development of consistent basin-wide regulatory approaches for the management of AIS.
4. Seek opportunities to fund and implement the MICRA AIS Action Plan.
5. Support efforts to prevent the exchange of AIS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.
6. Coordinate efforts to prevent introductions, stop the continued spread, and control established populations of Asian carp in the basin.
 - a) Complete the 'National Analysis of Grass Carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) Regulation, Production, Triploid Certification, Shipping, and Stocking' funded through a Grant Agreement with USFWS.
 - b) Develop and implement standardized methods for collecting and reporting population data for Asian carp.
 - c) Promote funding and implementation of the national 'Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States' to expand the scope of federal agencies' Asian carp funding and activities to include the entire Mississippi River Basin.

OBJECTIVE 4: Develop and implement a communication plan for disseminating information to target audiences.

PRIORITIES:

1. Work with outreach specialists from member and entity agencies to develop a MICRA communications plan.
2. Continue to publish the River Crossings newsletter.
3. Continue to develop and manage the MICRA website.
4. Engage in efforts to increase awareness and action of Congressional members.
5. Develop outreach materials, information brochures and short publications on issues of concern to fishery resource management in the Mississippi River Basin.
6. Develop an annual report of activities, accomplishments, and remaining resource needs identified in the MICRA priorities document.
7. Host workshops at Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, SEAFWA, AFS Parent Society meetings, etc. for members and associated partners.

OBJECTIVE 5: Secure funding for long-term operational needs and implementation of basin-wide programs.

PRIORITIES:

1. Establish joint funding mechanisms.
2. Establish reliable, long-term funding sources and mechanisms for MICRA.
3. Seek legal guidance regarding 501(c)3 status and lobbying restrictions and implement appropriate actions.
4. Investigate the possibility and actions necessary for MICRA to become a congressionally funded Commission (e.g. like the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the Mississippi River Commission etc).