

MISSISSIPPI INTERSTATE COOPERATIVE RESOURCE ASSOCIATION

Executive Board Meeting

August 2-3, 2022

St. James Hotel
406 Main Street
Red Wing, MN 55066

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AGENDA

(All times are Central)

Tuesday, August 2, 8:00-1:00 (CST), Oak Room

Call to Order

- 1) Call to Order (Brad Parsons)

Invasive Carp Interbasin Coordination

- 2) Population Assessment / Invasive Carp Advisory Committee / Invasive Carp Committee (Rob Simmonds, Greg Conover, Brian Schoenung)
- 3) Sub-basin Invasive Carp Partnership Coordinators Discussion (Sub-basin Partnership Coordinators)
- 4) Wildlife Forever Commercial Harvest Incentives Program (Conover)

[Lunch Break]

Tuesday, August 2, 3:00-TBD (CST), Lake Pepin

Field Visit

No remote option. Additional information will be provided Tuesday morning.

Wednesday, August 3, 8:00-12:00 (CST), Oak Room

Fishery Commission

- 5) FishTracks Database (Marybeth Brey, Andrea Fritts, and Travis Harrison)
- 6) Congressional Outreach (Ashlee Smith)
- 7) Fishery Commission Discussion (Parsons)

Joint Strategic Plan

8) Joint Strategic Plan Implementation (Conover and Parsons)

- Update on director concurrence
- Implementation
- What, if any, communication with delegates?

[Lunch Break]

Wednesday, August 3, 1:00-5:00 (CST), Oak Room

Chairman and Coordinator Reports

9) Chairman's Report (Parsons)

10) Coordinator's Report (Greg Conover)

11) Sub-basin and Federal Entity Updates (Sub-basin Representatives)

Committee Updates

12) MRBP/AIS Committee Update (Eugene Braig) – remote at 1:30

13) Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee Update (Ryan Hupfeld) – remote at 2:30

Old Business

14) Native Mussel Priorities (Steve McMurray) – remote at 2:00

15) Approval of February 2022 Meeting Notes (Parsons)

16) Review of Action Items (Conover)

New Business

17) 2024-2028 Priorities Document Development (Conover)

18) Young Professionals Travel Stipend (Conover)

19) Mississippi-Yangtze River Basins Symposium Sponsorship Request (Conover)

20) Schedule Fall Conference Call and Winter Executive Board Meeting (Parsons)

21) Other New Business / Parking Lot (Parsons)

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DECISIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

Decisions

1. The Executive Board members agreed that a single state should not serve as the representative more than one sub-basin on the Invasive Carp Advisory Committee.
2. It was agreed that the Executive Board does not need to formally approve the sub-basin partnerships' nominations for the Invasive Carp Advisory Committee.
3. The February 2022 Executive Board meeting notes were approved as final.
4. The Executive Board awarded the Young Professionals Travel Stipend to Sam Schaick with the Illinois Natural History Survey.
5. The Executive Board agreed to provide \$1,000 sponsorship for the Mississippi-Yangtze River Interbasin Symposium at the 152nd Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society.
6. The Executive Board will target March 6-10, 2023, for agency and Congressional visits in Washington, DC.
7. The Executive Board will target the week of February 6-10, 2023, for a Winter meeting in Mississippi, Alabama, or Louisiana.
8. The Executive Board will target December 6-7, 2022, for a Congressional briefing.
9. The Executive Board will hold a fall conference call from 1:00-3:00 pm (Central) on November 1.

Action Items

1. The Invasive Carp Advisory Committee (ICAC) co-chairs will keep the MICRA Executive Board informed on progress of populating the ICAC and technical workgroups.

2. The Executive Board sub-basin representatives will inform their respective delegates of the ICAC and technical workgroup representatives that have been identified for their respective sub-basins.
3. The Executive Board sub-basin representatives will work to identify state agency co-chairs for the Sampling Approach Workgroup and the Data and Analysis Workgroup by the end of August.
4. Conover will provide Simmonds with contact information for the MICRA Executive Board members.
5. Simmonds will provide the Executive Board with an overview of the ICAC and technical workgroup members that have been confirmed and which positions are still needed from the different sub-basins.
6. Smith requested distribution/abundance maps for the different sub-basins.
7. Conover will share the communications planning notes from the board's July 2014 meeting with the Executive Board members.
8. Conover will add a discussion of a MICRA Communications Plan to the agenda for the board's Winter meeting.
9. The sub-basin partnership coordinators and ICAC co-chairs will provide examples of communications needs and barriers to the Executive Board.
10. The Executive Board will hold a conference call specifically focused on resuming this discussion about internal and external communication needs, particularly the following considerations (see details in August 2022 meeting notes page 25).
11. The Executive Board will work with the sub-basin partnership coordinators to develop a request and guidance regarding sub-basin scale objectives for invasive carp management and control.
12. The sub-basin partnership coordinators will work with their respective sub-basin partnerships to identify sub-basin scale objectives to assist the ICAC and MICRA Executive Board with basinwide planning and communications.
13. The sub-basin partnership coordinators and the ICAC co-chairs will continue to discuss how the sub-basin scale objectives should be consistently developed and will report back to the Executive Board when they have reached consensus.
14. Smith will review the Wildlife Forever Commercial Harvest Incentive Program proposal and follow-up with recommendations for the MICRA Executive Board.
15. Gaikowski will work with USGS staff to provide the Executive Board and Invasive Carp Advisory Committee with a factsheet on FishTracks and the potential to expand the database to include telemetry data from other sub-basins and species.

16. Sub-basin partnership coordinators will share the FishTracks factsheet with their partners once it is updated and provided by USGS.
17. Sub-basin partnership coordinators will discuss the Executive Boards interest in basinwide platforms for data management and analysis with the sub-basin partnerships.
18. Sub-basin partnership coordinators will work with USGS to schedule a webinar on FishTracks for the sub-basin partnerships.
19. Sub-basin partnership coordinators follow-up with their partners to determine interest and concerns in a basinwide approach to collecting and storing telemetry data.
20. Woldt and Gaikowski will have internal discussions about briefing up within their respective agencies to raise awareness about MICRA's Fishery Commission initiative and draft legislation.
21. The Executive Board will work with Ashlee Smith to schedule a few Zoom meetings for the MICRA Delegates to be briefed on MICRA's fishery commission outreach effort.
22. The MICRA AIS Committee will be asked to work with Ashlee Smith to develop standardized state fact sheets for MICRA's 2023 Congressional visits.
23. Executive Board members were requested to provide Smith with additional recommendations for regional and local organizations that she might want to contact regarding the coalition.
24. Smith will begin working with the existing coalition members to begin working on a charter that addresses how to become a coalition member, Pledge of Support, dues, etc.
25. Smith will reach out to MICRA delegates regarding potential field visits for Congressional staff during the August recess.
26. Sub-basin representatives will email Smith with a few days of availability in August to go in the field with Congressional staff.
27. Parsons will email delegates to ask about local level partners, for example Friends of the Mississippi River, that should be informed about and asked to support the Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission initiative and partnership coalition.
28. Parsons will ask MICRA Delegates to brief new agency directors on the MICRA Fishery Commission initiative and to keep existing agency directors informed of progress and status of the commission.
29. Parsons will contact Dirk Miller, Deputy Chief of Fisheries, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, regarding the MICRA Joint Strategic Plan.

30. Parsons will follow-up with Montana, Nebraska, and Colorado regarding status of their director's signing the MICRA Joint Strategic Plan Memorandum of Agreement.
31. Executive Board members should review the Joint Strategic Plan ahead of the board's next meeting and discussions about the 2024-2028 priorities document.
32. Marybeth Brey will be invited to provide an overview of the FishTracks database at the next Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee meeting.
33. Conover will follow-up with Stephen McMurray about the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society referring to MICRA in their guidance documents and providing an annual update to the Executive Board.
34. Conover will follow-up with Stephen McMurray to discuss incorporating Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society priorities into the next MICRA priorities document.
35. Conover will add the final February 2022 Executive Board meeting notes to the MICRA website.
36. Conover will inform Jeff Janvrin that Neil Rude, MN DNR, has been asked to lead the planning of the MICRA large rivers habitat symposium at the 2023 AFS meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and that Rude will be reaching out to him to begin planning.
37. Conover will update the 2019-2023 MICRA Priorities document with initial accomplishments and provide the draft to the sub-basin representatives.
38. Sub-basin representatives will provide the annotated 2019-2023 MICRA Priorities document to their respective sub-basin delegates to request initial input on 2024-2028 priorities by the end of the calendar year.
39. Conover will notify the Young Professionals Travel Stipend applicants of the board's decision regarding the 2022 award.
40. Conover will notify Hae Kim of the board's decision that MICRA will provide \$1,000 sponsorship for the Mississippi-Yangtze River Symposium at the 152nd Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society.
41. Conover will follow-up with MICRA delegates in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, and Ashlee Smith, to identify a meeting location and options for an Executive Board meeting the week of February 6-10, 2023.
42. Smith will work with the Executive Board to organize a Congressional briefing December 6-7, 2022. Briefing should include an overview of USFWS and USGS work in support of the sub-basin partnerships.
43. Conover will follow-up with Gaiowski and a few USFWS field offices regarding Innovasea discount pricing of telemetry equipment.

44. Aldridge will send Conover notes regarding his discussion with Innovasea.
45. Aldridge will organize a call with Innovasea to introduce Conover to discuss potential discount pricing for MICRA member agencies.

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MEETING NOTES

* Meeting notes have been added to the briefing book using red font.

1) Call to Order

Roll call and introductions

2022 MICRA Executive Board Members

Voting Members

Arkansas/Red/White Rivers	Ken Cunningham	Present
Lower Mississippi River	Ben Batten	Present
Missouri River	Kasey Whiteman	Present via Zoom
Ohio River	Rich Zweifel	Present
Tennessee/Cumberland Rivers	Frank Fiss	Present
Upper Mississippi River	Joe Larscheid	Present
USFWS	Aaron Woldt	Present / via Zoom (8/2)
USGS	Rip Shively	Absent

Alternates

Lower Mississippi River	Angie Rodgers	Present
USGS	Mark Gaikowski	Present

* A quorum (six voting members) was present for the meeting.

Non-voting members

MICRA Chairperson	Brad Parsons	Present
MICRA Chairperson-Elect	Mike McClelland	Present via Zoom
MICRA Immediate Past Chairman	Brian Schoenung	Present
MICRA Coordinator	Greg Conover	Present

Committee Chairpersons

MRBP (AIS Committee)

Eugene Braig

Present via Zoom (8/3)

Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee

Ryan Hupfeld

Present via Zoom (8/3)

Introductions:

Ashlee Smith, MICRA Policy and Government Affairs Contractor

Caleb Aldridge, USFWS

Neal Jackson, USFWS

Rob Simmonds, USFWS – in person (8/2), via Zoom (8/3)

Emily Pherigo, USFWS

Mark Fritts, USFWS – via Zoom (8/2)

Jessica Hogrefe, USFWS – via Zoom (8/2)

Marybeth Brey, USGS – via Zoom (8/3)

Andrea Fritts, USGS – via Zoom (8/3)

Travis Harrison, USGS – via Zoom (8/3)

Stephen McMurray, Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society – via Zoom (8/3)

2) Population Assessment / Invasive Carp Advisory Committee / Invasive Carp Committee

Discussion Item:

Rob Simmonds, USFWS, and the sub-basin invasive carp partnership coordinators will join the MICRA Executive Board to discuss the status of the proposed development of a coordinated approach to invasive carp population assessment in the Mississippi River Basin. Rob briefed the Executive Board on the proposed approach in early May. Following the briefing, MICRA recommended that the effort should be coordinated through the MICRA partnership structure using a revised MICRA Invasive Carp Advisory Committee (ICAC) to coordinate efforts across sub-basins and workgroups. The Executive Board met with Rob in early July to discuss next steps for populating the revised ICAC. Following that discussion, the sub-basin partnership coordinators were asked to contact their respective MICRA sub-basin representatives to assist them in identifying a new sub-basin representative for the ICAC as well as potential state agency co-leads for the ICAC and two technical workgroups (Sampling Approach Workgroup and Data and Analysis Workgroup). The group will discuss progress identifying new sub-basin representatives for the ICAC, next steps and timelines for finalizing the revised ICAC membership and technical workgroups, and timelines for convening the different groups.

A revised version of the ICAC Principles of Operation was sent to the ICAC members for review on July 7th. Comments were received from Hank Jarboe, USACE. The primary concern is “overuse of the word ‘implement’ and underuse of the word ‘advise’”. An updated version addressing comments will be provided following the Executive Board’s meeting.

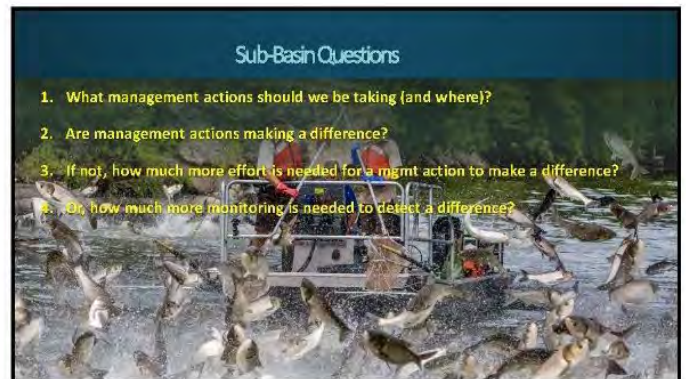
At the board’s February 2022 meeting, the board discussed a proposal for a new MICRA Invasive Carp Committee during which Brian Schoenung was asked to reach out to some of the MICRA states to gauge interest in the formation of a MICRA Invasive Carp Committee and report back to the Executive Board. Schoenung will report out on those discussions and the board will consider the proposal for a new MICRA Invasive Carp Committee in light of the recent discussions regarding the development of a coordinated approach to basinwide population assessment and the decision to revise the ICAC.

Notes:

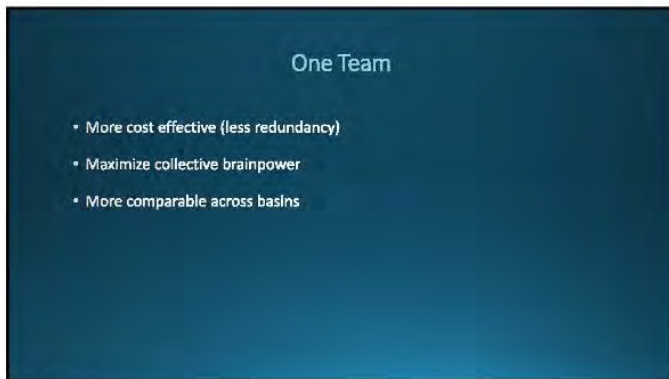
Simmonds provided an update on the invasive carp population assessment that he briefed the Executive Board on in May. See slides below. The update included a status of populating the revised MICRA Invasive Carp Advisory Committee and the two technical workgroups. Next steps will be identified once the revised ICAC is in place. Simmonds hopes that ICAC will have an initial meeting in September, followed by a meeting with the technical workgroups in November, and ultimately begin to engage with the sub-basin partnerships by early 2023. He requested feedback from the Executive Board.



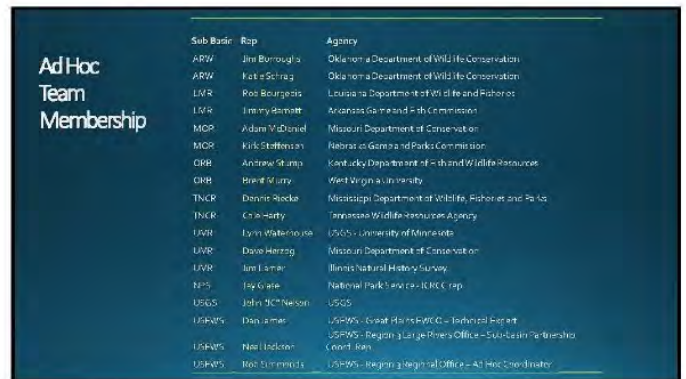
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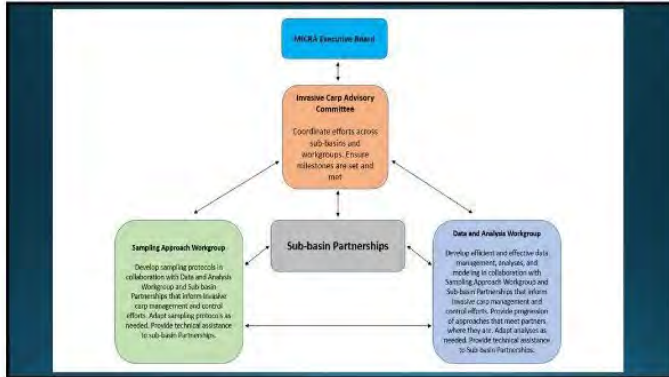
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4



5

Sampling Approach Workgroup — Data & Analysis Workgroup

- Co-lead: State and Federal (USFWS)
- Sub-basin Partnership Technical Reps (up to 2 each)
 - Lower Mississippi River Basin
 - Arkansas-Red-White Basin
 - Ohio River Basin
 - Tennessee-Cumberland Basin
 - Missouri River Basin
 - Upper Mississippi River Basin
- Key Federal Agencies as identified in WARDA 2014 (up to 2 each)
 - NPS
 - USACE
 - USFWS
 - USGS

6

Invasive Carp Advisory Committee

- Co-Chairs: State (one sub-basin rep below) and Federal (USFWS)
- Sub-Basin Partnership Representatives
 - Lower Mississippi River Basin
 - Arkansas-Red-White Basin
 - Ohio River Basin
 - Tennessee-Cumberland Basin
 - Missouri River Basin
 - Upper Mississippi River Basin
- Other Federal Agencies
 - NPS
 - USACE
 - USGS
- Workgroup Co-Leads
 - Sampling Approach Workgroup (2)
 - Data and Analysis Workgroup (2)
- Sub-Basin Partnership Coordinators (4)

7

Next Steps

- Great question!
- See how ICAC, SAW, DAW come together
- ICAC meet virtually (mid-Sep)?
- SAW and DAW meet virtually (late-Sep or early-Oct)?
- Joint ICAC-SAW-DAW Mtg (Nov)?
- Reach out to Sub-Basin Partnerships to seek information and/or input (Nov-Jan)?

8

Questions, Thoughts, Concerns?

Rob_Simmonds@fws.gov
612-713-5114

9

Discussion:

Simmonds requested Executive Board guidance on process regarding the formation of the ICAC and technical workgroups. Specifically,

1. Does the Executive Board approve the revised ICAC once new representatives are identified for each of the roles?
2. Does the ICAC approve the membership of the workgroups?
3. How will the decision be made regarding the state co-chairs for the ICAC and workgroups? There will be a single state co-chair representing all the sub-basin partnerships.

Jackson stated that identification of a state co-chair for the ICAC is the highest priority to address to keep progress moving forward. The state co-chair is needed to help identify next steps moving forward in a collaborative manner with the states. Jackson also asked for a better understanding of the expectation for the revised ICAC sub-basin representatives' interaction with the Executive Board (e.g., will they be expected to attend an Executive Board meeting every year). The additional information will help identify the right people for these roles.

Conover stated that the revised ICAC is a committee under the Executive Board. He would anticipate one or both co-chairs representing the ICAC and providing an update to the board similar to other MICRA standing committees. All ICAC members would not be expected to attend board meetings. Fiss agreed that at least one co-chair should provide a report at future Executive Board meetings. He clarified that remote participation may be adequate rather than burdening them with additional travel.

Fiss brought up a concern about there being enough people to fill all the roles that have been identified. Fiss did not receive any feedback from the Tennessee-Cumberland Sub-basin (TNCR) delegates. There have been discussions among the TNCR about representatives for the different roles, however the people proposed for the different roles has not been run past the partnership members for concurrence. Cole Harty (TWRA) has offered to be the sub-basin representative on the ICAC, Josh Tompkins (KDFWR) has offered to serve on the Sampling Approach Workgroup (SAW), and Steve Miranda (MSU) has been suggested as the TNCR representative on the Data and Analysis Workgroup (DAW). TWRA does not have additional people to put in different positions if requested. Simmonds clarified that for the workgroups, positions were created for up to two sub-basin representatives realizing that not all sub-basins may be able to provide two representatives for each workgroup. The sub-basins can also draw on university or federal agency partners to serve as sub-basin representatives on the technical workgroups.

Jackson said there has been some discussion about the same person serving as the representative for two sub-basins when they are from a state that is in more than one sub-basin (e.g., Missouri). The sub-basin coordinators have communicated that ideally there would be a different person representing each sub-basin to maximize the diversity of ideas. However, if there are limitations in capacity the Executive Board might want to consider this scenario.

- ! The Executive Board members agreed that a single state should not serve as the representative more than one sub-basin on the Invasive Carp Advisory Committee.

Conover informed the board that he has been asked about having the same person serve on the ICAC and as a sub-basin representative on one or more technical committees. Since the ICAC is advising the technical workgroups, ideally the ICAC members will not be serving in a dual capacity on a technical workgroup. Ultimately, it will come down to capacity. There may be some duplication of roles initially that are addressed in the future once these groups form and begin to function. Simmonds offered that he thinks the groups will function well even if there are some capacity limitations that prevent us from fully populating any of the groups.

Conover informed the board that Hank Jarboe, USACE, has informed him that he is willing to continue to serve on the revised ICAC. He is also reaching out internally within his USACE Division regarding agency representation going forward.

Aldridge asked if the ICAC sub-basin representative should be someone that is highly engaged in the invasive carp issue. Is someone with experience in a programmatic role outside of invasive carp an acceptable representative? Batten said that he has exactly that situation with the DAW representative for the Lower Mississippi River Sub-basin Partnership. He has a data person that does not have any experience with carp but would potentially be a good fit with this workgroup because of his experience with data management and analysis. There are only so many people within each agency to draw from. Simmonds stated that carp knowledge isn't necessary for the DAW, but it would be preferable for the SAW. Ultimately it comes down to each sub-basin's capacity and their comfort with representative identified to assist in the realm of carp.

Conover suggested that for the ICAC, it may not be necessary for the sub-basin representatives to have hands-on experience with carp. The ICAC representatives were originally the Executive Board members, people that are not out in the field sampling carp. The board's interest has been in stepping down the ICAC representatives a level so there is more capacity to consider inter-basin coordination needs and to provide

guidance and direction for a cohesive basinwide approach, however, this still likely to include some agency personnel that are not directly involved with invasive carp at a field level. Carp experience could help but would not be critical for this role.

Do we have an idea of the time commitment for any of these roles? Simmonds suggested that there will be a bit of a lift for the ICAC during the first year, potentially getting together monthly to touch base and hear updates from the workgroup co-leads. He would like to have a face-to-face meeting for a few days to get things kicked-off, but overall, he wouldn't expect more than ½-day per month of their time to participate in monthly calls and review pre- and post-meeting materials. The workgroups will likely be more of a demand on people's time as they will be the one's trying to figure out the details. There will be a base level commitment of perhaps 1-day per month. There will likely be a few people that will put in an additional few days per month working on tasks and action items but it's not likely that all workgroup members will be able to put in the additional time. It's possible that the USFWS or other federal agency staff could be the ones tasked with carrying the additional load.

Will the ICAC continue to review the compiled project proposals from the sub-basin partnerships and the annual Monitoring and Response Plan? Yes, they will have the same roles as in the past. The ICAC would recommend to the Executive Board that the project proposals be forwarded to the USFWS for funding consideration.

In the past, by the time the project proposals are fleshed out and presented to the ICAC for approval the projects are too far down the road to change direction. There needs to be a broader basinwide approach to how the projects are implemented. That means direction on the front end, not after the proposals have been finalized and submitted to the ICAC for review. Guidance to enhance cohesiveness among the sub-basins is needed prior to or early in the development of project proposals, rather than how it has happened in the past.

Schoenung reported on his discussions with others about the need for a MICRA Invasive Carp Committee and basinwide coordination of removal projects. He stated that the current effort to revise the ICAC addresses the needs that the proposed Invasive Carp Committee would have been formed to address.

ICAC review of the compiled project proposals should be the stepping off point for developing guidance and recommendations regarding the next round of project proposals. In the past, there was no follow-up with, or guidance provided to, the sub-basin partnership coordinators as they prepared for the next round of project proposal development. This will be a critical function of the ICAC and why it is important to have the sub-basin partnership coordinators and the workgroup co-chairs participating as

non-voting members of the ICAC. The annual project updates will also be important pieces of information for the ICAC as they consider future direction and guidance to the sub-basin partnerships.

The MICRA sub-basin representatives and partnership coordinators reported out on the status of identifying representatives for the revised ICAC and technical workgroups.

Missouri River: Whiteman is working on getting additional sub-basin states represented. Missouri and Nebraska are the only states represented so far. He expects the sub-basin to provide to representatives for the SAW. It will take some work to find a representative for the DAW. The level of experience and coordination needed for the ICAC needs to be discussed further. The SD delegate has stated that they do not want someone from one state representing multiple sub-basins (e.g., Missouri representing both the Missouri River and Upper Mississippi River sub-basins).

Ohio River: Capacity is a limiting issue with several basin states having a presence in multiple sub-basin and receiving multiple requests from sub-basin representatives to consider serving in these different roles. For example, Kentucky was contacted by the Tennessee-Cumberland, Lower Mississippi River, and Ohio River sub-basin representatives. Within the ORFMT, the ICAC was met with lukewarm enthusiasm. There was uncertainty about the time commitment associated with serving in this role. The upper basin states were looking at the lower-basin states to provide the ICAC representative. Craig Jansen, IN DNR, is interested in the SAW but has to clear it with his supervisor. A couple of people from WVU are interested in the DAW. Schoenung has discussed serving as the Ohio River ICAC representative with his supervisor, but that has not been discussed within the ORFMT yet. Schoenung was asked to consider serving as the ICAC state co-chair if he is approved as the ORFMT representative.

Upper Mississippi River: The UMR partnership has not confirmed any participants yet. Larscheid suggested that Michael Weber (ISU) may be a good candidate for the DAW. He has both modeling and carp experience. Rebecca Neeley, UMR sub-basin partnership coordinator, is reaching out to a few people and discussing the different needs for representing the sub-basin. Kim Bogenschutz has been recommended as the ICAC representative for the UMR.

Lower Mississippi River: Batten has reached out to Bruce Drektrah (MDC) regarding Dave Herzog's availability as the sub-basin's ICAC representative. He

is working closely with Cunningham given the overlap within the two sub-basins. There may be a need initially for these two partnerships to share representatives on the SAW and DAW due to capacity limitations.

Arkansas-Red-White: Cunningham has reached out to Craig Bonds (TWP) regarding Monica McGarrity's interest and availability for the ICAC. Matt Horton (AGFC) is a possible SAW representative for both the ARW and LMR sub-basins. More time will be needed to fill these positions within the ARW.

Does the recommendation of Dave Herzog (MDC) as the LMR ICAC representative affect the Missouri River partnership's plans for an ICAC representative? No, but it will take some additional work to find a sub-basin representative from a different state. There are good potential representatives in the other Missouri River Sub-basin states.

What does approval look like? Is it adequate for the ICAC co-chairs to report out on progress to the Executive Board? It is not likely that the Executive Board would overrule a sub-basin's recommendation for representation, so approval does not seem necessary.

- ! It was agreed that the Executive Board does not need to formally approve the sub-basin partnerships' nominations for the Invasive Carp Advisory Committee.
- ! The Invasive Carp Advisory Committee (ICAC) co-chairs will keep the MICRA Executive Board informed on progress of populating the ICAC and technical workgroups.

How far should the ICAC co-chairs go with identifying technical workgroup members before having the ICAC fully populated? How much input should the other ICAC members have in proposing and identifying the workgroup members? Finding enough participants is likely to be the issue rather than needing to choose one person over another. There are only so many people out there with the expertise and availability to participate. Is it necessary to allow for ICAC member involvement in forming the technical workgroups to create buy-in. It sounds like we have many of the ICAC representatives identified and its possible we can keep everything moving together concurrently. The likely ICAC representatives can be looped-in and kept informed before the ICAC is finalized. The MRNRC meeting will be held at the end of August and that is when their selection for the ICAC would be endorsed by the partnership.

What is the committee's charge with respect to reviewing the sub-basin partnership projects? What is the standard for flagging things? This is similar to considerations within each of the sub-basins regarding the allocation of resources. For example, how

much funding should go towards removal versus the amount of funding that should be towards locating fish in areas where they are in low abundance. It's subjective, there's really no right or wrong answers. There is nobody that is looking at these things from a basinwide perspective.

I look at the ICAC's role with advising project plans as facilitating interjurisdictional projects. If all the sub-basins are struggling with a specific issue such as population assessment, how can we work together on the front end of developing projects rather than as six separate efforts. Coordinating efforts across the different sub-basin partnerships rather than be prescriptive and advising on the amount of funding or effort being directed in different places. The amount of funding and number of sub-basin partnerships has grown enough that this type of coordination is now warranted.

Rather than reacting to project plans that have been developed over the past several months, the ICAC should provide advise ahead of the next round of proposal development. One of the first steps for the ICAC might be to look back at the previous year's Monitoring and Response Plan and Annual Interim Summary Reports to see the current direction of projects across the basin. This review would provide the ICAC members with a baseline of information on the basinwide efforts to date prior to convening the group for their first face to face meeting.

The context for this type of role varies within the individual partnerships to some extent based on a number of factors that influence how willing people are to go into a meeting and challenge the ideas that are brought up. For example, some state reps are more open than others to discussing how they are doing things in their particular reaches within the basin. Some state reps are thinking only about their particular reaches while others are trying to thing on the broader sub-basin or basinwide scale. The sub-basin coordinators all have different relationships with their state partners and their abilities to challenge the partners are unique. To work, these ideas and processes need to be developed in partnership whether at the Executive Board, ICAC, or sub-basin level so that everyone buys in and supports them.

ICAC Principles of Operation

The ICAC developed Principles of Operation when the group first formed in 2016. Prior to the Executive Board meeting, Conover was asked to provide a revised version of the ICAC's Principles of Operation for review. The revised Principles of Operation were intended to be shared with the people that are being recruited to participate on the revised ICAC to provide them with a sense of what they are being asked to do. Conover received some feedback regarding "overuse of the word implement, and underuse of the word advise." Conover will be providing an updated version of the revised Principles

of Operation after the Executive Board meeting. This is intended to be a higher-level document and it does not have any details regarding decision making processes.

Timing of Initial Meetings

The Executive Board was asked about the timing of ICAC and technical workgroup meetings. Simmonds would like to have an initial meeting of the ICAC to get their thoughts together. The ICAC includes the workgroup co-chairs and sub-basin partnership coordinators so they would all be part of that initial discussion. The hope would be for the workgroup co-chairs to come out of that meeting with a plan for how they want to move forward. For example, do they want to have an initial meeting with just their respective workgroup members, or do they want to jump right to an all hands meeting of the ICAC and technical workgroups. Simmonds is targeting an initial ICAC meeting in mid-September. The MRNRC will not finalize their sub-basin participants until their meeting on August 25th. The Executive Board was asked if the end of August a reasonable target to confirm the sub-basin reps for the revised ICAC and the state co-chairs for the technical workgroups.

- ! The Executive Board sub-basin representatives will inform their respective delegates of the ICAC and technical workgroup representatives that have been identified for their respective sub-basins.
- ! The Executive Board sub-basin representatives will work to identify state agency co-chairs for the Sampling Approach Workgroup and the Data and Analysis Workgroup by the end of August.
- ! Conover will provide Simmonds with contact information for the MICRA Executive Board members.
- ! Simmonds will provide the Executive Board with an overview of the ICAC and technical workgroup members that have been confirmed and which positions are still needed from the different sub-basins.

Is there a need to share the ICAC and technical workgroup representation that the MICRA sub-basin representatives and sub-basin invasive carp partnership coordinators have identified with the membership of each of the sub-basin partnerships to make sure they are satisfied with the representation for their respective partnerships? The partnership coordinators should keep the partnership members informed of progress and status during their upcoming planning meetings.

This topic wrapped up with a discussion about agency representation versus sub-basin representation. Ideally, state agencies will represent the sub-basins or identify academic partners to represent the partnerships. There are a number of good federal agency staff

that are interested in participating but do not have a role in the workgroups as agency representatives. It's possible that the states could request a federal agency person to represent the sub-basin on the workgroups, but that should happen at the request of the states. We want to have active participation and buy-in from the state agencies at all levels, so it is important to have the states representing the sub-basin partnerships to the extent possible.

3) Sub-basin Invasive Carp Partnership Coordinators Discussion

Discussion Item:

Federal authority and funding for invasive carp work in the Mississippi River Basin began in 2014/2015 in the Ohio (OHR) and Upper Mississippi River (UMR) Basins. At that time, state agencies in each sub basin requested that MICRA and the USFWS work together to implement the national invasive carp plan (created in 2007). As a result, with coordination and funding support from the USFWS, invasive carp partnerships were gathered, control strategy frameworks developed, and the UMR and OHR sub basins began implementing projects in the fall of 2015. In the last seven years, authority and funding have expanded to all six sub basins of the Mississippi River. Currently, four sub basin invasive carp partnership coordinators work across 6 sub basins to implement projects, annually, in support of sub basin invasive carp control strategy frameworks (step down documents of the national plan). As the effort has grown, so has the need for a higher level of focused coordination. The four coordinators of invasive carp partnerships serve a unique and important role within the USFWS and with MICRA. We'll share information about our roles, our partnerships, and some of the challenges of implementing an effective collaborative invasive carp program in the Mississippi River Basin. We hope this is the first of more discussions to incorporate the MICRA vision into our invasive carp coordination work.

Notes:

Neal Jackson, coordinator for the Ohio River and Tennessee Cumberland sub-basin invasive carp partnerships, Emily Pherigo, coordinator for the Missouri River sub-basin invasive carp partnership, and Caleb Aldridge, coordinator for the Lower Mississippi River and Arkansas-Red-White sub-basin invasive carp partnerships spoke to the Executive Board on a variety of topics related to coordination of invasive carp management and control efforts in the Mississippi River Basin. Rebecca Neeley, coordinator for the Upper Mississippi River sub-basin invasive carp partnership was unable to attend the meeting. The coordinators provided an overview of their roles with the invasive carp partnerships, the status of each partnership, their partnership coordination objectives (i.e., what are they trying to achieve and how are they trying to work within the partnerships), and their success and challenges coordinating the partnerships.

The Arkansas-Red-White, Lower Mississippi River, and Missouri River partnerships are only in their second year of project planning as compared to the Upper Mississippi River, Ohio River, and Tennessee-Cumberland partnerships that began receiving U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funding in 2015. The coordinators work together to try to provide as much consistency in process and approach as possible across the sub-basins.

The list of priorities is generally the same in each of the sub-basins (defining spatial distribution including early life stages, removal, deterrence, population assessment, and early detection), but there are differences in the amount of on-going work under each of these priorities. There are also differences in numbers and types of locks and dams, sampling conditions and access, commercial fishing regulations and pressure, and partner agency dynamics in each of the sub-basins.

Personnel capacity and leveraging data at a broader scale are common challenges. Most partnerships are working on proof-of-concept projects to develop approaches for full scale management actions. The sub-basins with newer funding have a desire to learn from those sub-basins that have been implementing projects for several years. The need for increased inter-basin coordination has increased as the amount of funding and the geographic scope of that funding has increased in the last couple years. Communication within and across the sub-basins, as well as external from the management agencies is another common theme across the partnerships.

A common challenge is taking the information generated from on-going projects, making sure it is the right information, and then applying that into a decision that moves us towards the goal. The partnerships are all beginning to wrestle with this challenge of identifying and working to achieve sub-basin scale management objectives.

! Smith requested distribution/abundance maps for the different sub-basins.

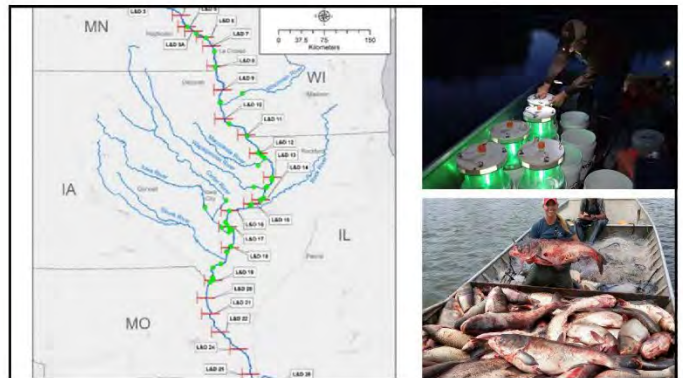
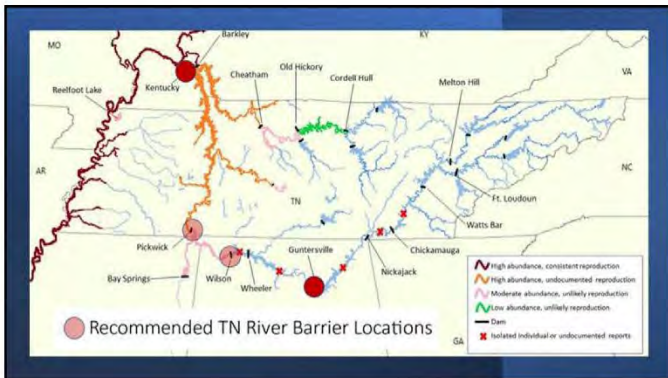
Mississippi River Basin Invasive Carp Coordination

Neal Jackson, Caleb Aldridge, Emily Pherigo, Rebecca Neeley
8/2/2022

Name	email	Partnership(s)	Established
Neal Jackson	neal_jackson@fws.gov	Tennessee-Cumberland & Ohio River	2015
Rebecca Neeley	rebecca_neeley@fws.gov	Upper Mississippi River	2015
Emily Pherigo	emily_pherigo@fws.gov	Missouri River	2020
Caleb Aldridge	caleb_aldrige@fws.gov	Arkansas-Red-White & Lower Mississippi River	2020

ORB Priorities for Implementation

- Early life stages
- Asian carp removal
- Deterrence
- Population Assessment
- Early Detection



Missouri River Sub-basin

- Large dams block upstream movement in mainstem Missouri River
 - Secondary pathways are of concern
- Reservoirs have high recreational value
 - High number of tributary dams and reservoirs
- Very little commercial fishing
- Impacts to native species

Travis Hering/The Okfuskee Foundation
A man in a boat on the Missouri River... ducks to avoid a silver carp that...

Missouri River Basin Priority Themes

- Define Invasive carp populations in the Missouri River Basin**
 - Spatial and demographic
- Apply relevant management actions in the correct location**
- Communication**

Prioritize Missouri River tributaries to inform Invasive carp distribution and population demographics for eventual management efforts.

Impacts to mitigate

- Competition with native aquatic species
- Negative experience during recreational activities
- Physical harm to people
- Economic impacts

Communication

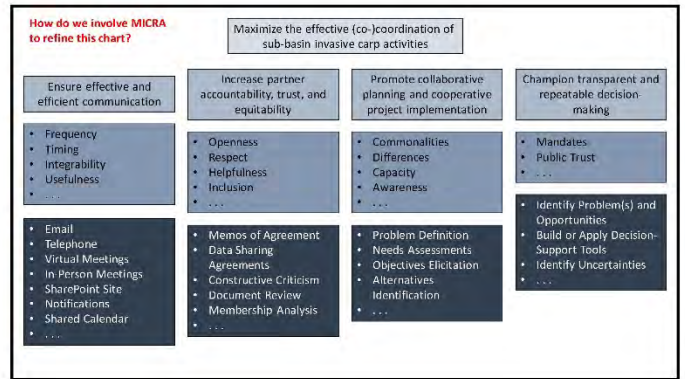
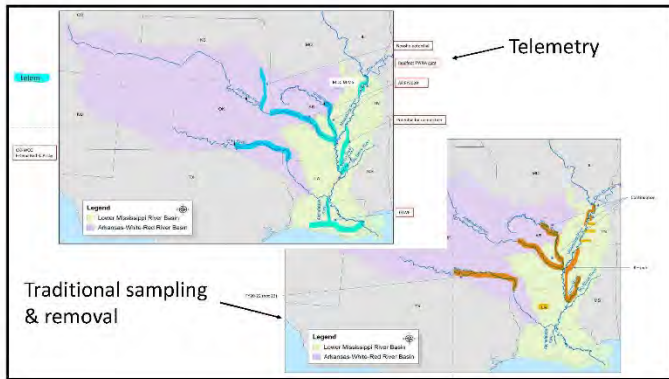
- Annual meetings
- Team virtual meetings
- Midwest Fish and Wildlife Symposium
- Talking points

Lower Mississippi River Basin
11 States
No pre-existing partnership
Framework: primarily State ANS Coordinators

- Prevention
- Monitoring and Population Status
- Population Control and Agency Response
- Understanding Impacts and Research
- Agency Communication
- Public Outreach and Education
- Funding and Financial Support

Data gaps and sampling challenges

- Generally, challenges are related to sampling conditions, site access, safety, and personnel capacity.
- Much of the data gaps conversation revolved around juvenile presence (recruitment) and leveraging data at a broad scale.



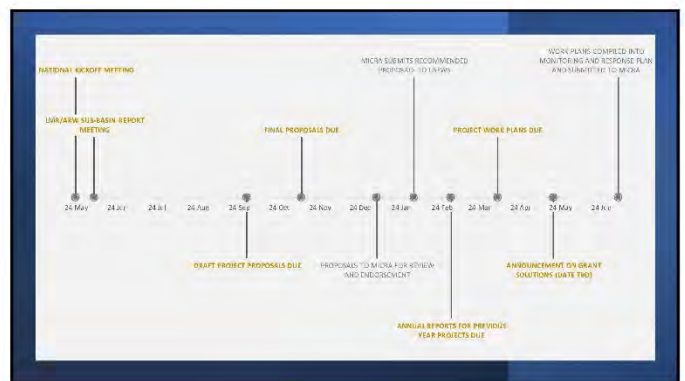
Effective and Efficient Communication

Success

- Planning documents (proposal, work plan, Monitoring and response plan, annual reports, annual project updates)
- Annual process
- Coordination among sub basins
- Coordination among grants managers

Challenge

- Collaborative messaging (sub basin and national scale)
- Efficiency in providing guidance
- minimize planning burden while maximizing implementation



Increase partner accountability, trust, and equity

Success

- Building from existing partnerships

Challenge

- Development of shared vision (sub basin scale objectives)
- Development of consistent and fair review processes
- What do we do if a partner violates trust or accountability? Example?

Promote Collaborative Planning and Cooperative Project Implementation

Success	Challenge
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many project level examples • TNCR Control • ORB Monitoring • Flexibility in implementation to create capacity • Universities • USFWS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Variation in collaboration across the Basin • Lack of shared sub basin scale objectives • Variation in capacity across the Basin • Variation in interest or priority level across the Basin

Champion
Transparent and
Repeatable
Decision Making

Success

- Process for allocating available funds (Basin scale)
- TNCR Control Decision Analysis

Challenge

- Capacity
- Agreement on which tools or how to apply them
- Dealing with uncertainty
- Planning beyond our constraints (Temporal, Financial)

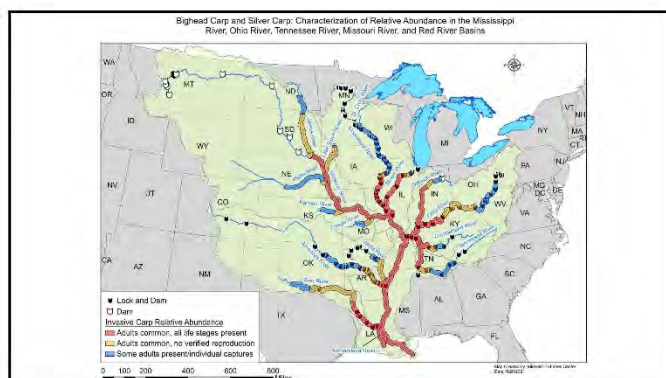
Informing an ICAC vision

COORDINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Sub basin coordinators

Name	email	Partnership(s)
Neal Jackson	neal_jackson@fws.gov	Tennessee-Cumberland & Ohio River
Rebecca Neeley	rebecca_neeley@fws.gov	Upper Mississippi River
Emily Pherigo	emily_pherigo@fws.gov	Missouri River
Caleb Aldridge	caleb_aldridge@fws.gov	Arkansas-Red-White & Lower Mississippi River



Discussion:

The coordinators understand their roles as maximizing the effective coordination of sub-basin invasive carp activities to accomplish the goal/s of the sub-basin frameworks and the national plan. There are four primary areas of emphasis where their work is focused:

1. Ensure effective and efficient communication
2. Increase partner accountability, trust, and equitability
3. Promote collaborative planning and collaborative project implementation
4. Champion transparent and repeatable decision making

The Executive Board was asked for their feedback on what they would like to see from the sub-basin coordinators. The board was also asked for input on several challenges that the coordinators are all struggling with:

1. Collaborative messaging (sub-basin and national scale)

2. Efficiency in providing guidance
3. Minimize planning burden while maximizing implementation

Communications

A dynamic hub for active communication within and among the sub-basin partnerships would improve efficiency. The coordinators mentioned the idea of developing common sub-basin partnership fact sheets but also identified capacity for communications as a challenge.

There is a substantial amount of resources directed towards communications within the Great Lakes Invasive Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ICRCC). The invasivecarp.us platform does not seem conducive to hosting a bunch of information from the rest of the nation. It's unclear how much funding goes to support that group's collaborative communications and how the decision was made to provide that level of support. It may be time to consider funding communication needs in the Mississippi River Basin and making information readily available through the MICRA website or another location. There are good alternatives to hosting our own information hub. Research Gates are a potential way to allow collaboration outside the MICRA member agencies.

From a policy perspective, this information has been incredibly helpful. Congressional offices frequently ask specifically how the funding is being used. It would help tremendously to bring some additional specificity to how the USFWS is supporting the states' efforts in the basin, and how they state and federal agencies are collaborating. A coalition could help with some of these invasive carp communication needs in addition to supporting a Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission. Prior to COVID, MICRA organized informational briefings in DC where state and federal agencies would talk about their collaborative efforts. Federal agencies are not restricted from discussing what they are doing and how they are supporting this effort.

There is likely 25% of a full-time position for someone to focus on the variety of communications needs to support the partnerships and MICRA. There have been discussions within the sub-basin partnerships about communications for years, but these have not developed into anything tangible.

Is there any interest on the Service's part to allocate some base funding to address the communications needs in the Mississippi River Basin? If not, is there any appetite among the states for using a portion of the \$14 million provided by the Service to address basinwide communication needs? This is something that the Service can consider and talk through. Does it make sense to continue to use the existing MICRA

structure or should this be developed as a common project? If the states prefer that this type of support comes from the Service, then this is something that would need to be considered internally. All options are on the table. The first step would be to identify specifically what type of support is needed and then developing this into a request. We'll be able to better consider options once we get the need clearly identified. What we want to consider is 'Is the need strong enough to warrant potentially allocating resources towards that effort'?

You might consider working with someone to rough out a communications plan. The first thing they will ask is who are you trying to reach and what information are you trying to communicate. Having a rough communications plan will help identify the amount of resources needed. Similar to the discussion that we have been having about the sub-basin learning from the other experience and not duplicating effort, it would be helpful to start by reviewing the ICRCC's communication plan and adapting it to the Mississippi River Basin's needs.

The ICRCC has a communications workgroup. Perhaps we should consider a communications workgroup under the ICAC. Do the agencies have communications staff that could participate on a communications workgroup and not add to the capacity constraints of the biologists? It is important to get that collaborative messaging piece at that broader scale. Most states and agencies are good at communicating about specific projects, but very few people have a good understanding of what is going on nationally and how one project ties in with or supports other projects in different parts of the basin.

We have had discussions about a rough communications plan with Service External Affairs staff in the past. This discussion has been started a couple of times but continues to stall out. The ICRCC communications workgroup may be able to provide some perspective on what it took to get their workgroup members active.

So far, we have been talking about one-way communication but there are also needs for two-way communications between the sub-basin partnership members or the sub-basin coordinators and the partnership members. For example, providing a workspace for collaborative documents, locating SOPs, or a single location for all things carp. IL DNR has grant supported funding that goes to a subcontractor to do a lot of the heavy lifting within the ICRCC Monitoring and Response Workgroup. Tasks like assembling an annual Action Plan and getting information assembled and posted on the website. These types of tasks are not being handled by the ICRCC's communication workgroup members. There are multiple models depending on need.

A communications workgroup could also help with keeping information current. The state fact sheets that MICRA has used for Capitol Hill briefings were very effective, however, some of the information now dates back to 2014. There was also no information about USFWS projects occurring in the different states. Those projects should be pointed out.

Is MICRA's communications plan still active? MICRA does not have a communications plan. The Executive Board had an initial discussion about audiences and messages in 2014 but delayed developing a communications plan while focusing on the fishery commission initiative.

Is there interest in any action related to a communications workgroup? Do people think there is a deficit in the public's understanding of what the agencies are doing to address invasive carps? Is the general public your main target audience? You might want to focus on elected officials and agency or regulatory officials, then the general public to bolster grassroots support. You want to make sure your directors are fully aware of the importance of the collaborative effort and how all the different pieces fit together. Many people support one particular element but do not have a grasp of the bigger picture.

The revised ICAC could be asked to evaluate the different communications needs for the basin and come up with a plan. Would it save a step to form a workgroup now with the agencies' outreach and communications people and ask them to connect with the ICRC communications workgroup? We have tried to get the agency people engaged a few times in the Ohio River Basin, but it never seemed to go anywhere. The state agency communications folks are geared more towards getting information on platforms to the general public. A lot of the needs we've discussed this morning are between sub-basins and different audiences than the general public. This may be a deeper dive than asking the state agency communications people to take this on. Would it make sense to put a communications workgroup in place underneath the ICAC rather than requesting the ICAC to take this on directly? We could try to identify co-chairs to get the ICAC and committee started. Do those same needs exist within MICRA itself? Is this larger than invasive carp? Yes, but invasive carp is the paramount need and the likely issue where funding might be available to move this forward. The other layers could be added on if you get a good launch on the invasive carp communications. Two co-chairs for a communications workgroup would be a good way to start.

What is needed to prevent the group from stalling out as it has in the past? It needs to be one of the top priorities for someone to make sure that it has a champion and it is being working on. Communications people generally are not in the fisheries program in some agencies, so they don't have to do the work when they are asked. It may not be a

priority for them even if it is a priority to the fisheries program. It would be interesting to get perspective from the ICRCC communications workgroup about how they are able to get the agencies to regularly participate. It may just come down to money and funding to do the work. The communications workgroup should be tasked with identifying the communication needs and not the communications themselves. We may need to contract the communications work itself out. There will still be a need for people beyond the workgroup to provide the information that needs to be communicated. This will require time and commitment on their part to support communications.

Would there be value in having a core team within the ICAC that consists of members of the ICAC, the technical workgroups, and communications experts to provide communication and coordination of the overall effort? It appears that there is a need to have people responsible for reaching out to the sub-basins and states to pull information back, coordinate and facilitate connections between the sub-basins on projects, provide connections on expertise, and provide tools for outreach to different target audience to help facilitate the overall effort. There is a nexus among those three groups to provide communication and coordination. It may be possible to contract external support or staff time so that all the work isn't falling on those core members. Would MICRA want to recommend that a small portion of the total USFWS funding that is allocated to the individual sub-basins be allocated to the basin as a whole to support basinwide initiatives like this? It's likely there will be more and more of these types of needs. Ideally new funds could be used in this way rather than carving out of the existing funding. This is similar to how USFWS grants are administered in the Great Lakes.

There seems to be competition among some Congressional offices for the individual sub-basins. It would be really helpful to have a basinwide summary of what is needed over the next five years to present a holistic need rather than a sub-basin by sub-basin approach. Even within the sub-basin we don't have an outward looking forecast of where we'd like to be in five years.

Who should comprise a communications workgroup? If the state agency communications people aren't the right group, are we tasking our biologists with this? We could contract for this support. Hired experts are still going to have to ask a lot of questions and require a considerable amount of time from the biologists. It might be worth contracting for additional support and to make sure the information is delivered correctly.

If MICRA had a place at AFWA, then the Directors would have an interest in this which would then require that the IT people care about this. The Invasive Species Committee

at AFWA seems mostly focused on terrestrial issues and there is very little discussion of invasive carp despite how big of an issue this is. We are missing out on that AFWA level director buy-in that could result in more agency support outside of fisheries. Brian Canaday gave a presentation on MICRA and the fishery commission concept at the AFWA meeting in St. Paul, MN, several years back. We might want to consider getting on the agenda for an upcoming AFWA meeting. What about starting with some of the regional AFWA groups – MAFWA, SEAFWA, WAFWA? We could also continue to work with the Invasive Species Committee and the Government Affairs staff. There may not be an opportunity to have time in front of the Directors at SEAFWA.

Does the USFWS contribute monetarily to MICRA more than supporting the coordinator position? Not specifically to MICRA, but they do provide the sub-basin coordinators for invasive carp partnerships. An education, outreach, and policy committee might be an approach that would open funding from outside entities.

Rather than forming a communications workgroup, do we task the ICAC with discussing and defining communications needs and the board will continue to discuss how address those needs? Bandwidth may be a concern for the ICAC. If the ICAC is tasked with this, then they will likely not be able to work on removal or another priority beyond population assessment. If this is broader than invasive carp, is it something that the Executive Board should handle? This is the group that works directly with Ashlee, not the ICAC. MICRA's messaging continues to emphasize the MICRA is more than just invasive carp or AIS. The communications needs are much broader than invasive carp. You might consider a communications committee under the Executive Board rather than the ICAC. This inter-basin coordination need has been brought forward through a discussion about invasive carp, but that doesn't mean it should be addressed within the invasive carp structure. It would be helpful to see the ICRCC communications plan. They have a communications workgroup, but they do not have a communications plan. Concrete examples of barriers from the sub-basin partnerships that the MICRA Executive Board could address would be helpful. We also need to review the notes from the Executive Board's initial discussion about a communications plan.

- ! Conover will share the communications planning notes from the board's July 2014 meeting with the Executive Board members.
- ! Conover will add a discussion of a MICRA Communications Plan to the agenda for the board's Winter meeting.
- ! The sub-basin partnership coordinators and ICAC co-chairs will provide examples of communications needs and barriers to the Executive Board.

- ! The Executive Board will hold a conference call specifically focused on resuming this discussion about internal and external communication needs, particularly the following considerations.
 - o A dynamic hub for active communication within and among the sub-basin partnerships would improve efficiency e.g., a workspace for collaborative documents, housing SOPs, basically a single location for all things carp.
 - o Focus communications on elected officials and agency or regulatory officials, then the general public to bolster grassroots support.
 - o Make sure your directors are fully aware of the importance of the collaborative effort and how all the different pieces fit together.
 - o Is there any interest on the Service's part to allocate some base funding to address the communications needs in the Mississippi River Basin? The first step would be to identify specifically what type of support is needed and then developing this into a request.
 - o Would MICRA want to recommend that a small portion of the total USFWS funding that is allocated to the individual sub-basins be allocated to the basin as a whole to support basinwide initiatives like this?
 - o It would be helpful to have a basinwide summary of what is needed over the next five years to present a holistic need rather than a sub-basin by sub-basin approach.
 - o It might be worth contracting for additional support and to make sure the information is delivered correctly.
 - o We might want to consider getting on the agenda for an upcoming AFWA meeting. What about starting with some of the regional AFWA groups – MAFWA, SEAFWA, WAFWA?
 - o Consider a communications committee under the Executive Board rather than the ICAC.

Partner accountability, trust, and equity

Several challenges were highlighted. The national plan and sub-basin frameworks have high-level goals such as minimize distribution and abundance. There are sub-basin projects that have specific and measurable objectives, but there is a lack of sub-basin scale SMART objectives. This makes it hard to know and demonstrate progress because the sub-basins haven't defined what progress is. We need to connect our agency and partnership values with metrics to allow us to evaluate progress over time. The sub-basin coordinators expressed interest in the Executive Board's ideas and suggestions.

Developing a shared vision through setting sub-basin scale objectives will assist with setting a standard for project proposals and in establishing a consistent and fair review process for project proposals. The question was asked earlier, what is the standard for an ICAC member to question a project proposal.

Another challenge from a partnership coordination standpoint, is what to do if a partner violates trust or accountability. There are examples in the basin where people are doing things for their own purpose, and it doesn't relate to what the partnership is trying to achieve overall. What is the coordinators' role in addressing these situations? The coordinators are doing all they can to build trust with each agency individually while also advocating for the partnership scale objectives.

There needs to be a mechanism to align the federal partners with the shared vision that is developed within the partnerships. This is not always the case. The federal partners are setting objectives and priorities for their invasive carp funding outside the sub-basin partnership process. There is a potential role for MICRA to encourage all of these groups to work together to use their available funding to do things that support a shared vision. It would be counterproductive for the states to have one vision for what they want to accomplish with this pot of funding, and to have the federal partners with a different vision for their pot of funding. Understanding agency missions are different and this leads to different perspectives. We don't have much discussion among the different groups at a high-level about how the different pieces fit together and if there are better ways to align those.

All the different layers and scales of decisions that are made hinge on a good foundation of a clear vision and objectives. It is critical to be clear about what you are trying to accomplish at a sub-basin scale.

We have been discussing sub-basin scale objectives. Is there a need for MICRA to have basinwide objectives that would in part guide the sub-basins in setting sub-basin scale objectives? One of the first things the ICAC will need to do is to establish a 5-year plan for what we want to see in the basin. Absent that, how do you decide what the immediate priorities are? The sub-basins have been challenged by the ability to plan beyond the constraints of funding and time. Capacity is a consistent limitation within each of the sub-basin partnerships.

The areas that the sub-basin partnership coordinators see has the highest priority and would like to have continued interaction with the MICRA Executive Board are in building that partnership-scale coordination and communication strategies. What does the

MICRA Executive Board see as the ICAC's role in 1) developing a shared vision, and 2) ensuring that proposed projects address the shared vision? Answers to these questions will be important for the ICAC co-chairs and sub-basin partnership coordinators. The coordinators' desire is to know and understand MICRA's interests and vision to guide their daily work with the partnerships. Rather than coming to the board with a specific request today, the intent was to start a conversation about these things that will continue to be addressed through on-going discussions.

The coordinators were asked if they envision developing sub-basin scale objectives within their partnerships and then bringing them to the ICAC to identify common priorities among the sub-basins. They will be making the case for setting sub-basin scale objectives and the need to be able evaluate success at their upcoming planning meetings. The hope is to begin working towards sub-basin scale objectives but it is not expected to be an outcome of the upcoming meetings.

There was agreement that sub-basin scale objectives are needed. Several years ago, MICRA requested each sub-basin develop an invasive carp framework to step-down the national plan. Is there a need for a similar request from the MICRA Executive Board to the sub-basin partnerships to develop a shared sub-basin scale vision and objectives? The national plan has very high-level objectives. There are some things that are pretty clear within the sub-basin frameworks, but there are others that are not. It would be helpful to put some clarity and common understanding on these higher-level goals objectives. If we do this in each sub-basin, we will likely see areas with a lot of commonalities that could then be areas of interaction with the ICAC and workgroups. How much of that consistency should be forced versus allowing it to come about organically? It would be very helpful to the partnership coordinators for MICRA to request the sub-basin partnerships each develop sub-basin scale objectives if that is something the Executive Board or ICAC would like to see from the partnerships. Something to consider is that there are different places throughout the basin where people are more or less independent and they want to maintain that independence. We have been able to accomplish most everything by consensus this far. Having this request and direction from MICRA would help the partnership coordinators to press the groups to develop the sub-basin scale objectives. MICRA and the ICAC can help guide the coordinators and partnerships by providing priorities (e.g., developing sub-basin scale objectives) to help move the groups along.

What would we put in a 5-year strategy and what would that gain us? Would it be intended to step down the national plan or is it another generic sort of plan? The sub-basins would need to develop their own 5-year strategies that address their specific needs. Based on the technology we have available now, based on the current

distribution and abundance of invasive carps, the strategy would identify what we want to accomplish and where we want to be in 5 years. Maybe the sub-basins want to prioritize specific reservoirs, reaches, or tributaries to focus current efforts.

A 5-year strategy could help the agencies stay in front of external initiatives like the recent one from Wildlife Forever that wants to remove carp from within select portions of the basin. It would be a valuable tool for MICRA to be able to present decision makers and Congressional staff with a basinwide plan for removal at the current funding level. How did Wildlife Forever come up with the amount of funding, the locations for removal, and the targets? Those were not developed in collaboration with the states or the on-going multi-agency efforts throughout the basin. There are a lot of capacity concerns with the Wildlife Forever proposal. Do we have the processing capacity to handle that amount of fish? Do we have the commercial fishers within the basin to be able to capitalize on that level of funding? From a planning perspective, we can estimate what the capacity for removal is. Then you could extrapolate what that looks like from a capacity perspective. This would be a way to communicate what is needed from a removal perspective. Each sub-basin framework and priorities focus on the same key aspects: deterrents, removal, and monitoring. Looking at a broader basinwide level from a planning perspective allows you to engage your outreach in such a way that identifies the problem and what it will take to address the problem. That would help prevent groups that aren't coordinating with the states from promoting well-meaning, but not well-developed plans to members of Congress. Wildlife Forever's recent initiative was not developed with any coordination with MICRA and that speaks to a lack of effective communication on our part, which may also contribute to a lack of relevance.

It sounds like the 5-year plan is an aspirational document that describes in an ideal scenario what the agencies would like to do, what it would cost, and why it is important to you and your constituents. I see the 5-year plan as a list of questions that we want to address over the next 5 years. Some of those things include learning how to catch these fish in places where we don't know this yet, I need to sample enough in specific locations to determine if I am removing enough fish, etc. Assuming we know what information we need and from where, it would identify details such as we are going to monitor in these places, for these life stages of fish, for the next five years, this is what it is going to cost, and this is how we are going to use this information. There are the four highest priority questions that I need answered. We are going to implement research projects for an estimated number of years to answer each question. Trying to put a logical sequence of steps to our actions over the next 5 years. It will be a challenge to make sure we are asking decision-relevant questions.

Defining on the frontend what information you need to inform the things you can do will help us from addressing the wrong questions or collecting information that doesn't

inform a decision. It sounds like developing the sub-basin scale objectives is the first step before working on this type of 5-year plan. These discussions should start at the sub-basin scale and allowing commonalities across the sub-basins to come up organically.

Reduce range and reduce abundance will be on a list of common objectives across the basin. There may be sub-basin specific locations, but the overall objectives will be there. There will also be objectives that are unique to a given sub-basin.

It is a natural progression as the amount of funding and geographic scope of work has increased within the basin. This type of planning wasn't necessary during the initial years of funding, but it has become necessary. It will help us to ensure that we are spending funding in useful ways.

- ! The Executive Board will work with the sub-basin partnership coordinators to develop a request and guidance regarding sub-basin scale objectives for invasive carp management and control.
- ! The sub-basin partnership coordinators will work with their respective sub-basin partnerships to identify sub-basin scale objectives to assist the ICAC and MICRA Executive Board with basinwide planning and communications.

What is the interaction between me as a sub-basin coordinator and my sub-basin with that ICAC member and the ICAC at-large? How do these groups interact in developing the sub-basin scale objectives? The sub-basin scale objectives should be developed within the partnerships and be fed up to the ICAC for basinwide consideration. Developing sub-basin scale objectives is not an added burden on the new ICAC members. This sounds like an opportunity for a basinwide interjurisdictional project to provide facilitation. It would be nice to have the same person working across the sub-basins to facilitate these conversations to provide consistency and to take the burden off the sub-basin partnership coordinators.

For what scenario are the sub-basin partnerships being asked to develop these SMART objectives? Is it for current funding levels or is it absent of funding constraints? These objectives should be independent of funding. Are we targeting achievable or aspirational? We need to be cautious to not put more energy into planning than we are on the ground. We need to develop plans that connect what you are trying to achieve with what you are measuring, then you can't have a plan that is left on a shelf because your actions are directly linked to the plan.

If your objective identifies that more funding is needed to properly achieve your objective, then that becomes a communication need. The objectives should not be based on funding constraints. The 5-year plan will be based on current funding constraints. There is a third element to this that we haven't discussed. That is the communications element to convey what we aren't able to address in the 5-year plan because of those funding constraints. The funding constraint will likely be reflected in the geographic scope of your objectives. For example, we might say that we are going to reduce abundance of invasive carp in specific locations rather than saying we plan to reduce the abundance of invasive carp in every pool of the Ohio River. We need to prove that is measurable in one location first before doing it on a wider scale. Do you have enough resources within the Ohio River sub-basin to apply removal pressure to the point that you can measure it? We may not anywhere, including the Illinois River.

Is there more discussion needed in the direction that is needed in developing the sub-basin objectives? Yes. I don't feel like we are all on the same page and we are likely to get different products from each group. More direction is not needed from the Executive Board. The sub-basin partnership coordinators and the ICAC co-chairs need to spend more time on how to develop the objectives.

- ! The sub-basin partnership coordinators and the ICAC co-chairs will continue to discuss how the sub-basin scale objectives should be consistently developed and will report back to the Executive Board when they have reached consensus.

4) Wildlife Forever Commercial Harvest Incentives Program

Discussion Item:

Conover was contacted by Pat Conzemius, Wildlife Forever, in March for “a casual conversation about the current efforts for Asian carp removal in the MS basin and activities coordinated through MICRA.” Conover encouraged Conzemius to talk with the state agencies regarding their on-going efforts, interests, and need with respect to removal and incentive programs. Conover offered to coordinate calls with individual states or sub-basins to assist with communication. There was no further communication with Conzemius as a result of that discussion.

In June, Illinois and Kentucky both shared the attached “Wildlife Forever Commercial Incentive Program” fact sheet. Conzemius contacted Illinois with the following information, that attached fact sheet, and a request for information.

“We have been working with industry and several organizations around the framework for an Asian carp management program we are calling the *Commercial Harvest Incentive Program* (CHIP).

While still very early, our vision is to work with participating state agencies, licensed commercial anglers, and fish processors to incentivize carp harvest and removal. We would seek new federal funding so to not compete or detract from current programs.

Can you tell me, does Illinois offer any type of incentive for commercial harvest and, are you aware of any incentive program for carp removal?”

A Kentucky biologist attended a meeting of the Land Between the Lakes Sportsmen’s Club in western Kentucky and shared the following report. Judge Wade White was at the meeting “to give an update on his War on Carp efforts. The highlight is this Commercial Harvest Incentive Program that he is working on with Wildlife Forever. He handed out the attached document to those in attendance at the meeting.”

Conzemius was invited to attend the MICRA Executive Board meeting to discuss Wildlife Forever’s Commercial Harvest Incentive Program and the organization’s interest in helping the states with removal efforts. After multiple emails encouraging Conzemius to engage with MICRA and the state agencies before pitching a “solution” to Congress, his final response follows.

“As an NGO with an unfunded program, it’s hard for us to invest additional time and resources to help without support. Time is money as you know. I would welcome the ExCom to discuss the merits of our proposal and if the states felt our help to get additional funding for Asian carp prevention is warranted, please reach out. After engaging with the commercial fishing industry, they mentioned the only barrier to more removal was access to product (fish). Our discussion with legislators is ongoing.

The information is provided here for the board’s consideration and discussion. Is there communication needed from MICRA, or the individual member agencies, with Wildlife Forever? How should MICRA and the member agencies engage with NGOs that are interested in helping, or seeking opportunities for invasive carp funding, to ensure their efforts are beneficial, are a priority, and support the on-going coordinated multi-agency effort in the basin?

Notes:

The first time the states had seen the initiative from Wildlife Forever was when Pat Conzemius shared it in June along with a request for information. Conover has had some unproductive dialogue with Conzemius, trying to get him to attend the Executive Board meeting to discuss the attached initiative from Wildlife Forever. Conover’s take is that Conzemius is interested in hearing from the states directly and not from the MICRA Coordinator.

“I would welcome the ExCom to discuss the merits of our proposal and if the states felt our help to get additional funding for Asian carp prevention is warranted, please reach out. After engaging with the commercial fishing industry, they mentioned the only barrier to more removal was access to product (fish). Our discussion with legislators is ongoing.”

Discussion:

It appears that Wildlife Forever grabbed on to the concept and ran with it before contacting any of the states. Does Wildlife Forever interface with AFWA and the agency directors? In his correspondence, Conzemius states that Wildlife Forever has been coordinating with MICRA and the USFWS and they fully support this. That is a gross mischaracterization. Conzemius had a single phone call with Conover and was encouraged to work with the states through MICRA, but there was no further communication following that call.

Conzemius had a conversation with the USFWS Regional Directors for the Midwest and Southeast regions. Conzemius invited Judge White to that discussion. The USFWS

communicated the position that this is a states' issue and that the states in the basin have a variety of positions and policies regarding incentivized removal programs. The USFWS encouraged Wildlife Forever to work directly with the states. The next thing the USFWS heard on the topic was from MICRA when questions about this draft initiative were raised. USFWS provided a letter to Wildlife Forever and it did not say that the agency fully supports the initiative.

The purpose of including this as an agenda topic is to discuss how to engage with Wildlife Forever, and other entities, to prevent initiatives from being developed outside the collaborative effort and without the input of agencies that will be tasked with implementing the initiatives. This ties in closely with the communications discussion yesterday. Initiatives like this have the potential to disrupt the collaborative, multi-agency efforts if they are not worked out in advance with the relevant management agencies. It is in everyone's best interest if the initiative is something that the states' need and support, rather than engaging with the agencies after an initiative is funded.

Is there any action needed by MICRA to get out in-front of this initiative or others like it in the future? Is there any indication that this has been picked up by any offices or that it has any sponsors? Judge White may be discussing this with McConnell's office. Kentucky staff were at a public meeting where Judge White was handing this initiative out to the public. They reached out to USFWS to see what we know about this because they were not aware of it. We do need to reach out to McConnell's office to discuss this. We need the Kentucky Delegate on that call. We need Kentucky's Director to call McConnell's office. He will respond best if someone from Kentucky talks with his staff. Judge White has now been nominated for a position on TVA's board.

Looking at this at the surface, the concept is interesting. We know that we could definitely remove more fish if we had additional funding to direct towards removal. How did the breakdowns on the funding and pounds removed come to be? Utilizing the Magnuson-Stevens Act is an interesting concept as it is focused on marine commercial fisheries. We do not have enough commercial fishers in those regions to be able to give them \$25 million to remove fish. The number of commercial fishers needed just doesn't exist to fish the population that hard. At 6 or 7 cents per pound, that is a lot of fish that would have to be removed to use that much funding. I don't know that we could remove 80 million pounds from the Upper Mississippi River even with more commercial fishers. Where did these numbers come from? Maybe if you cut the goal in half and doubled the incentive you might get close.

Is there any communication (i.e., letter or phone call) that should come from MICRA to Wildlife Forever, Judge White, or Senator McConnell's office? Communications are

critical to prevent similar disconnects with other NGOs in the future. One strategy is to say nothing and let it die. This couldn't be done straight through an appropriations bill. Conzemius stated in one of his emails that they haven't heard any support from the states and there currently is not an opportunity that they are pursuing to fund the initiative.

“Our vision for “this commercial harvest incentive program from Wildlife Forever” has always been to coordinate and discuss with the states if funded. CHIP is designed to complement state efforts and become an economic driver to further help state economies. Unfortunately, we've not heard support from any states to collaborate or support the vision to fundraise congress for the removal of carp.

At this point in the game, our window of federal opportunity has closed on an enhanced incentive program. I'm told there may be opportunity within the Mississippi River Restoration and Resilience Initiative but have yet to see the bill language from Sen. McCollum. Funding for large initiatives takes time and access to the right people in congress.”

Ashlee suggested that she should do some more research into the initiative and provide some suggestions back to the board, including whether she thinks a call is needed.

We want people to ask how these types of initiatives fit in with the on-going collaborative effort. If there are some good merits to the initiative, we may be able to have a call with Wildlife Forever about the tactic they're proposing. It's possible they are trying to avoid the bureaucracy that comes with working with the multi-agency partnerships, but its worth a try to have a discussion with them.

- ! Smith will review the Wildlife Forever Commercial Harvest Incentive Program proposal and follow-up with recommendations for the MICRA Executive Board.

Wildlife Forever Commercial Harvest Incentive Program

I. Overview

Invasive Carp threaten our Nation’s native biodiversity, outdoor heritage, and national economy.

Current federal funding strategies to mitigate invasive carp includes the beginning work to install invasive carp barriers at dams (BAFF), and experimental works by the USGS and other agencies. While the BAFF strategy is working as a containment at Barkley Dam, invasive carp biomass continues to rise in many areas. The most effective strategy for reducing the invasive carp is the use of BAFF at more dams and heavy harvesting of invasive carp of every size in all basins. Where incentivized commercial fishing is strongly supported, we are seeing reductions in populations. That must be duplicated across all basins.

To reduce invasive carp populations, removal must be done through economic development and market-based incentivization. The overabundance of invasive carp makes for a plentiful resource, yet low market-prices and underdeveloped commercial fishing economy, reduces capacity for adequate removal and obtaining state harvest goals. Through federal allocations, a regional-based incentive structure responsibly drives licensed commercial fisherman to the market and provides increased supply for fish processors.

The Commercial Harvest Incentive Program (CHIP) would include a 25-million-dollar amendment to the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act (H.R. 59, 117th Cong, (2021-2022). CHIP would allow for economic growth and opportunity of commercial harvest through a market-based reduction of invasive carp in support of state and federal population goals.

II. Outcomes

- 1) To reduce the environmental and economic threats posed by spread of invasive carp.
- 2) Incentivize participation in commercial fishing and harvest of invasive carp.
- 3) Amend the *Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act* to include CHIP 25 million in appropriated funds for the purpose of decreasing invasive carp populations through a federal economic development

(sub-basin regional map)



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III. Strategy

Activity 1: Oversee the program allocated through the Magnuson-Stevens Act: Coordinate with federal, state, and local resource managers to distribute funds to qualifying, state licensed, commercial anglers while ensuring oversight, accountability, and transparency. Utilize current state harvest goals in determining incentive rates for the program.

Activity 2: Coordinate with commercial anglers and fish processors in each sub-basin to ensure harvest goals and population dynamics are considered to increase economic output and market trends.

Activity 3: Provide annual metrics and detailed reports of the effectiveness of the program: Data provided includes total lbs. of carp harvested, commercial fishing output by state and region, licensing revenue increases by state, and coordination with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, MICRA, and state agencies to determine annual decline in populations of invasive carp.

Harvest Rate Allocations: FY '23

*would coincide with state incentive programs currently allocated.

Sub-Region	State(s)	Federal Incentive Rate	Regional Harvest Goal
Missouri Region	MI, ND, SD, NE, CO, MO, KS	6 cents/lbs. (minimum 5,000lbs.)	90 million lbs.
Tennessee Region	TN, AL	7 cents/lbs. (Minimum 5,000lbs.)	70 million lbs.
Ohio Region	OH, KY, WV, PA, VA	9 cents/lbs. (Minimum 2,500 lbs)	100 million lbs.
Upper-Mississippi Region	MIN, IA, WI, IL	6 cents/lbs. (Minimum 5,000 lbs.)	80 million lbs.
National Totals:	18 State Program	\$23,800,000	340,000,000 lbs.

IV. Economic Impact & Coordination with Business

- 1) Create an interactive online resource for commercial fisheries that directs them to nearest fish protein processing plants, fertilizer production plants, and ANS eviscerated bait manufacturing facilities (chum).
- 2) Coordinate with private-sector businesses to ensure weight of harvested invasive carp is validated to avoid industry waste, fraud, or abuse of CHIP.
- 3) Partner with state and local governments to utilize invasive carp harvests as fertilizer and organic enriched soil additives for use in public planning

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For Reference:

- 1) <https://www.edf.org/media/rep-huffman-case-introduce-legislation-reauthorize-magnuson-stevens-act>
- 2) <https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/environment-sustainability/msa-reauthorization-debated-in-us-house-of-representatives>
- 3) <https://republicans-naturalresources.house.gov/magnusonstevens/> (Chair of committee)
- 4) <https://oceanleadership.org/debate-continues-magnuson-stevens-act-reauthorization/>
- 5) <https://fw.kv.gov/Fish/Pages/Invasive-Carp-Information.aspx>
- 6) <https://www.cleveland.com/open/2019/05/army-corps-estimates-asian-carp-containment-measures-will-cost-more-than-830-million-new-report-says.html>
- 7) <https://www.seafoodsource.com/news/environment-sustainability/turning-an-invasive-problem-into-a-bait-solution>
- 8) <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/asian-carp-bait-canada-lobster-1.5113202>

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5) FishTracks Database

Information Item:

During a discussion about Joint Strategic Plan next steps at the July 7th Executive Board meeting, there was a brief discussion about the Great Lakes Acoustic Telemetry Observation System (GLATOS; <https://glatos.glos.us/>). Mark Gaikowski provided a brief description of the [FishTracks database](#) developed by USGS in support of telemetry monitoring of invasive carp in the Upper Mississippi River sub-basin. The database was developed to provide centralized access to standardized invasive carp-related telemetry data in a scalable, query-able, downloadable database format. The board members expressed interest in a more detailed presentation about the FishTracks Database during the board's August meeting.

Marybeth Brey, Andrea Fritts, and Travis Harrison will join the Executive Board remotely to provide an overview of the FishTracks Database followed by a demonstration of the website's utility and access.

Notes:

The goal of FishTracks is to develop a web-based, centralized location to access and archive fish telemetry data for the Mississippi River Basin. The project was initiated specifically for invasive carp in the Illinois River. Analyzing and visualizing the data are secondary goals to getting good QA/QC data into a database that is accessible and archivable. Beginning to do some development of visualization tools.

Brey provided an overview of timeline of development over the last 10 years. Began to link some USGS gaging station data to telemetry data to get at discharge and temperature data. Transitioned from Access database to USGS servers using an LTRM-type database model. Travis Harrison has been the data manager since 2017. He has been working on SOPs, data structure, QA/QC process, and overall communications. By 2021, USGS had a fully functioning database and can now consider expanding if partners are interested.

Project started with the Illinois River. Database includes data back to approximately 2011. They have started including data from the Upper Mississippi River (UMR) over the last 1-2 years and some historical data from UMR partners. Wabash River data from Purdue University for 2012-2015. Southern Illinois University (SIU) will begin contributing Wabash River data this year. Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources (KDFWR) and USFWS have provided data from Ohio River dating back to approximately 2017. Decided to do more work on the database before adding more data from other sub-basins.

Database includes information about transmitter, tagged fish, and deployment and removal records for all acoustic telemetry receivers. The receiver data has been the most difficult to QA/QC. Developed SOPs and data procedures so that all collaborators are providing the same information. Detection histories are downloaded from the receivers and uploaded to the database after the data have been time corrected. The database can incorporate other types of data including external tags and recaptures.

Marybeth showed examples of the SOPs and documentation that have been developed (e.g., fish tagging data format and receiver log). This information is all available on the FishTracks website. Much of the structure was modeled on GLATOS and modified for rivers.

FishTracks data are accessed by login and password. Project PIs have to request the addition of new people to access data. All receiver locations can be viewed on a map by anyone that has an account. Users can see all detection data for their transmitters, including detections from other people's receivers. Users cannot see fish data from other people's transmitters without permission. Anyone can search for transmitter data for a tag that they have detected allowing them to find the tag owner. Illinois River team just agreed to add PI contact information in addition to agency affiliation. Travis developed a FishTracks R package for data downloads and visualizations. The package is undergoing internal review, but the intent is to make it available. FishTracks is considered a science and management tool by USGS, so it is not open to the public. The partner agencies own the data that is contributed to FishTracks, not USGS.

Expanding FishTracks should not be too difficult at this point if there is interest. The agency contributor needs to format data properly, follow QA/QC procedures, secondary QA/QC by USGS, and then the data can be uploaded. On-going maintenance would be required by the database manager (Travis Harrison). An additional half-time to full-time database manager will be needed for application and database management, and to create custom reports. A program manager/data contributions administrator will be needed to provide project update meetings, manage contributor agreements, etc.

FishTracks is being transitioned to run on Amazon Web Services. Storage and space will not be limited. Cost is relatively low. There will also be expanding personnel costs to grow the database to a broader geography. There are a lot of existing large data sets for native species telemetry that could be incorporated to bring all of the data together.

Following the overview, Marybeth gave a demo of the FishTracks telemetry receiver map interface and the FishTracks website.

Discussion:

Do you have any idea how many tagged fish there are in the system? The number of active tags documented in FishTracks can be accessed in the database summary. There are currently 2,897 active tags in the database. There are approximately 900 active tags in the Illinois River and a lot more in the Upper Mississippi River, but a lot of those are HTI tags that are not currently in the database.

The bigger concerns aren't the actual number of tagged fish, but the capacity of the array to support additional tagged fish. This has been worked on a lot in the Illinois River to determine if there are a lot of false detections. There doesn't seem to be a problem, but it comes down to the distribution of tags throughout the system. There are more tags near some receivers than others. We have not seen a problem in the Upper Mississippi River yet either. There is not a limitation within FishTracks to house the data and we do not appear to be at a point in the rivers where we have maxed out the number of tags. We do watch for this by looking for false detections. We also watch our tag codes. Vemco keep track of who puts tags where. That is something that the database can help with.

Minnesota has a lot more native fish tagged than invasive carp. MN DNR would have great interest in seeing the database expanded to include native fish. USGS received positive feedback when the UMR partners were briefed on FishTracks. We have already added in some telemetry data for native species. There is a lot of interest from the USACE Lock and Dam 22 Fish Passage Science Team in using FishTracks to monitor native fish passage for this project. Native fish species tagged for this project are now being included in FishTracks. USACE is interested in using FishTracks for additional NESP Fish Passage projects in the UMR. MN, IA, and MO were all very interested. It is not a problem to incorporate historical data. MDC is currently doing some QA/QC of some of their older data so that it can be included in the database.

Partners in the Missouri River sub-basin have been asking for something similar to this tool. Partner agencies and universities met a couple years ago to discuss telemetry. The biggest need that came from that meeting was the ability to know whose tags are being detected. The partners have considered developing a database as well as partnering with Innovasea (Vemco). There was concern from some partners about putting information into a database. There is interest in this type of tool being made available for the Missouri River sub-basin. The process of getting tag information from Innovasea can take a while. FishTracks provides us with information more quickly and the ability to use the information. Mississippi State University is working on a tag look up tool for the Ohio River and Tennessee-Cumberland rivers sub-basin partnerships. We can wrap these tools together if there is interest. There have been concerns from some

partners from the beginning about providing data to a shared database. The data you provide to FishTracks is your data. No one else can see it without you providing permission. The owners maintain control of their data. There have also been questions about the security and access to Innovasea's cloud-based system. A lot of government agencies cannot use Innovasea's system because it does not comply with OPM or DOI guidance. FishTracks is setup in a system that is fully compliant with DOI data security requirements.

How far along is the development of similar telemetry databases in the other sub-basins? The Missouri River has not developed anything yet, but there is interest in what is being developed outside the sub-basin. Ohio hosts an FTP site for partners to download and share raw receiver data. Kentucky downloads the data, performs QA/QC, and then shares it with USFWS for some of the data analysis. Not sure about storage. The partners in the Lower Mississippi River and Arkansas-Red-White had a similar conversation as the Missouri River partnership. From that conversation, a simple look up tool was developed by the USFWS. It only provides tag numbers and contact information. There has been discussion about how something like that could potentially be of use to FishTracks and there are a lot of elements of FishTracks that would be useful to the partnerships. Providing different options of the toolset to the partners is of interest. So, there is interest in maintaining separate tools? Not necessarily. If the functionality is all in one place, then there is no need for duplication.

USFWS Lower Mississippi River FWCO has been in conversation with Innovasea about the potential of their product incentive program like they offer to GLATOS. Innovasea's VP of Sales was very enthusiastic about having a conversation with the MICRA Executive Board. Potentially, large-scale orders within the Mississippi River Basin could be discounted. They were very excited about seeing how these data are being used on a large-scale within the Basin. FishTracks provides some great examples and provides some nice visualization with things like the receiver array map.

Will Innovasea require project reports or descriptions that document the large-scale scope of the telemetry data? They did at first. The invasive carp reports on the MICRA website satisfied their initial request. We can further demonstrate collaboration and how the data are being synthesized with FishTracks. They understand the extent of collaboration enough to now want to talk with MICRA.

Was this discussion specific to invasive carp? It began as a discussion about invasive carp, but the question was asked about telemetry equipment for native species. They seemed to be open to telemetry within the Mississippi River Basin network, then it is potentially contributing to the larger collaboration throughout the basin. Further

discussion about MICRA discussing a bulk purchasing discount for telemetry equipment with Innovasea was put in the parking lot for further discussion.

Having something like FishTracks to house all the basin's invasive carp movement and passage data could be very important to developing tools like a spatially explicit invasive carp population model for the Mississippi River to support invasive carp management and control efforts. Having access to these data is an important consideration.

What would it take within the sub-basins to start moving towards a basinwide database? Is our next step a large-scale webinar for all partners engaged in telemetry projects in the basin? Identifying what our objectives and management questions are for these data is important. A basinwide webinar would be useful. There have been a number of one-on-one discussions with partners, as well as discussions within some sub-basin partnerships. If there is interest in moving towards a basinwide database, then we likely need a basinwide conversation. There may be some prep needed at the sub-basin level, but discussions about inter-basin coordination necessitates a basinwide discussion. It's a piece of the same conversation that we are planning to have through the ICAC. That is, asking experts to make recommendations based on objectives and the management questions we have. We need to demonstrate or make the case that there is a benefit to everyone that is involved.

If we are just talking about invasive carp, this seems to be perfect for the ICAC to consider. Why is it necessary for the ICAC and sub-basin partnerships to identify common management objectives and the Data and Analysis Workgroup to make recommendations before we move forward with a basinwide discussion about a basinwide tool for storing telemetry data?

Even if all the data were not in one database, having a conversation about the structure of the databases, what information to collect, and the detail you need in that information is important if we ever want to use those data for multi-basin analysis. The data structure conversation is needed at a minimum.

We should make people aware of FishTracks now and to begin utilizing it to reduce redundancy and the potential for people to be duplicating effort in different parts of the basin. This topic is on the radar for the Data and Analysis Workgroup. How to align different telemetry databases will be something that group considers. Travis Harrison is on the workgroup so he will be able to provide FishTracks expertise in those discussions.

A one-page factsheet and/or one-two slides that summarize the key points about FishTracks would be something the sub-basin partnership coordinators can circulate among their partners to provide awareness.

Can we hear more from the Executive Board's perspective on moving forward with a basinwide telemetry data storage tool? There appears to be several groups using several different tools that are working for their needs. The heavy lift may be getting people to convert from whatever system they are using to something new - and value it. From a commonsense perspective, it makes a lot of sense to have all the data in one place. It could be made a requirement in the projects moving forward for collaborators to use the FishTracks system. Researchers in the Great Lakes use GLATOS regularly. It is a powerful tool. It takes a lot of effort to maintain these arrays, no one agency can do it alone. Having everyone on the same page and storing their data in the same place makes a lot of sense. Getting all these data together is as important to getting boots on the ground in some cases. Capacity will be an issue. We can raise awareness of the need for resources for data management. There are a lot of agencies that have collected a lot of data. There is a common need to bring those data together at a basinwide scale. This is a prime example of what a commission can assist with. A commission could fund the increased capacity needed to support FishTracks as a basinwide tool.

It may be useful to consider this from two perspectives: 1) data management and having a common database platform for the basin, and 2) the metadata about the telemetry receivers and data so that the data can be merged even if it is stored in multiple databases.

Next steps:

- ! Gaikowski will work with USGS staff to provide the Executive Board and Invasive Carp Advisory Committee with a factsheet on FishTracks and the potential to expand the database to include telemetry data from other sub-basins and species.
- ! Sub-basin partnership coordinators share the FishTracks factsheet with their partners once it is updated and provided by USGS.
- ! Sub-basin partnership coordinators will discuss the Executive Boards interest in basinwide platforms for data management and analysis with the sub-basin partnerships.
- ! Sub-basin partnership coordinators will work with USGS to schedule a webinar on FishTracks for the sub-basin partnerships.
- ! Sub-basin partnership coordinators follow-up with their partners to determine interest and concerns in a basinwide approach to collecting and storing telemetry data.

6) Congressional Outreach

Discussion Item:

Ashlee Smith will join the Executive Board to discuss on-going Congressional outreach, remaining needs, and opportunities for additional outreach in 2022.

Notes:

The Executive Board discussed the follow-up on MICRA's DC visits and on-going outreach on their recent conference call. Smith asked if there were any specific questions related to Congressional Outreach and recommended the board focus on the Fishery Commission discussion.

Discussion:

Parsons asked Smith if she was still planning to schedule virtual meetings with Democratic offices. Smith followed up with some offices individually because it is sometimes easier and more effective. There is no need to schedule virtual group meetings at this point. The House is out for the entirety of August recess. The Senate will adjourn at the end of this week for the entirety of August recess. Many of the members are focused on and re-election campaigns and the upcoming primaries. We anticipate the members and committees that MICRA targets will look completely different for the next Fly-in in 2023.

7) Fishery Commission Discussion

Decision Item:

The most recent version of the draft legislation to establish the Mississippi River Basin Fisheries Commission provided by Ashlee Smith and shared with the MICRA delegates following the board's July 7th meeting is provided below. The sub-basin representatives will report on comments they received from their sub-basin delegates on the draft legislation. The board will review and finalize the draft legislation considering the input from the MICRA Delegates. The board will then discuss next steps and communication needs with the MICRA Delegates and external partners.

During a discussion about forming a coalition of partners to support the formation of the fishery commission at the board's February 2022 meeting, Smith requested the board reach out to the MICRA delegates to see if there are groups that should be invited to participate in this effort, e.g., Friends of the Mississippi River. Smith is working with national level groups and is not very aware of the local level groups that could help. RAWA has 100s of groups signed on across the country and that is helping to get it across the finish line. The discussion resulted in the following action items that remain to be addressed.

23. Parsons will email delegates to ask about local level partners, for example Friends of the Mississippi River, that should be informed about and asked to support the Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission initiative and coalition.
27. The Executive Board will need to discuss what kind of communication should be provided to the MICRA delegates along with the request for local stakeholders to inform about the fishery commission and coalition.

Notes:

Before discussing next steps, the MICRA members need to all agree with the terms and provisions that have been proposed for the Fishery Commission. She specifically wanted to discuss the need to convey how much the state and federally agencies are collaborating. MICRA has been very effective in communicating how much work is being accomplished through the sub-basin partnerships and how well the states are working together across state lines. MICRA has not been effective in messaging how much (and what) USFWS and USGS do to support the states' efforts in the Basin. Some folks are aware of how much the federal agencies do in the Great Lakes and UMR, but MICRA needs to put together the big picture of how all these agencies work together in the Basin.

Smith said that she has heard mixed messaging on how comfortable the Service is with the idea of a Fishery Commission. She has heard from offices that said they were totally onboard with the Fishery Commission, but then they checked in with Service and heard that the agency is not onboard. It is critical that all the agencies within MICRA are onboard with the concept and are unified in the message.

The draft Act authorizing the Fishery Commission does not include an authorizing amount or a specific authorization time period (i.e., sunset). The sub-basin representatives were previously asked to share the draft legislation with their respective delegates and ask for feedback regarding any specific concerns. The federal employees recused themselves from the discussion about the draft legislation.

Smith reviewed the following notes on next steps for the fishery commission.

The Act itself –

1. Authorization
 - a. Begin building support in Congress
 - b. Secure co-sponsors
 - i. Bipartisan, 2-4 in Senate and 2-4 in House
 - ii. The right committees
 1. House Natural Resources
 2. Senate Environment and Public Works or Energy and Natural Resources
 - c. Additional co-sponsors
 - d. Stand alone or part of package
 - e. How long and for what \$\$?
 - f. Committee path, committee passage
 - g. Floor vote, passage
2. Funding – Appropriations
 - a. Annually – Beginning of the year determination of need
 - b. Pre-Authorization (establishment funding)
 - c. Authorization – Funding the Commission (How much do we need)?
 - i. DC Fly-in
 - ii. Congressional briefings in DC
 - iii. All our regional committees
 - iv. Continual outreach (zoom and in-person)
 - v. Field tours!!

Discussion:

Ben Batten held a virtual meeting with Lower Mississippi River delegates last week. That was the first time that he shared the draft legislation with them. He has not received any feedback yet. Were they aware of this before the call? They are aware of the Fishery Commission initiative in general, but Ben had not requested substantive input before the call. There were no concerns expressed and he expects strong support from the sub-basin.

Frank Fiss sent the current version out to the Tennessee-Cumberland sub-basin delegates. He did not receive any comments. The delegates have seen earlier versions of the draft legislation. He suggested that it will likely have to become more real before the delegates really dig into the details. The draft legislation was also brought up on the last Tennessee Wildlife Federation's Southeast Asian Carp Professionals coordination call. There were a couple Tennessee offices on the call, so they know that it is out there.

Rich Zweifel reported that the Ohio River sub-basin is in about the same place. He sent the draft language to all the ORFMT reps after the last MICRA Executive Board conference call. He talked through it with the ORFMT reps during their call last week and asked them to let him know if they had any specific concerns. Everyone is good with the concept, but he doesn't expect people to dive into the details until it gets more real. Do we expect the current draft to get edited substantially through the legislative process and come out looking different? Maybe, maybe not.

Joe Larscheid reported that he has not heard anything negative from the Upper Mississippi River sub-basin delegates. The fishery commission was proposed in the Joint Strategic Plan as a desired outcome for implementing the plan, but the Directors were not asked to sign off or approve of the fishery commission draft legislation. The delegates were all asked to brief their directors on the fishery commission concept when they discussed the Joint Strategic Plan with them. The Joint Strategic Plan and Fishery Commission were communicated as two separate and distinct steps. The Joint Strategic Plan has been signed by the directors in nearly all MICRA member states so we are now moving forward with draft legislation to authorize a fishery commission that would be charged with implementing the plan.

Kasey Whiteman sent the draft legislation to the delegates in the Missouri River sub-basin. The delegates that he heard back from did not request any edits or changes to the legislative language. Discussions within the Missouri River sub-basin about the Joint Strategic Plan and Fishery Commission have been as part one and part two in a

process. They are well aware that MICRA is moving forward with the fishery commission initiative.

MICRA's intent is that the commission will be stood up with new funding and not be taken out of the Service's existing funding. Specifically, MICRA would prefer to see the funding for the commission go to the Service's Population Assessment account or a new account rather than to the Invasive Carp account. If MICRA is interested in the DOI or Service hosting the fishery commission, then there is some awareness that is needed within the department and agency. The existence of the draft legislation that proposes the Service as the host agency for the proposed commission makes this a good time to begin briefing up within the federal agencies. The agencies will not comment on the draft legislation, but it will provide awareness at higher levels that the state partners are proposing this.

- ! Woldt and Gaikowski will have internal discussions about briefing up within their respective agencies to raise awareness about MICRA, the Fishery Commission initiative, and draft legislation.

Most of the Congressional offices that MICRA has been working with over the past several years are familiar with the fishery commission concept and are expecting this draft language. The first step will be to secure 2-4 bipartisan initial bill co-sponsors from both the House (Natural Resources Committee) and Senate (Environment and Public Works Committee). After that, Ashlee will work to get additional co-sponsors from both chambers. At this point, she will likely need assistance from the sub-basin representatives to recruit delegates from within the sub-basin to participate on calls with Congressional staff. She would like the sub-basin representatives to assist her in setting up calls with the delegates to prep them for the calls with Congressional staff. She will not bring people into calls with Congressional staff without first talking with and preparing them for the discussion. This step will likely happen after January. It is unlikely that there will be a big conservation package that is introduced this calendar year that MICRA can try to tack the fishery commission language on to.

Ashlee was asked about meeting with the new delegates ahead of time to brief them on the fishery commission outreach effort. She proposed meeting with all the delegates since MICRA will be starting to push this initiative. It will be difficult to get all the delegates together at one time, even within the different sub-basins. It might work well to hold a few Zoom meetings to provide the delegates with multiple opportunities to get the information. The basic message to the delegates would be 'this is what's going to happen, we have all the materials, we've got you for these discussions, we just need you to talk about local information and how this will help you and your state'.

- ! The Executive Board will work with Ashlee Smith to schedule a few Zoom meetings for the MICRA Delegates to be briefed on MICRA's fishery commission outreach effort.

It would be very helpful to get updated state AIS factsheets from all MICRA states. They should address all AIS but focus on invasive carp in those states where they are a concern. Each state should focus on their big AIS issues that their members will be interested. This can be discussed with the AIS Committee members when they meet in September. We will want to have new fact sheets before the next DC visits.

- ! The MICRA AIS Committee will be asked to work with Ashlee Smith to develop standardized state fact sheets for MICRA's 2023 Congressional visits.

A decision is needed on the authorization levels that should be included in the draft legislation. There has been some discussion about \$10 million in the first year and what that funding would be used for. One thing that was discussed was to provide immediate pass-through funding to each member state sufficient to hire an additional AIS person. Capacity is major issue in all states. At one point we had the first-year funding down to a few hundred thousand at one point to focus on hiring staff for the commission. Isn't that what the state ANS management plans are supposed to fund? MICRA has talked about funding the state ANS plans at a level sufficient to hire a state ANS coordinator that can focus on implementing the state plan and addressing statewide ANS needs. The difference is the commission funding would provide additional capacity for invasive carp and interjurisdictional fisheries management. There is a growing demand on states to participate in collaborative, multi-agency teams, but there is no capacity for more engagement. This a problem for the states for both invasive carp and interjurisdictional fisheries. The collaborative, interagency management is what the commission is intended to improve and support.

Would the funding be dispersed to the states as a grant to hire these positions or would they be hired by the commission to help the states? The intent is for the funding to be passed through to the states to hire additional staff. But will the commission be able to require the states to use the funding to hire staff to support the commission's work? We might run into the question of why not just ask for a lot more funding through NISAW to increase the amount of funding to states to implement their AIS management plans. The states submit grant requests to the Service that identify specific objectives for the NISAW funding. The Commission could passthrough funding to the states using a similar model for implementing (or in support of) the Joint Strategic Plan. This would

provide a form of agreement with or commitment from each state regarding how they would use the funding.

Do other commissions mandate that member agencies higher dedicated staff? They are all very different in how they operate. The Gulf States Commission enters into a cooperative agreement with NOAA, then the funds are transferred to the commission. The commission transfers the funds to the states through sub-awards. The commission is then responsible for oversight of the sub-awards. The commission also gets additional funding through annual state agency dues of \$22,000. The other commissions already have staff dedicated to work on the issues. There are dedicated people working on coastal fisheries and Great Lakes fisheries. The Mississippi River Basin fishery commission will raise the awareness of the need and increase capacity for managing fisheries in the (Mississippi River) basin. The commission would not mandate member agencies higher staff, but rather it would support the states that are interested in increasing capacity to work on these issues. So, each state would have some flexibility in how they would use these funds? Some, yes.

As we've talked about before, the greatest value of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) is the facilitation role of bring the members together, organizing the structure and process around the management actions and the various research activities. The member agencies already have existing dedicated funding that provides capacity for them to participate in the commission. The GLFC works a lot on communications, something that the board identified as an issue for MICRA yesterday. Planning, organizing, hosting, and documenting multiple meetings requires a lot of time and energy. The GLFC also coordinates the Lake Committees and task teams, similar to the sub-basin structure for the Mississippi River Basin. There is a lot of behind-the-scenes coordination that goes into supporting all these groups and enabling the management to happen.

One recommendation regarding the draft language is to change the requirement for a biennial Report to Congress (Section 12) from being due within 60 days to 180 days after the beginning of each regular session of Congress. Reporting once every three or five years would be even better.

Do you anticipate any of the funding during the first two years to be used for project work? Yes, there would probably be additional project needs if people knew there was more money available. There is more invasive carp work needed than there is funding available. With the additional capacity provided through the commission, it would allow for additional projects to be implemented. Deterrents alone will potentially be a large project funding need. Would more funding to the commission for project work allow the

Service to dole out less of the agency's base funding in state grants and increase their invasive carp work? There is much greater need for invasive carp and interjurisdictional fisheries than \$10 million. Aside from river restoration projects, are deterrents the biggest ticket items we have? They are roughly \$10 million each to purchase and install. How many barriers would the states want over the next 5 years. The commission would not want to commit to a specific number of barriers in a specific amount of time because there are parts of that process that are outside the commission's control. Deterrents are dependent on USACE process. We may only be able to get two barriers in 5 years.

The Wildlife Forever proposal requested \$25 million to increase removal within just the upper part of the basin. We may not have enough commercial fishers or processors to take advantage of that level of funding, but there is certainly a need for more capacity, and, if properly incentivized, the opportunity to remove a lot more invasive carp than we currently have funding for.

Once the Commission is authorized, it will still need to be funded. Smith recommended starting with a bigger number and attempting to get the appropriations authorized for a longer period of time. We do not want to be dependent upon a reauthorization every two years like WRDA. A 5–10-year authorization would be much better which is why you need to start with a larger appropriations request.

We need to discuss MICRA's 2023 DC fly-in and plan for another Congressional briefing. There are still a lot of Democratic staff that are teleworking and not back to working out of their offices. We may want to consider scheduling a briefing before the end of the year, sometime following the election. We expect more turnover in the House than in the Senate. There are members that are not up for re-election that we can work with to secure a room for us and sponsor the briefing. Coalition partners would likely be very interested in helping with this. This would create a couple of touch points with the offices and help keep this on their minds.

An in-person briefing? Yes. How many representatives would you be wanting to attend? Last time we had one person from each federal partner (i.e., USGS, USFWS, and USACE), an NGO, and two MICRA representatives. Videos, sub-basin representative, or maps are helpful. We might want to consider including an NGO like NWF or ASA. Are there any GLRI briefings scheduled for this fall? They used to regularly hold Spring and Fall GLRI briefings but that stopped with COVID. There is not a GLRI briefing planned at this point.

Coalition

Ashlee suggested that it is time to formalize a coalition to support the Fishery Commission initiative. She recommended developing a 'carp coalition' and have the commission as one of the tasks the coalition works on. Will the coalition's purpose be the same regardless of what it is called? Yes. Keep in mind that you may want to continue the coalition after the commission is authorized. Calling it a carp coalition sounds bigger than a coalition built around a single piece of legislation. The challenge is we want everyone to have the broader view of the commission than only invasive carp. You could call it the 'Mississippi River Basin Fisheries Coalition'. Is this coalition going to be based on the need for ecosystem integrity? That would provide the opportunity to touch on all these things. Is there any advantage to having 'carp' in the name? Sort of, I think. I prefer not to have 'carp' in the name, but it may be necessary to draw people in. Is there a big fisheries coalition already that you can call on? No. This can also be discussed within a coalition meeting. They may have very specific interests that they are willing to work on. What about a very general name and then identify specific purposes under the name? For example, Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission, invasive carp, sustainable recreational fisheries, etc.

Smith requested the Executive Board members give some consideration to a name for the coalition. It was noted that there is already a "CARP" coalition related to cannabis.

There is a core group of NGOs that have already agreed to participate in the coalition, but more members are needed. Ashlee shared the following list of organizations that have indicated preliminary support or interest.

Coalition Support:

American Sportfishing Association
 B.A.S.S.
 Marine Retailers Association of the Americas
 National Wildlife Federation
 The Nature Conservancy
 National Marine Manufacturers Association
 Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation
 American Fisheries Society

Preliminary Discussions with Support:

Delta Council and Delta Wildlife
 The Wildlife Society
 Wildlife Mississippi

Prospects:

Friends of the Mississippi River
Mississippi River Network

The board members added several additional prospects that could be approached to support the coalition.

Additional Prospects:

Wildlife Forever
World Fish Migration Foundation
Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society
America's Watershed Initiative
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
Audubon Society (was active in the UMR) – some Audubon Societies are local
Isaac Walton League
NWF chapters
Trout Unlimited (WI and MN feed into MS)
Ducks Unlimited (pushing Grass Carp in Lake Erie and Reelfoot Lake)
Upper Mississippi River Basin Association
American Rivers
Wild Rivers Conservancy
American Waterways Operators
Consortium of Aquatic Science Societies

- American Fisheries Society
- Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography
- Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation
- Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society
- International Association for Great Lakes Research
- North American Lake Management Society
- Phycological Society of America
- Society for Freshwater Science
- Society of Wetland Scientists

- ! Executive Board members were requested to provide Smith with additional recommendations for regional and local organizations that she might want to contact regarding the coalition.

In addition to agreeing on a name for the coalition and securing more members, there are several details that need to be worked out regarding how organizations become formal members of the coalition. For example, are there membership dues, developing

a charter document, and potentially developing a Pledge of Support. Smith recommended a less formal coalition with a mission statement, but not something formal that members are requested to sign. There may be some groups that just want to work on the fishery commission and others that are only interested in invasive carp. The primary mission at this point is the authorization of a fishery commission.

Smith reviewed coordination needs for the coalition.

- Regular calls/meetings
- Coordinated Congressional outreach (Fly-ins and regular DC member/staff visits)
 - Coalition members participate in MICRA fly-in
 - May consider an entire coalition fly-in later in the year
- Coordinated state outreach (Governors, Mayors, Commissioners, Voters)
 - MRCTI is getting so much traction in large part because so many mayors have signed on
- Sign-on letters

Public support considerations:

- Press
 - Op-eds and articles across the basin
- Social media (create specific hash tags and a campaign)
 - Acknowledge and thank sponsors MRBFC and ask for more
 - Ask partners to send action alerts to call members to support, sign-on, vote at various points during the process.
- Listening sessions and Town Halls with members and local officials

This will be a fluid process. We may or may not need this level of an outreach campaign.

- ! Smith will begin working with the existing coalition members to begin working on a charter that addresses how to become a coalition member, Pledge of Support, dues, etc.

Smith was asked if she feels like MICRA has enough Congressional members supporting the commission? There is strong support on the Senate side. Senator Boseman (AR) is at the top of the list of members to request to sponsor the authorizing legislation. Wicker (MS) and Duckworth (IL) are also at the top of the list of Senators. Blunt (MO) and Shelby (AL) have been good supporters, but they are on their way out. Support from McConnell (KY) would be fantastic. There are some less senior Senators that are supportive, but they are not targets for primary bill sponsors. She will target members in specific committees (see above). We will want to get members or their staff out in the field. Smith would like to send a list of key members that MICRA should target

to the respective sub-basin representatives and/or MICRA delegates with a request for them to let her know when they would be available to go out in the field during local sampling events with Congressional staff to discuss the fishery commission, particularly during the August recess. Smith needs the delegates/sub-basin representatives to give her a few dates that they are available, and she can then pass those dates on to the staffers to try and coordinate a field visit. It is not important what field work the staffers see, the goal is just to get them in the field to make a connection with them so that when they have questions about fish issues, they will think to reach out to their fish chief. For example, Tennessee staffers reach out to Fiss all the time.

Smith will be stepping down as the Executive Director of the Mississippi Wildlife Federation later this year and will have a lot more time to help MICRA prepare for their 2023 fly-in. She will need board members or other MICRA delegates to be available for briefings, the DC fly-in, and occasionally getting staffers out in the field.

- ! Smith will reach out to MICRA delegates regarding potential field visits for Congressional staff during the August recess.
- ! Sub-basin representatives will email Smith with a few days of availability in August to go in the field with Congressional staff.
- ! Parsons will email delegates to ask about local level partners, for example Friends of the Mississippi River, that should be informed about and asked to support the Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission initiative and partnership coalition.

Related to the proposed Fishery Commission and the interaction with the legislative people in DC, is there any need for the sub-basin representatives to raise awareness with their delegates that there maybe questions coming back to the states from the legislative offices? There's a chance that members might call and ask agency directors about the commission. Most states have signed the Joint Strategic Plan, but a reminder to let them know that the Executive Board is working on the Commission from the DC side would be prudent. Calls could also be made to the Governor's office and not the Directors. Smith suggested that briefing agency directors should be adequate at this time. The biggest concern is that agency administrators and state administrations are not blind-sided by calls from Congressional staff.

- ! Parsons will ask MICRA Delegates to brief new agency directors on the MICRA Fishery Commission initiative and to keep existing agency directors informed of progress and status of the commission.

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117 CONGRESS 2ND SESSION

S. _____



AN ACT

To establish the Mississippi River Basin Fisheries Commission,
and for other purposes.

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS**

2 (a) SHORT TITLE. – This Act may be cited as the “Mississippi River Basin
3 Fisheries Commission Act”.

4 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS. -The Table of Contents for this Act is as follows:

5 Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents

6 Sec. 2. Definitions.

7 Sec. 3. Mississippi River Basin Fisheries Commission.

8 Sec. 4. Interjurisdictional Multi-Agency Management.

9 Sec. 5. Effective Date.

10 Sec. 6. Commission Governance.

11 Sec. 7. Commission Duties.

12 Sec. 8. Department of the Interior.

13 Sec. 9. Federal Partners.

14 Sec. 10. Nonbinding Authority.

15 Sec. 11. Renunciation.

16 Sec. 12. Report to Congress.

17

18 **SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS**

19 In this Act:

20 (1) AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES. – Aquatic invasive species are species that
21 are not native to an ecosystem and whose introduction causes or is likely
22 to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. They
23 can be disease, parasite, plant or animal. The term aquatic nuisance
24 species and aquatic invasive species are often used interchangeably and
25 generally have the same accepted meaning.

26 (2) DIRECTOR OF FISHERIES. – The term “director of fisheries” is used here
27 generally to describe the highest designated officer in charge of fisheries
28 management employed by each state wildlife agency in each member
29 state in the commission. Each state wildlife agency has a different title
30 for their primary fisheries manager, and in this act, the term “director of
31 fisheries” is used to describe that position regardless of actual formal title

1 of the officer in each state. This position has the scientific training,
 2 experience and knowledge to help guide the commission in its duties as
 3 that state’s delegate.

4 (3) FISHERY RESOURCE. – The term “fishery resource” means finfish,
 5 mollusks, crustaceans, and any other form of marine animal or plant life,
 6 other than marine mammals or birds.

7 (4) INTERJURISDICTIONAL FISHERY RESOURCE. – The term “interjurisdictional
 8 fishery resource” means –

9 (a) A fishery resource for which a fishery occurs in waters under the
 10 jurisdiction of one of more States;

11 (b) A fishery resource for which there exists an interstate fishery
 12 management plan; or

13 (c) A fishery resource which migrates between the waters under the
 14 jurisdiction of two or more States within the Mississippi River Basin.

15 (5) INVASIVE CARP. – Invasive carp are aquatic invasive finfish that
 16 originated from Europe and Asia. The bighead carp, black carp, grass
 17 carp and silver carp spread quickly once they are established in a body of
 18 water or waterway, and cause serious damage to the native fish
 19 populations, as well as economic and physical harm to humans.

20 **SECTION 3. MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN FISHERIES COMMISSION**

21 (a) PURPOSE.- To effectuate the improved management and utilization of the
 22 interjurisdictional fisheries resources of the Mississippi River Basin
 23 through the creation of the Mississippi River Basin Fisheries
 24 Commission responsible for cooperative fisheries management, aquatic
 25 invasive species (such as invasive carps) management and control, and
 26 associated research.

27 (b) JUSTIFICATION. –

1 (1) Management of the inland fishery resources of the Mississippi River
2 Basin are shared by 31 states, multiple federal agencies, and 2
3 Canadian provinces. The basin supports economically and culturally
4 significant subsistence, commercial, and recreational fisheries.
5 Economic output from recreational fishing in the basin in 2011
6 exceeded \$19 billion (USFWS unpublished data). States within the
7 Mississippi River Basin have formed multiple regional interstate
8 partnerships, and one basin-wide partnership, to promote cooperation
9 and communication among the conservation agencies to manage the
10 interjurisdictional fishery resources of the basin. Twenty-eight
11 Mississippi River Basin state fishery agencies and the U.S. Fish and
12 Wildlife Service (USFWS) ratified the Mississippi Interstate
13 Cooperative Resource Agreement in 1990 and formed the Mississippi
14 Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA) in 1991 to
15 improve the management of interjurisdictional fishery resources in the
16 basin. Despite the economic, ecologic, and social importance of
17 fishery resources in the Mississippi River Basin, and the complexity
18 of managing sustainable fisheries with the multiplicity of resource
19 management authorities, there are no federally recognized interstate
20 compacts or federal legislation to guide or facilitate cooperative
21 fisheries management for the entirety of the basin.

22 (2) Recognizing the economic, ecologic, and cultural value of the diverse
23 interjurisdictional fishery resources in the Mississippi River Basin and
24 the complexity and severity of issues facing resource management
25 agencies, Congress and the MICRA member agencies acknowledge
26 the need for the establishment of a Mississippi River Basin Fishery
27 Commission for basin-wide, inter-agency collaboration in the

1 establishment of shared management objectives, and the collaborative
2 planning, implementation, and evaluation of management actions to
3 provide for the long-term biologic and economic sustainability of
4 interjurisdictional fishery resources in the basin. To accomplish this
5 level of cooperative, inter-agency management, formal state and
6 federal agency commitments are necessary from each management
7 authority in the basin, as well as long-term, stable funding to support
8 coordination, implementation, and evaluation of management actions
9 and associated research.

10 (3) Recognizing that the development of ‘*A Joint Strategic Plan for*
11 *Management of Great Lakes Fisheries*’ (GLFC 2007) was paramount
12 to the Great Lakes Fishery Commission’s success over the last four
13 decades, the MICRA member agencies have developed ‘*A Joint*
14 *Strategic Plan for Management of Mississippi River Basin Fisheries*’
15 to provide a more coordinated and structured approach for
16 cooperative, inter-agency management of interjurisdictional fishery
17 resources in the basin than is currently realized through the MICRA
18 partnership.

19 (4) By consent of Congress, and as directed by national law (i.e.,
20 Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act),
21 sustainable marine fisheries within the U.S. coastal waters of the
22 Pacific, Atlantic, and Caribbean Oceans, and the Gulf of Mexico, have
23 been managed by multi-state commissions and fishery councils for
24 many decades. The interjurisdictional and international fishery
25 resources of the Great Lakes are cooperatively managed by the Great
26 Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC), operating through the 1954
27 Convention on Great Lake Fisheries. The Mississippi River Basin

1 covers approximately 41% of the interior United States, with rivers
2 draining all or part of 31 states and 2 Canadian provinces. The
3 Mississippi River Basin is the largest in the nation and one of the most
4 valued ecosystems in the world. There are more than 90 tributary
5 rivers and fish species within the basin that come under the
6 management of two or more governmental entities and are considered
7 “interjurisdictional” resources.

8 **SECTION 4. INTERJURISDICTIONAL MULTI-AGENCY** 9 **MANAGEMENT**

10 (a) The commission will improve the management and utilization of
11 sustainable interjurisdictional fisheries resources in the Mississippi
12 River Basin through the development of a multi-agency program for the
13 joint management and protection of such fisheries. Long-term
14 sustainability of interjurisdictional fishery resources is dependent on the
15 control of aquatic invasive species within the basin, therefore it is the
16 further purpose of this commission to provide for coordinated, inter-
17 agency, basin-wide management, control, and removal of invasive carps
18 and other prioritized aquatic invasive species within the Mississippi
19 River Basin.

20 **SECTION 5. EFFECTIVE DATE**

21 (a) This agreement shall become operative immediately as to those entities
22 executing it whenever any two or more of the States with fisheries
23 management jurisdiction within the interjurisdictional waters of the
24 Mississippi River Basin have executed it in the form that is in accordance
25 with the laws of the executing state and the Congress has given its
26 consent. Subsequent to the formation of the Commission, any state or
27 tribal authority with fisheries management jurisdiction within the

1 interjurisdictional waters of the Mississippi River Basin, or Federal
2 agency or Federally chartered entity that manages and regulates
3 Mississippi River Basin resources may become a party hereto upon
4 receipt of written request and approval of said request by a two-thirds
5 majority of the current members.

6 **SECTION 6. COMMISSION GOVERNANCE**

7 (a) Each state, federal agency, entity, and tribe joining herein shall appoint
8 its state's director of fisheries or equivalent as delegate to represent that
9 member's interests to the Commission hereby constituted and designated
10 as the Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission. The Commission
11 shall be a body corporate with the powers and duties set forth herein. The
12 member entities will establish a governance structure following
13 formation of the Commission.

14 (b) The Commission shall elect from its number a Chair and a Vice Chair
15 and shall appoint, at its pleasure, remove, or discharge such officers and
16 employees as may be required to carry the provisions of this agreement
17 into effect, and shall fix and determine their duties, qualifications, and
18 compensation. Said Commission shall adopt rules and regulations for the
19 conduct of its business. It may establish and maintain one or more
20 offices for the transaction of its business and may meet at any time or
21 place but must meet at least once a year.

22 (c) No recommendation or action shall be taken by the Commission in
23 regard to its general affairs except by the affirmative vote of a majority of
24 the whole number of member entities.

25 (d) The Commission shall strive for unanimity in its decisions but will
26 operate by consensus in its decision making.
27

SECTION 7. COMMISSION DUTIES

(a) The duty of the Commission shall be to establish shared management objectives, and to collaboratively plan, implement, and evaluate management actions to provide for the long-term biologic and economic sustainability of interjurisdictional fisheries in the basin. The Commission shall make inquiry and ascertain from time to time such methods, practices, circumstances, and conditions as may be disclosed for bringing about the conservation and/or sustainable management of interjurisdictional fisheries. Further, the Commission shall be responsible for developing and coordinating inter-agency and inter-basin strategies to prevent the introduction and control the abundance and spread of invasive carps and other prioritized aquatic invasive species of the Mississippi River Basin.

(b) The Commission shall draft and recommend to the appropriate management agencies strategies and approaches for dealing with the conservation of interjurisdictional fisheries and the management and control of aquatic invasive species within the Mississippi River Basin.

(c) The Commission shall consult with and advise the pertinent administrative agencies in the member entities party hereto with regard to problems connected with the fisheries and recommend the adoption of such regulations as it deems advisable.

SECTION 8. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

(a) The Commission shall be hosted and funded by the Department of Interior, in accordance with annual appropriations from Congress.

SECTION 9. FEDERAL PARTERS

(a) The United States Geological Survey (USGS) shall act as the primary federal research agency partner of the Mississippi River Basin Fishery

1 Commission, cooperating with the research agencies in each state for that
2 purpose. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) shall act
3 as the primary federal partner engaged in field work with the Mississippi
4 River Basin Fishery Commission, cooperating with the state wildlife
5 agencies and their biologists in each state carrying out fisheries
6 management and aquatic invasive species prevention and control.
7 Representatives of the USGS, USFWS, USACE, and TVA shall attend
8 the meetings of the Commission and have liaison roles to integrate other
9 federal agencies when authorities or jurisdiction warrant the involvement
10 of other relevant federal agencies. The federal agencies will further liaise
11 with relevant academic and NGO partners as needed to advance fisheries
12 management and aquatic invasive species prevention and control
13 priorities of the commission.

14 **SECTION 10. NONBINDNG AUTHORITY**

15 (a) Nothing in this Act shall be construed to limit the powers of any
16 signatory state or to repeal or prevent the enactment of any legislation or
17 the enforcement of any requirement by any signatory state imposing
18 additional conditions and restrictions to conserve its fisheries.

19 **SECTION 11. RENUNCIATION**

20 (a) This agreement shall continue in force upon each member entity unless
21 renounced by it. Renunciation of this agreement must be preceded by
22 sending six months' notice in writing of intention to withdraw from the
23 Commission to the other member entities hereto.

24 **SECTION 12. REPORT TO CONGRESS**

25 (a) The Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission constituted by the
26 agreement shall make a biennial report to Congress not later than sixty
27 days after the beginning of each regular session thereof. Such report

- 1 shall set forth the activities of the Commission during the two calendar
- 2 years ending immediately prior to the beginning of such session.

8) Joint Strategic Plan Implementation

Discussion Item:

Twenty-four of the twenty-eight MICRA member states have signed the Joint Strategic Plan Memorandum of Acceptance (MOA). Kasey Whiteman was informed in July that Nebraska's new Director has indicated they are willing to sign on the MOA. The remaining three states are Colorado, Montana, and Wyoming. The Colorado and Montana delegates indicated in October 2021 that the MOA is in their Directors' offices awaiting signature. Wyoming has not responded to emails or phone calls.

The final Joint Strategic Plan was provided to the MICRA Delegates in February 2021 with a request to seek their director's signature on the MOA. The board communicated the expectation that the Joint Strategic Plan would be used to guide MICRA into the future regardless of what happens with the Fishery Commission initiative. Most states have signed the Memorandum of Agreement. There has been no follow-up communication with the delegates regarding next steps to implement the Joint Strategic Plan since it was provided to them as final in February 2021.

During the board's February 2022 meeting, there was a brief discussion about implementing the Joint Strategic Plan but there was not adequate time to address this topic. The discussion resulted in the following action item:

9. An Executive Board call will be needed after the DC fly-in (mid to late March) so the board members can be updated on the DC fly-in and have a focused discussion on Joint Strategic Plan next steps for implementation.

Joint Strategic Plan implementation was briefly discussed again during the board's July 2022 conference call. The discussion resulted in the following action item:

8. The Executive Board will discuss implementation of the Joint Strategic Plan during the August Executive Board meeting and consider an assessment of on-going joint state projects as an initial step.

The board members will discuss next steps to implement the Joint Strategic Plan and communications with the MICRA delegates.

Notes:

- ! Parsons will contact Dirk Miller, Deputy Chief of Fisheries, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, regarding the MICRA Joint Strategic Plan.

- ! Parsons will follow-up with Montana, Nebraska, and Colorado regarding status of their director's signing the MICRA Joint Strategic Plan Memorandum of Agreement.

We should consider Joint Strategic Plan implementation in conjunction with the next 5-year priorities document. The board should start putting together some examples of things that MICRA is currently working on and additional things that MICRA would like to work on. We are currently working on a basinwide Paddlefish management framework. Should we also consider a basinwide management framework for Lake Sturgeon and other interjurisdictional species? Identifying some concrete steps would be helpful. Another example is expanding FishTracks for invasive carp in the Illinois River to the remainder of the basin and possibly other interjurisdictional fish.

Part of the communication out to the MICRA Delegates along with the Priorities Document could be that the Executive Board is considering Joint Strategic Plan implementation and will be building that into the 2024-2028 priorities document. Some communication with the delegates regarding the Joint Strategic Plan would be useful so that they know the board is working on implementation.

Fiss stated that he expected implementation to come once MICRA received funding for the commission. He doesn't see MICRA implementing those things other than how the MICRA members would anyway within our own agencies. Agencies could adopt philosophies from the Joint Strategic Plan, but the MICRA Delegates would not be implementing on a project basis until there is funding. Until the commission is authorized, we can only look at how the Joint Strategic Plan can be implemented in the absence of additional funding.

- ! Executive Board members should review the Joint Strategic Plan ahead of the board's next meeting and discussions about the 2024-2028 priorities document.

9) Chairman's Report

The chairman will provide a report on his activities since the board's February meeting.

A letter drafted by the Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee Commercial Harvest States Workgroup was sent to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Scientific Authority requesting a summary of paddlefish information annually requested from the states (see below). The information will be used for the summary report the Workgroup is drafting.

Ben Batten provided a thank you letter on MICRA letterhead and the ornamental fly to Rob Finley on behalf of MICRA in appreciation for hosting the board's February meeting at Cranor's White River Lodge.

Notes:

In the interest of time, Parsons let his update stand as provided in the briefing book.



April 6, 2022

Mr. Jon Siemien
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
International Affairs
5275 Leesburg Pike, MS: IA
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

Dear Mr. Siemien,

Annually (since at least 2017), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Scientific Authority has requested information about state regulation of paddlefish fisheries and the sustainability of the species to make a non-detriment finding associated with the export of paddlefish products. An example of this *annual request* to the state of Missouri is attached.

The Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association's (MICRA) Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee is drafting interstate management recommendations for inter-jurisdictional paddlefish fisheries. We are requesting the following information to inform and guide these recommendations:

1. A summary of responses, and/or the states' responses themselves, received by USFWS-DSA from each state that receives an *annual request* and for all years the *annual request* has been made.
2. A summary of or data on the amount/type/origin/destination/etc. of paddlefish products being exported and imported for all years the *annual request* has been made.

MICRA requests this same information be provided annually for the committee's use as long as USFWS-DSA continues to request this information from the states. The annual summaries or compilation of this information will be very helpful for informing the committee's continued efforts to coordinate management of sustainable paddlefish fisheries in the Mississippi River Basin.

Please contact me at micra@micrarivers.org and Ryan Hupfeld (MICRA Paddlefish & Sturgeon Committee Chair) at ryan.hupfeld@dnr.iowa.gov if you have questions or concerns regarding this request.

Thank you for your assistance.

Bradford Parsons

Digitally signed by Bradford
Parsons
Date: 2022.04.07 10:47:51 -05'00'

Brad Parsons
MICRA Chairman

Cc: Rosemarie Gnam
Cc: Deb Hahn
Cc: Greg Conover
Cc: Ryan Hupfeld
Cc: Joe McMullen



April 21, 2022

Rob Finley
Cranor's White River Lodge
806 County Road 703
Cotter, AR 72626

Dear Rob,

On behalf of the MICRA Executive Board, I would like to thank you and your staff for hosting our meeting at Cranor's White River Lodge. As a partnership of 28 Mississippi River Basin state fish and game agencies, the MICRA Executive Board holds annual meetings around the basin to provide opportunities for MICRA board members to experience other parts of the basin.

Your facility provided an outstanding venue for our meeting and the board members enjoyed their time immensely. The food was outstanding, the fishing was top notch, and the lodge and accommodations were excellent. The settings facilitated a lot of great work and important conversations that will help move conservation forward in the basin. Your hospitality helped cement Arkansas with this group in a way that really means a lot. Thank you for being such a great ambassador.

On behalf of MICRA, we appreciate your contribution as well as that of Donald Cranor, Tim Chaney, and your entire staff. We all look forward to our next visit to Cranor's!

Sincerely,

Ben Batten
MICRA Executive Board Member

10) Coordinator's Report

Financial

- Accountant, bank, and coordinator financial records all reconcile as of 6/30/2022
 - 6/30/2022 balance = \$240,988.08
 - MRBP = \$51,355
 - MICRA = \$189,633

- Status of 2022 membership dues
 - Dues invoices were mailed out February 28, 2022
 - 2nd notice/July invoices were mailed out July 8, 2022
 - MDC provided \$5,000 additional dues for policy coordination
 - Dues received from 22 states and 1 federal agency
 - USGS has initiated payment of 2022 dues
 - All states except North Carolina and Wyoming have indicated they will pay 2022 dues

- MRBP funding
 - FY22 FWS funding for MRBP awarded 5/20/2022
 - Funding level remained at \$50,000
 - MICRA receives \$4,500 for indirect cost
 - Funds are invoiced for reimbursement and are not included in the MRBP balance above

Membership

Doug Nygren has retired from the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks. Bryan Sowards is the new Fisheries Division Director. A welcome email was sent to Bryan welcoming him as the MICRA Delegate for Kansas and introducing him to the Missouri sub-basin representative and MICRA Chairman. As decided at the board's February 2022 meeting, Bryan was provided the MICRA website address and several key MICRA documents including the partnership's Constitution and By-laws, 2019-2023 priorities document, Joint Strategic Plan, and the current partnership directory.

Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee / Commercial Harvest States Workgroup

Conover has been working with the Commercial Harvest State Workgroup to address action items from the board's February 2022 meeting. More information on the requested draft report will be provided during the Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee update.

Watts Barr Deterrence Correspondence

MICRA sent a letter on behalf of the Tennessee River sub-basin delegates to Roane County Commissioner, Ron Berry, in January 2022 regarding, deterrents for invasive carp at Watts' Bar Lock on the Tennessee River. A response was sent to Brian Schoenung, MICRA Chairman at the time, by Dr. Joseph representing the Watts Bar Ecology and Fishery Council. This letter and Dr. Joseph's response were discussed at the board's February meeting. Based on the experience of Tennessee and others, the board agreed that MICRA should not respond to Dr. Joseph and enter an endless debate.

Dr. Joseph sent a second email to Brian requesting a response days after the board's February 2022 meeting. As discussed, MICRA did not respond to this second email from Dr. Joseph.

In mid-May, Conover was contacted by a few delegates inquiring about an email they and some members of their staff had received from Dr. Joseph. Brad forwarded the e-mail received by Brian Canaday and the letter sent by MICRA to Mr. Berry in January 2022 to the MICRA delegates along with an email providing context. Several delegates replied that they simply forwarded the MICRA letter to Dr. Joseph or would not respond.

TWRA sent a letter from the agency's Executive Director to Dr. Joseph in June specifically addressing six questions. There has been no further correspondence from Dr. Joseph or the Watts Bar Ecology and Fishery Council to MICRA or MICRA member agency staff that I am aware of.

Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) AIS Stakeholder Group (CAWS Group)

One of MICRA's priorities under the Objective to coordinate prevention and control measures for AIS is to "support efforts to prevent the exchange of AIS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins." MICRA's activities to address this priority have included:

- Submitting comment letters to USACE regarding the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) and the resulting Brandon Road Lock and Dam project.
- Including discussions about GLMRIS, the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project, and the need for funding and direction to the USACE to initiate the scoping phase for a feasibility study to prevent two-way transfer of AIS through the CAWS.
- Active participation in the Chicago Area Waterway System Advisory Committee, later renamed the AIS Stakeholder Group, to represent Mississippi River Basin interests in a diverse stakeholder group collaboratively working to reach

consensus on a set of recommendations to elected and appointed local, state, and federal officials and the public on short and long-term measures to prevent invasive carp and other AIS from moving between the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins through the CAWS.

The CAWS-AIS Group Stakeholders received an email regarding the future of the group on July 22, 2022. The letter is of particular interest to MICRA as it essentially marks the end of the stakeholder group while recognizing continued progress on the issue of stopping invasive carp from moving upriver into the Great Lakes (i.e., Brand Road Interbasin Project) and identifying the issue of two-way AIS transfer (i.e., downriver from the Great Lakes into the Mississippi River Basin) remains unaddressed. See excerpt below and full letter on following pages (highlight added to text).

“Of the seven criteria in the Group’s January 25, 2016 letter to the President regarding GLMRIS recommendations for the Chicago Area Waterway System, six have been or will continue to be addressed through the above actions. The remaining recommendation, to prevent two-way interbasin transfer of invasive species, remains unaddressed. In October of 2020, at the recommendation of a two-way transfer working group, the Group submitted a letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works requesting that ongoing study of solutions to the transfer of species south into the Mississippi River Basin issue be funded through update of the GLMRIS.”

Notes:

Conover highlighted the notes in his written report regarding the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) AIS Stakeholder Group (CAWS Group). Of particular interest to the board, is the news that the group will no longer continue to work on the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) charge of addressing two-way interbasin transfer of invasive species. This issue has been a priority for MICRA dating back before invasive carp and the GLMRIS study.

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Mail Basic CAWS Group Administrative Support Contract Printout

Candice Eklund <ceklund@nirpc.org>

7/22/2022 3:00 PM

CAWS Group Administrative Support Contract

Dear CAWS-AIS Group Stakeholders;

Since 2014, the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Stakeholder Group (CAWS Group) has been an important forum for exchange of ideas with the federal and state agencies to preventing the spread of invasive carp and other invasive species between the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins. The organizations in the CAWS Group provided invaluable input to the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) and has helped further understanding between the many users and parties invested in the complex CAWS as well as proponents of ecosystem health. One of the major successes of this group was reaching consensus on seven criteria that long-term AIS solutions in the CAWS should meet. The Brandon Road Interbasin Project, currently in the Planning Engineering and Design stage, combined with ongoing nonstructural control measures such as carp harvesting downstream, address most of the recommendations and concerns of this group.

At this time, many of the tasks initially identified by the CAWS-AIS Group for the groups contracted administrator are now being successfully handled by others.

- Planning, engineering, and design (PED) of the Brandon Road Interbasin Project is underway. A website, quarterly webinar, and newsletter is being provided by the Illinois DNR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. These actions are intended to keep stakeholders up to date on all aspects of the project including engineering, deterrent technology research, schedules, and financing. Two hundred twenty-six (\$226) million dollars in New Start Construction Funding for the Brandon Road project was allocated as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.
- The Great Lakes States and Provinces Forum continues to work together to help ensure successful implementation of the Brandon Road project. This includes recent requests for 100% federal funding.
- The Invasive Carp Regional Coordinating Committee (ICRC) continues to work with the CAWS Technical and Policy committee to coordinate and support invasive carp deterrent technology research, population monitoring, and harvesting.

Of the seven criteria in the Group's January 25, 2016 letter to the President regarding GLMRIS recommendations for the Chicago Area Waterway system, six have been or will continue to be addressed through the above actions. The remaining recommendation, to prevent two-way interbasin transfer of invasive species, remains unaddressed. In October of 2020, at the recommendation of a two-way transfer working group, the Group submitted a letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works requesting that ongoing study of solutions to the transfer of species south into the Mississippi Basin issue be funded through update of the GLMRIS.

In November of 2021, the CAWS Group Steering Committee elected to discontinue regularly scheduled calls, but suggested that NIRPC might provide support for the Tech and Policy Committee. The COVID 19 Pandemic continues to show that in-person meetings, one of the core deliverables of the administration contractor, are not necessary, cost-effective, or even desired by participants in the CAWS Group.

As a result of all these factors, NIRPC, as the project administrator, has elected not to request additional funding for this work in Federal Fiscal Year 2022 and has recommended financial support for this administrative function be discontinued. NIRPC will complete the current contract by supporting a virtual fall Technical and Policy Committee Meeting. All CAWS Group members will, as always, be encouraged to participate in this committee meeting to receive updates on research and agency activities.

https://email.ionos.com/appsuite/hv=7.10.6-14.20220707.080462/print.html?prinl_1658954471453

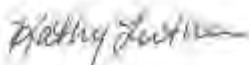
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Mail Basic CAWS Group Administrative Support Contract Printout

NIRPC will provide all members with instructions on how to subscribe to the Brandon Road Project Newsletter and Webinar distribution lists. If there are other recommendations on procedures for sunsetting this administrative support contract, please contact Kathy Luther, kluther@nirpc.org or (219) 254-2513. Be advised that Kathy will be on vacation the last week in July and unable to respond until she returns the first week in August.

Sincerely,



Kathy Luther

CANDICE EKLUND | EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
NORTHWESTERN INDIANA REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
(219) 254-2501 | CEKLUND@NIRPC.ORG | WWW.NIRPC.ORG

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11) Sub-basin and Federal Entity Updates

Information:

The board decided in August 2021 that sub-basin representatives will contact their respective delegates prior to future Executive Board meetings to ask if they have any interjurisdictional fishery management concerns or emerging issues that they would like to discuss with the board or request the board to address. This time will be used for sub-basin representatives to discuss items brought forward from their respective sub-basins. The Federal entity members will also use this time to provide any relevant updates or topics to the board for consideration.

Notes:

No sub-basin representatives received any interjurisdictional fishery management concerns or emerging issues from their delegates for discussion or consideration by the Executive Board.

Aaron Woldt informed the board members that on August 9th, from 1:00-4:00 pm Central, the USFWS will host a forum looking at existing and potential future uses of commercially harvested invasive carp. USFWS, in partnership with a few state agencies, were planning for an in-person meeting in Chicago; however, due to COVID-19 levels, the forum will now be on-line only. DOI was directed by Congress in the FY2022 Appropriations Bill to host this forum and USFWS was assigned the task. A third-party contractor, Tetrattech, will facilitate the forum. The forum is expected to initiate a much larger discussion on this topic. Invites should be going out today and can be forwarded to industry and agency partners. The forum will be recorded and posted on the USFWS's website once it is 508 (ADA) compliant. USFWS only had 180-days to host, record, post, and report back to Congress.

Mark Gaikowski informed the board members that USGS has been tasked with hosting a Science Forum for the Mississippi River. USGS is early in the planning stages and will likely be held this fall or winter.

Discussion:

Do you know what Congressional participation is looking like for the USFWS-hosted forum? We do not. Do you know if there is Congressional interest beyond the group that requested this? It is hard to say, but interest is likely much broader than that group.

What is meant by a Science Forum? USGS was tasked with assessing the state of the science on six key issues for the Mississippi River, identify gaps, and report back to

Congress. The forum is focused on the mainstem Mississippi River. USGS will be inviting other groups to participate in the forum.

The Science Forum sounds very familiar to the Mississippi River Restoration and Resiliency Strategy that EPA was tasked with leading this year. They are both linked to the Mississippi River Restoration and Resiliency Initiative, but the USGS report will be different from the report that was prepared by EPA.

12) MRBP/AIS Committee Update

Discussion Item:

MRBP co-chair, Eugene Braig, will provide an update on MRBP activities and progress addressing relevant action items and MICRA priorities since the board's February meeting (see relevant action items and MICRA priorities below).

February 2022 Decisions and Action Item

8. The board members agreed that Objective 3, Priorities 8. (e.) and (f.) are no longer priorities for the AIS Committee to address in the next two years.
15. Braig was asked to communicate the relevant priorities back to the MRBP and AIS Committee with the charge to begin addressing the priorities and report back to the MICRA Executive Board on progress or obstacles.
16. Braig was requested to seek recommended updates to the MICRA website from the MRBP and AIS Committee members.
17. The MRBP Executive Committee was asked to consider the recommendation that the MICRA AIS Committee Chair serve as MICRA's primary representative to the ANS Task Force.
30. Braig and Conover will share the TWRA video from the Congressional field visit at Pickwick Dam, along with the appropriate context, with the MRBP membership during the September coordination meeting to initiate a discussion of the potential to develop similar videos to address specific information and outreach needs.

MICRA AIS Priorities 2019 - 2023

OBJECTIVE 3: Coordinate prevention and control measures for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) to ensure sustainable 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. Prevent, manage, and control AIS in the Mississippi River Basin by supporting the Aquatic Invasive Species Committee.
3. Promote strengthening of Injurious Wildlife provisions of the Lacey Act.

4. Aquatic Invasive Species committee will identify needs and provide recommendations to the Executive Board for promoting streamlining of the Lacey Act Injurious Wildlife Listing process and for establishing a federal screening process to evaluate risk of non-native species prior to importation.
5. Promote development of consistent basin-wide regulatory approaches for the management of AIS.
 - a) Executive Board will facilitate meetings and discussions with the diploid grass carp states, as needed, to establish regulatory consistency for grass carp as recommended in the February 2015 MICRA Grass Carp Report.
 - b) Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will coordinate efforts to implement recommendations in the February 2015 MICRA Grass Carp Report.
6. MICRA Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will review and make recommendations for revising the MICRA AIS Action Plan so that it remains a relevant outreach tool.
7. Support efforts to prevent the exchange of AIS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.
8. Coordinate efforts to prevent introductions, stop the continued spread, and control established populations of Asian carp in the basin.
 - a) Promote the need to expand the scope of federal agencies' Asian carp activities to include the entire Mississippi River Basin and the need for federal funding to facilitate implementation of the Mississippi River Basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks in support of the national 'Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States'
 - b) Coordinate basinwide efforts to develop sub-basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks, including Action Plans for implementation.
 - c) In partnership with USFWS, coordinate the collaborative development of an annual Monitoring and Response Plan to identify highest priority management actions for Asian Carp in the Mississippi River Basin each year.
 - d) Coordinate the collaborative development, prioritization, and submission of annual recommendations to USFWS for federal

funding assistance to implement sub-basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks.

- e) ~~Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for standardized methods for collecting and reporting population data for Asian carp species.~~
- f) ~~Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for documenting and reporting harvest data for Asian carp species.~~
- g) Promote consistent outreach materials and messages throughout the Mississippi River Basin.

Notes:

MRBP Immediate Past Co-Chair, Eugene Braig, provided and reviewed the following written update.

Recently completed activities and projects

- MRBP coordination meeting since last update: 29, 31 March 2022: Virtual via Zoom.
 - 34 attendees (20 voting members).
 - Committees—Research and Risk Assessment, Prevention and Control, Education and Outreach—continue to meet virtually in advance. So successful that we plan to continue that into the future to allow all members to look in on any/all committees and free agenda time for coordination meetings.
 - Greg Conover, USFWS, MRBP Coordinator, and Duane Chapman, USGS, Research–Risk Assessment Chair, presented MRBP history and context to inform new members and potentially recruit to leadership roles.
 - Minutes not yet posted to MRBP web site, but accessible by excomm on Google Drive.
- Revision of guidance document/bylaws
 - Began as a simple effort to move some operational items to a more-easily-amended “appendix” with me offering initial language.
 - Expanded to a much more substantial revision headed largely by Andrew Stump, KY and Co-chair; and Greg Conover.
 - Some question about legality of Canadian members. Passed unanimously at March meeting with allowance to amend as needed.
- Tributary microchemistry

- Initiated in 2019 with Southern Illinois University to assess water chemistry (strontium, barium, calcium, magnesium, and manganese concentrations and stable oxygen isotope ratio) of main-stem rivers and tributaries in the Mississippi basin, focusing on rivers where limited or no water chemistry data are available.
- Final report received April 2022.
- All data accessible: https://opensiuc.lib.siu.edu/fiaq_data/13
- Election of first-year Co-chair: Struggled to find candidate. Will be ably filled by Cole Harty, TN. Attended first excomm meeting as Co-chair in mid-July.

Ongoing Funded Projects

- Silver Carp Genomics
 - Project housed at U. Nebraska Omaha with some work subcontracted to an Ohio firm.
 - To be completed in 3 phases: 1. develop database of informative genomic markers (completed), 2. expand analysis to geographically distinct locations, and 3. (if warranted by phase 2 results) expand analysis throughout MRB.
 - Phase 2 solidly underway this season with protocols and kits provided to volunteer field staff spanning 26 sites.

Ongoing and Future Activities

- Contracted administrative services
 - Annual contract began early 2021 and revised/renewed for 2022. Allows excomm to fully engage with activities and meetings while contractor handles logistics, contracts, note taking, etc.
 - WI has provided a number of competent staff to this role in series (currently Ben Ewaldt); however, they've tended to climb their in-house ladders to become unavailable to the MRBP.
 - RFP for contractor to begin in 2023 was issued June 2022, and open into early July. Three submissions, all qualified. (WIDNR did not submit this cycle.)
 - Elizabeth Brown Environmental Consulting, LLC, has substantial history and experience with western panel and was selected unanimously. Call with excomm and Elizabeth to discuss contract planned within next couple weeks.
- Identify Research–Risk Assessment Chair: Duane Chapman retiring. Long history; big shoes. No real expressed interest to date.

- Identify MICRA liaison: first choice—past MRBP Co-chair Chris Steffen, KS—unavailable because of commitments to regular work duties. Currently considering other candidates.
- Co-chair Andrew Stump compiled and submitted commentary on recent ANSTF guidance document regarding “A Framework for Determining the Need for an Aquatic Invasive Species Control and Management Plan.”
 - Bottom line: “Overall, the framework is a bit confusing and doesn't clearly inform how the process plays out. Although well intended, the end result does not fit the context.”
- Recent recommendation to ANSTF—Review function of or eliminate Experts Database: Now in hands of ANSTF, function to be reviewed by Wes Daniels.
- Update invasive carp regulations document: received updates from (I believe) 27 of 28 states.
- Update top 10 priority pathogens to live-bait trade: looks like 13 of 28 states have provided to date.
- Work on “Most Troublesome”/“Highest Priority” document/list now within Prevention–Control Committee.
- Education–Outreach considering revising logo and web site and evaluating Whack-a-mussel. May consider
- North American Journal of Fisheries Management, Invasive carps special issue: current status unknown (by me: I haven't heard in a while).
- 12–15 September 2022: Anticipated/Planned in person at Reelfoot Lake, TN. Planning baitfish symposium and substantial occupancy modeling session. Procuring hardware to “hybridize” this and future meetings.

Discussion:

Has the otolith microchemistry project report been distributed widely? The report itself, and a link to the database, were shared with the panel membership and should be available on the MRBP website. The data are publicly available, but not certain how widely their availability has been circulated beyond the MRBP. The Missouri River Basin partnership had a project that complimented this water chemistry project. Now they are developing a proposal to build off this work. There have been some questions within the partnership regarding the results and findings of the MRBP project. Since the project was intended to fill in gaps in baseline water chemistry data, the project report itself is not very substantial. The publicly accessible data are the primary outcome and deliverable of the project. Many of the data gaps were in tributary rivers. The Missouri River Partnership is very interested in invasive carp use of tributaries in the sub-basin. Understanding where there are measurable differences in water chemistry in Missouri River sub-basin tributaries will be very helpful.

The MRBP meeting is scheduled for September 13, 14, and 15 at Reelfoot Lake State Park in western Tennessee. The MRBP will be meeting the first two days. The third day is now being organized as MICRA meetings. The first two hours on September 15th will be a formational meeting for the MICRA AIS Committee. Following a break, the rest of the day will be focused on invasive carp topics. Conover is working with the sub-basin partnership coordinators to develop an agenda that includes topics that are of common interest across the basin.

Conover provided is a list of MRBP and MICRA AIS Committee related action items from the board's February meeting, along with Objective 3 and related priorities from MICRA's Priorities Document in the briefing book under this agenda topic. There has not been substantial progress on any of these since February other than communicating this information out to the MRBP Executive Committee and discussions planned for the panel's in-person meeting in September.

13) Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee Update

Discussion Item:

Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee chair, Ryan Hupfeld, will review and discuss the written update provided below on the Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee's activities and progress addressing relevant action items from the board's February meeting and MICRA's Priorities (see below).

February 2022 Decisions and Action Item

1. The paddlefish commercial states workgroup was tasked with developing a summary report on the age and growth project including data collection, analysis, workgroup discussions, recommended next steps, and differing perspectives.
2. The paddlefish commercial states workgroup will present a recommendation to the Executive Board at their summer meeting based on the available data and analysis, along with the different views within the workgroup.
3. Hupfeld will discuss the proposal from Dr. Scarnecchia for facilitating the development of basinwide paddlefish management framework with the Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee and report back to the Executive Board.

MICRA Priorities 2019 - 2023

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

PRIORITIES:

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 to support conservation, management, and utilization of native interjurisdictional fishes and aquatic resources.
 - a. Support continued efforts for coordinated basin-wide management of paddlefish and sturgeon species.
 - b. The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will develop a basin-wide management plan for paddlefish.
 - c. The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will continue to coordinate and manage (e.g. Regional tag coordinators) a basin-wide coded-wire tag database for paddlefish.
 - d. The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will provide

recommendations to the Executive Board for standardized methods for documenting and reporting harvest data for paddlefish.

- e. The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for basin-wide commercial harvest databases for paddlefish and sturgeon, including roe harvest and roe buyers.
- f. Conserve native freshwater mussels through continued support of the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society.
- g. Native Mussel Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for standardized methods for documenting conservation strategies employed in mussel conservation.
- h. Native Mussel Committee will develop and maintain a Basin wide list of propagation facilities and species that are being produced at each location.

Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee Meeting Update Aug. 2022 - Ryan Hupfeld

1. Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee Overall:

-Met in person in St. Louis on March 29, 2022

-Topics discussed:

- a. Current and future priorities were the focus of the meeting- Are the current priorities, still important and what are our priorities moving forward?
- b. Paddlefish Basin-wide Management Framework Proposal was reviewed
 - i. All states were supportive and thought it would help with management of the species
 - ii. A smaller workgroup was developed to work with Dennis on this
- c. Continue to coordinate and manage a basin-wide coded-wire tag database for paddlefish
 - i. Still a backlog of data- Query sent out to membership to determine how much of a backlog there is
 - ii. Table discussion until after Paddlefish Management Framework is developed
- d. Commercial fishing workgroup update was provided to the group along with Executive Board recommendations
- e. Mississippi Yangtze River Interbasin Symposium-AFS- Michael Moore (USGS/ISU)

- i. Mississippi River/Yangtze River Interbasin Symposium at the Annual AFS Meeting in Spokane, WA from August 21-25, 2022. Please submit any abstracts if you have any relevant presentations.
- f. Standardizing methods for documenting and reporting harvest data for paddlefish
 - i. Committee still sees this as a priority and will likely be addressed for the most part in the Paddlefish Management Framework
- g. Basinwide commercial harvest databases for paddlefish and sturgeon including roe harvest and roe buyers
 - i. Committee still sees this as a priority and will likely be addressed for the most part in the Paddlefish Management Framework
 - ii. Does CITES already collect/compile this information from the States?
 - 1. Request currently out to CITES- Should have information back from them soon.
- h. Website Updates
 - i. Asked for input on what the committee wants on the website and what is the purpose of the website moving forward
 - 1. List of things were discussed to add moving forward
 - a. Current regulations, old documents, meeting minutes, stocking protocols, harvest reporting forms, other states management plans, sturgeon documents, etc.
 - 2. Request for other ideas by email was sent out as well.

Priorities and Emerging Issues for 2024-2028:

Discussed a variety of topics and had really good discussion:

- 1. Shovelnose Sturgeon-
 - Commercial and recreational harvest management and regulations- consistency
 - Exploitation
 - Life history/population demographics
 - Age/Growth data- Fin rays are inaccurate
 - Framework for shovelnose sturgeon?
- 2. Lake Sturgeon-
 - Bycatch of lake sturgeon- how to document this consistently
 - Data collection basin-wide- How to do this and how to make it useful?
 - Stocking evaluations?- MO has lake sturgeon management plan
 - How to stock and evaluate?
 - Genetics
 - How many to stock?

- Query of states on lake sturgeon management in each state
 - Stocking, genetics, tagging, research projects, etc.
 - Framework document for lake sturgeon?
3. Ageing of Paddlefish and Sturgeon spp.- Developing accurate ageing techniques
 - Microsatellite genetic analysis
 - Bomb radiocarbon analysis/DNA methylation
 - Mark/Recapture analysis for growth, survival, longevity, etc.
 4. Tagging coordination among agencies- Basin wide tagging strategy?
 - CWT evaluation in fish captured? Is it being done? Any recommendations for tagged fish captured?
 - PIT tagging preferred?
 - PIT, CWT, etc.
 - Tagging locations (on fish and in basin)
 - Metadata associated with fish and location
 - Acoustic telemetry
 5. GSI/Fecundity stages in Mississippi River Basin of Paddlefish and Sturgeon spp.
 - Prime spawners

What do we want to work on now and in the future?

Immediate:

- Paddlefish Framework- Dennis S. and working group
- Commercial Harvest Workgroup Summary Report- Commercial harvest workgroup- June/July
- Lake Sturgeon information compilation?
- Compiling Sturgeon spp. and Paddlefish tagging information
- Types of tags, locations, etc.

Future:

- Sturgeon spp. Framework
 - Would lead into other projects previously listed
- Ageing of Paddlefish and Sturgeon spp.- Developing accurate ageing techniques
- Maturity schedule of Paddlefish and Sturgeon spp.- added after discussion in commercial fishing workgroup meeting
- Sub-basin Paddlefish management plan updates

Emerging Issues:

- Major changes in the ecosystem (e.g., invasive species, habitat changes, habitat rehabilitation/enhancement, etc.)
 - Influences on paddlefish/sturgeon spp.?
 - Recruitment
 - Reservoir environments are changing
 - Hydropower
- Aquaculture of non-native species
 - Sterlet Sturgeon
- Sturgeon/Paddlefish domestication
 - Hatchery vs. wild fish fitness
- Polyploid deficiencies in Sturgeon in TN
- Technological advances in fishing equipment
 - Increase in harvest on an increased timeline?
 - What is fish managers ability to respond?
 - Information transfer technology (social media) is much more rapid now
- Lake Sturgeon ESA Listing- Request update from FWS
- Paddlefish/Sturgeon bycatch of other commercial fisheries (i.e., buffalo/carp harvest)

2. Commercial Fishing Workgroup (Paddlefish):

- a. Executive Board recommended to complete a final report with recommendations
 - i. Workgroup met following UMRCC meeting on March 24-25, 2022
 - ii. Workgroup met following MICRA Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee meeting on March 30, 2022
 - iii. A plan was developed for completing a draft report by section with different individuals leading certain sections
 1. Workgroup Action Items and Timeline:
 - a. Draft sections uploaded to google drive between June 30 and July 27
 - b. Conference call to discuss draft report on July 27
 - c. Compiled sections shared with workgroup by August 8th
 - d. Greg and Ryan update the MICRA Executive Board August 3rd
 - iv. A draft has been developed and will be compiled by August 8th
 1. First draft is completed
 2. First Review completed by August 24th meeting with the workgroup

Discussion:

Conover suggested that the basinwide paddlefish tag database is a good example of how a Fishery Commission could help the states. MICRA funded the USFWS to maintain the database for years, but it became cost prohibitive. There were maintenance needs to further develop the database that were never addressed. The sub-basins assumed responsibility for keeping the database updated and merged but not all sub-basins have been able to keep up with the workload. The database, and MICRA member agencies, would greatly benefit from additional resources and capacity to manage the database. This could be a function of the proposed commission.

Who are the members of the paddlefish framework working group? Are they all committee members? Yes. Katie Zipfel (WV), Trish Yasger (MO), Jason Schooley (OK), Sara Tripp (IL), Kirk Steffensen (NE), Nathan Nye (WI), Eric Ganus (TN), Ryan Hupfeld (IA), Greg Conover (USFWS), and Dennis Scarnecchia.

Any differences among the workgroup members regarding the summary report will come to light during the August 24th meeting. The timeline may get thrown off depending on the outcome of the discussions during that meeting. It is possible that we may not reach consensus on a set of recommendations. There are some strong differences in opinion within the workgroup. The report may include recommendations that are supported by the majority of workgroup members but also include a dissenting opinion from one (or more) workgroup members.

Conover reviewed the outline for the commercial fishing workgroup report. The additional analysis conducted by Dr. Michael Wilberg is a major point of divergence within the group. The workgroup is trying to stay focused on next steps moving forward rather than getting hung up on the Wilberg analysis. We would like to get this report completed before kicking off the basinwide paddlefish management framework. There are several committee members that will be participating on both workgroups.

Are there any elements of FishTracks that aren't established yet or that you would like to see prioritized to help support paddlefish movement or other goals for the Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee? The ability to archive acoustic tag data from across the basin for any native species would be a good start. There are several additional tag types that are being used with paddlefish and sturgeon. It would be useful to have Marybeth Brey provide an overview of the FishTracks database to the committee members followed by a discussion of this question.

- ! Marybeth Brey will be invited to provide an overview of the FishTracks database at the next Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee meeting.

14) Native Mussel Priorities

Discussion Item:

MICRA formed a Freshwater Mussel Committee in 1996. Organizational meetings were held reaching out to freshwater mussel experts, enthusiasts, and consumptive users nationwide. The first order of business of MICRA's Freshwater Mussel Committee was to initiate discussions related to development of a Strategic Action Plan for the conservation and management of freshwater mussels within the Basin.

These discussions and meetings made it evident that a broader, nationwide approach was needed. As a result, MICRA's *Freshwater Mussel Committee* provided the stimulus for formation of the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society (FMCS) in 1998. Later that year the Society published its "National Strategy for the Conservation of Native Freshwater Mussels" in the *Journal of Shellfish Research*, 1(5):1419-1428. MICRA members participated in the development of this "National Strategy", and it now serves as a guide for MICRA's own regional management of freshwater mussels.

In 1998 MICRA's Freshwater Mussel Committee was renamed the Native Mussel Committee, and it now not only serves the needs of MICRA, but also serves as an ad hoc regional advisory group to the larger FMCS. MICRA's most recent focus has been on standardizing state regulations related to the commercial harvest of freshwater mussels. The FMCS's Web Page can be found at: <http://molluskconservation.org>.

The Native Mussel Committee's long serving Chairman, Don Hubbs, retired from TWRA in 2020. A new committee chair was not appointed. MICRA provided annual financial support to the FMCS until 2019. After the retirement of Don Hubbs, the connection between MICRA and FMCS was lost.

The MICRA Executive Board reviewed the partnership's standing committees at the board's January 2021 meeting and decided to sunset the Native Mussel and Gamefish committees.

Following a review of the MICRA 2019-2023 Priorities Document during the board's August 2021 meeting, the following action item was identified.

The Executive Board will invite someone from the Freshwater Mussel Conservation Society to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss the Native Mussel Committee priorities (1.2.g.h.) in the 2019-2023 Priorities Document.

Stephen McMurray, a malacologist with the Missouri Department of Conservation, is the current President of the FMCS. Stephen will be joining the Executive Board to discuss the Native Mussel Committee priorities in MICRA's 2019-2023 Priorities Document. The discussion will include considerations of MICRA's future support of the FMCS, and likewise, FMCS future support of MICRA.

MICRA Priorities 2019 - 2023

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

PRIORITIES:

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 to support conservation, management, and utilization of native interjurisdictional fishes and aquatic resources.
 - f. Conserve native freshwater mussels through continued support of the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society.
 - g. Native Mussel Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for standardized methods for documenting conservation strategies employed in mussel conservation.
 - h. Native Mussel Committee will develop and maintain a Basin wide list of propagation facilities and species that are being produced at each location.

Notes:

Conover had an initial discussion with McMurray prior to the Executive Board meeting about the previous relationship between MICRA and the FMCS and how the two organizations can support one another going forward. McMurray is joining today's meeting to have a similar discussion with the Executive Board. When the 2019-2023 Priorities Document was developed in 2018, MICRA identified three priorities involving native freshwater mussels and the former MICRA Native Mussel Committee (see above).

Discussion:

McMurray informed the board that the FMCS would appreciate MICRA's continued financial support. The Society is a 501(c)3 organization. The biennial symposia (odd number years) and workshops (even number years) are a foundation for much of the

society's work. This year's workshop will be held on the Duck River in Tennessee covering sampling techniques and data analysis. The society's Board of Directors and committees meet in person in conjunction with symposia. FMCS operates under the financial premise of having sufficient funding available to pay full symposia costs in the event there was a problem and the society needed to cover the costs.

There are a lot of new initiatives that have been started within the last 10 years. FMCS provides financial support to regional mollusk groups (generally \leq \$500) to support their meetings. Occasionally provide requested support to other groups and entities projects, e.g., printing costs for the last two Upper Mississippi River Freshwater Mussel Field Guide.

FMCS committees were originally organized to fulfill the goals of the national strategy published in the *Journal of Shellfish Research* in 1998. The national strategy was updated in 2016 to expand from just mussels to include snails. FMCS has gone through some restructuring to align committees with priorities of the new mollusk national strategy. There is a Propagation Committee. A task that they have been working on for some time is to develop and maintain a list of propagation facilities in the U.S. along with information on the species and numbers they produce.

Is this list available on the FMCS website? It is a document that is available on request of the Conservation and Restoration Technical Committee chair (https://molluskconservation.org/MServices_propagation.html). There have been some concerns about having that information available on-line.

MICRA also had a priority for the Native Mussel Committee to provide recommendations to the Executive Board for standardized methods for documenting conservation strategies employed in mussel conservation. Most of the individual states have their own standardized methods that they require to be used. There are also standardized methods that have been developed for the pooled portion of the Upper Mississippi River.

Has the FMCS identified a similar need for standardized methods? Part of the impetus behind the workshop is to introduce new agency biologists to more accepted methods e.g., targeting the right species, covering the right areas, and using the right methods to sample.

In the absence of the context that led to the development of priority 'g' in 2018, the Executive Board members were asked if priority 'g' is relevant to them or their agency. There is a lot of active mussel work in several sub-basins but no sub-basin reps were

aware of this as a need. However, the reps also noted that mussel work is often done by staff outside of their programs. It was recommended that MICRA defer to the FMCS to identify native mussel conservation priorities and then support the society as requested. All agreed that an appropriate path forward is to re-establish the partnership between MICRA and the FMCS or for the two organizations to support each other as needed.

McMurray was not aware of the connection with MICRA and the financial support that MICRA has provided to the FMCS until he became chair of the society. He doubts many members are aware of the connection. He suggested that a formal recognition that explicitly identifies the partnership between the two organizations in their governance documents would be beneficial. For example, language to clarify that the FMCS will function in the place of a Native Mussel Committee for MICRA and provide recommendations to the Executive Board as needed.

McMurray was asked if it would be beneficial going forward for MICRA to provide a liaison with the FMCS, similar to the role Don Hubbs had served up until his retirement. As long as there is an understanding of the partnership between both organizations, then it could be as simple as the MICRA Coordinator reaching out annually to the FMCS president. Some written guidance on maintaining communication with FMCS may be helpful. The FMCS Executive Committee is made up of a President-elect, President, Past-president, Secretary, and Treasurer. President-elect, President, and Past-president are each sequential two-year terms to provide some continuity in leadership. McMurray will become Past-president next Spring, so he will continue to serve on the board for a couple more years. Megan Bradley, USFWS Genoa National Fish Hatchery, will become the next society President.

Several years ago, FMCS became a member of Consortium of Aquatic Science Societies (CASS). CASS was initiated by the American Fisheries Society in response to changes in the Clean Water Act and the desire for aquatic interests to have a stronger voice. Through CASS, approximately 12 organizations and 30,000 scientists speak with a single voice on aquatic issues. The former FMCS President serves as a liaison with AFS. Something similar to that could potentially be setup with MICRA if that is preferred to an informal arrangement.

The board members suggested that an informal arrangement should meet both organizations needs. The Executive Board expressed interest in the FMCS providing an update at one of the board's in-person meetings each year to hear about the society's priorities, the annual meeting that MICRA could potentially support, etc. This type of connection will help to maintain and build the partnership between the two groups.

If/when there is a Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission, there will likely be a mussel element as part of that more formalized fishery commission given the importance of interjurisdictional fisheries to mussels. How do we plan for that future and is that all we need to do at this time?

As additional funds become available for large river restoration work in the Upper Mississippi River and perhaps elsewhere, are there some needs that MICRA may be able to identify for native mussel conservation that would help FMCS members to prioritize funding or agency work for native mussel conservation? Would it help for MICRA to identify some native mussel priorities to help elevate some of the FMCS priorities? For example, referencing MICRA priorities, agreed to by a large group of management agencies, may benefit FMCS members competing for grant funding for native mussel conservation work in the basin.

McMurray was asked how MICRA could potentially assist FMCS beyond financial support for their biennial meetings. Any work towards control of black carp, bolstering native fish populations, and efforts to enforce water quality standards are all important for mussel conservation. The more voices supporting common priorities the better.

Are the society's priorities set through the 2016 national strategy? The society does not operate under a strategic plan. It describes broad goals for mollusk conservation, but it is not an action plan or guidance document for the society. The society is structured by committees to address the goals identified in the national strategy. The committees identify their own priorities for what they want to achieve and those in essence become the society's priorities. A big push of late has been diversity, equity, and inclusion within the society.

- ! Conover will follow-up with Stephen McMurray about the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society referring to MICRA in their guidance documents and providing an annual update to the Executive Board.
- ! Conover will follow-up with Stephen McMurray to discuss incorporating Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society priorities into the next MICRA priorities document.

15) Approval of February 2022 Meeting Notes

Decision:

Draft meeting notes for the Executive Board's February 2022 meeting were provided for review on May 25th. No edits were requested. Updated meeting notes with two minor corrections made by Conover were provided to the Executive Board members along with the August 2022 briefing book prior to the meeting. Executive Board members will be asked to make a decision on approving the revised February 2022 meeting notes as final.

Notes:

Larscheid motioned to approve the revised meeting notes from the Executive Board's February 2022 meeting that were provided to the Executive Board members along with the August 2022 briefing book prior to the meeting. Whiteman seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The meeting notes were unanimously approved as final.

- ! The February 2022 Executive Board meeting notes were approved as final.
- ! Conover will add the final February 2022 Executive Board meeting notes to the MICRA website.

16) Review of Action Items

Discussion:

Executive Board members will review Decisions and Action Items from the February 2022 meeting and July 2022 conference call, and discuss completion of outstanding action items. Outstanding Action Items from previous meetings are also included for consideration. Status of each action item was noted in the briefing book ahead of the Executive Board meeting in green font.

Notes:

The board did not have sufficient time during the meeting to review the status of Action Items. Updates were provided on two specific Action Items (11 and 12) from the board's February 2022 meeting. Board members were asked to review the Action Items below for outstanding items that remain to be addressed.

Discussion:

11. Parsons will put the new MN habitat biologist in touch with Conover to start coordinating with Janvrin to plan for the Habitat Symposium.

Parsons reported that Neil Rude was recently hired as the new habitat biologist for MN DNR. Parsons has discussed the MICRA large rivers habitat symposium with him, but he does not know if Rude has reached out to Jeff Janvrin yet.

- ! Conover will inform Jeff Janvrin that Neil Rude, MN DNR, has been asked to lead the planning of the MICRA large rivers habitat symposium at the 2023 AFS meeting in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and that Rude will be reaching out to him to begin planning.

12. Rodgers will work with her GIS specialist to develop a few lists of interjurisdictional rivers in the Mississippi River Basin using different criteria for the board to consider.

Rodgers reported that her station's GIS specialist has been using the NHD database to query interjurisdictional rivers in the basin. It is an enormous dataset. After clipping it to the 28 states in the basin, there are still over 2 million lines of data. She is going to filter the data for 4th order streams and higher as an initial cut. She is targeting October to have some options for the Executive Board's consideration. We should be able to discuss this further during the board's November conference call.

July 2022 Conference Call

Decisions and Action Items

1. Ashlee encouraged states to inform Congressional offices of opportunities to join agency staff in the field for invasive carp work. Congressional offices will be on recess for district work during much of August. Ashlee will reach out to other states to inquire about field opportunities.

On-going: Any further action for 2022?

2. Ashlee will provide a clean version of the draft fishery commission legislation for the Executive Board members to review prior to the Executive Board meeting.

Complete

3. Sub-basin reps will provide the draft legislation to their sub-basin delegates and ask for any comments prior to the Executive Board meeting.

Complete: Was this completed by all sub-basin reps? Did all delegates have the opportunity to review and provide comments?

4. Sub-basin reps will ask their sub-basin delegates if they have any interjurisdictional fishery management concerns or emerging issues that they would like to discuss with the board or request the board to address.

Complete: Was this completed by all sub-basin reps? Do we plan on brief written sub-basin updates for the board's winter meeting, or is there a preference to stick with this format for all meetings?

5. Executive Board members will finalize the draft legislation during the August Executive Board meeting.

Complete: On the August meeting agenda

6. Conover will contact Gaikowski about adding a presentation on the FishTracks database to the August Executive Board meeting.

Complete

7. Parsons will follow-up with the four states that have not signed the Joint Strategic Plan prior to the August Executive Board meeting.

On-going: Colorado, Montana, Nebraska, and Wyoming have not returned the signed Memorandum of Agreement

8. The Executive Board will discuss implementation of the Joint Strategic Plan during the August Executive Board meeting and consider an assessment of on-going joint state projects as an initial step.

Complete

9. Conover will request the sub-basin partnership coordinator contact the respective MICRA sub-basin representatives to discuss and assist as requested with identifying a new sub-basin representative for the revised Invasive Carp Advisory Committee (ICAC).

Complete

10. Sub-basin partnership coordinators and MICRA sub-basin representatives will collaborate to identify new sub-basin representatives for the ICAC as well as potential state agency co-leads for the ICAC and two technical workgroups.

On-going

February 2022

Decisions

10. The board decided to extend the application deadline for the 2022 Young Professionals Travel Stipend to June 1.
11. The Executive Board approved the revised August 2021 Executive Board meeting notes.
12. The board agreed that Conover should provide all new state delegates and Executive Board members with the MICRA website address and key MICRA documents including the Joint Strategic Plan, current MICRA Priorities Document, and Coordination Directory. Conover should also copy the MICRA Chairman and appropriate sub-basin representative when welcoming new state delegates to make those introductions. The chairman or sub-basin representative should call the new member to discuss the MICRA partnership with them.
13. The board agreed to move ahead with USFWS to evaluate the 2021 national survey data to potentially repeat the 2011 recreational fishing economic impact estimate for the basin.
14. The board agreed to target a summer meeting in Minnesota (likely in Red Wing), August 2-4. Monday, August 1, will be a travel day.
15. The timing of the Spring Executive Board conference call will be decided after the DC Fly-in.
16. The board members agreed to include the expenses for a coalition luncheon as part of the budget previously approved for the DC Congressional visits.
17. The board members agreed that Objective 3, Priorities 8. (e.) and (f.) are no longer priorities for the AIS Committee to address in the next two years.

18. An Executive Board call will be needed after the DC fly-in (mid to late March) so the board members can be updated on the DC fly-in and have a focused discussion on Joint Strategic Plan next steps for implementation.
19. The Executive Board approved sending a letter from MICRA and plaque or similar item of \$50-\$100 value to Mr. Finley as a thank you for hosting the MICRA Executive Board meeting.

Action Items

1. Conover will add Mike McClelland to the Executive Board mail list and update the membership roster to reflect McClelland as the new Chair-elect.
Complete
2. Schoenung will contact the delegates in CO, MT, NE, and ND to see if they can secure their director's signature on the MOA before the end of February.
Complete: The four states have not provided the signed MOA to date.
3. Parsons will attempt to contact the delegates in NC and WY to discuss the Joint Strategic Plan and the status of getting the MOA signed by their directors.
Complete: NC has signed the MOA. Parsons was unable to speak with the WY delegate.
4. Fiss and Rodgers will reach out to their contacts in NC to see if they can get some help with contacting Christian Waters.
Complete?
5. Schoenung will send a draft contract to Ashlee Smith to renew MICRA's Policy Coordination contract with her for 2022.
Complete: The contract for 2022 has been fully executed.
6. Conover will update the deadline for applications for the 2022 Young Professionals Travel Stipend to June 1 and share an announcement with the UMRCC and LMRCC coordinators for distribution.
Complete: The deadline was changed to July 15th to allow additional time for applications prior to the board's August meeting.
7. Conover will update the website to reflect the new deadline for applications for the 2022 Young Professionals Travel Stipend.
Complete
8. Parsons will forward the announcement about the Young Professionals Travel Stipend to the North Central Division for distribution.

Complete?

9. Parsons and Conover will send an announcement about the extended deadline for the 2022 Young Professionals Travel Stipend to the MICRA delegates.

Complete

10. Conover will send a note to the Tennessee River delegates prior to the 2022 quarterly TWF coordination calls, reminding them to announce opportunities for staffers to get out in the field with staff to observe invasive carp field work.

On-going: Completed for the July quarterly call but not the April call

11. Parsons will put the new MN habitat biologist in touch with Conover to start coordinating with Janvrin to plan for the Habitat Symposium.

On-going: Update needed.

12. Rodgers will work with her GIS specialist to develop a few lists of interjurisdictional rivers in the Mississippi River Basin using different criteria for the board to consider.

On-going: Update needed.

13. The Executive Board will consider proposed new GIS-based lists of interjurisdictional rivers in the Mississippi River Basin and make a decision on the preferred criteria and list to use as an updated list for MICRA.

On-going: Pending completion of action item #12

14. Conover will work with Janvrin to finalize the draft action plan once the Executive Board approves a new MICRA list of interjurisdictional rivers in the Mississippi River Basin.

On-going: Pending completion of action item #13

15. Braig was asked to communicate the relevant priorities back to the MRBP and AIS Committee with the charge to begin addressing the priorities and report back to the MICRA Executive Board on progress or obstacles.

On-going: More discussion scheduled during the MRBP coordination meeting and AIS Committee meeting in September 2022.

16. Braig was requested to seek recommended updates to the MICRA website from the MRBP and AIS Committee members.

On-going: More discussion scheduled during the MRBP coordination meeting and AIS Committee meeting in September 2022. No updates or revisions requested to date.

17. The MRBP Executive Committee was asked to consider the recommendation that the MICRA AIS Committee Chair serve as MICRA's primary representative to the ANS Task Force.

On-going: More discussion planned at Executive Committee's September 2022 meeting

18. The paddlefish commercial states workgroup was tasked with developing a summary report on the age and growth project including data collection, analysis, workgroup discussions, recommended next steps, and differing perspectives.

On-going: Further discussion during the Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee update at the August meeting.

19. The paddlefish commercial states workgroup will present a recommendation to the Executive Board at their summer meeting based on the available data and analysis, along with the different views within the workgroup.

On-going: Further discussion during the Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee update at the August meeting.

20. Hupfeld will discuss the proposal from Dr. Scarnecchia for facilitating the development of basinwide paddlefish management framework with the Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee and report back to the Executive Board.

Complete: The PSC supported the proposal and forwarded to the Executive Board. The board approved the proposal and work on the framework is expected to begin in August.

21. Schoenung will share the revised briefing documents for the March 2022 DC visits with Woldt and Brown for their review.

Complete: No comments received.

22. Smith will ask Connor Bevan to add Parsons, Schoenung, Fiss, and Conover to the contact list for the coalition and send them the link to the doodle poll for the first coalition meeting.

Complete: All participated on the first coalition call.

23. Parsons will email delegates to ask about local level partners, for example Friends of the Mississippi River, that should be informed about and asked to support the Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission initiative and coalition.

On-going: Added to August meeting agenda for further discussion.

24. Parsons, Schoenung, Fiss, and possibly Conover will represent MICRA on the coalition calls.

On-going: All four? participated on the first coalition call. No additional calls scheduled to date.

25. Conover will inquire internally with USFWS to determine his ability to participate in the coalition in his role as MICRA Coordinator.

On-going: Inquiry sent no guidance received to date.

26. Smith will keep all board members informed of coalition calls so they can participate if available and interested.

On-going: No additional calls have been scheduled to date.

27. The Executive Board will need to discuss what kind of communication should be provided to the MICRA delegates along with the request for local stakeholders to inform about the fishery commission and coalition.

On-going: On the August meeting agenda for further discussion.

28. Smith will work with Parsons, Schoenung, and Conover to revise the draft compact to address the appointment of commissioners and state agency representation on the commission, and will share a revised version with the Executive Board members.

Complete

29. Schoenung will reach out to some of the MICRA states to gauge interest in the formation of a MICRA Invasive Carp Committee and report back to the Executive Board.

On-going: On the August meeting agenda for discussion.

30. Braig and Conover will share the TWRA video from the Congressional field visit at Pickwick Dam, along with the appropriate context, with the MRBP membership during the September coordination meeting to initiate a discussion of the potential to develop similar videos to address specific information and outreach needs.

On-going: On the AIS Committee's September 2022 meeting agenda.

31. Schoenung will provide an update on the Joint Strategic Plan signatures and encourage remaining states to provide signed MOAs by the end of February.

Complete

32. Parsons will send (from the MICRA account) the draft Fishery Compact and MICRA's DC briefing documents to the MICRA Delegates prior to the DC fly-in.

Complete: Documents were sent to the delegates after the DC fly-in.

Outstanding Action Items

November 2021 Conference Call

6. Smith will provide a list of NGOs that have expressed interest in supporting the fishery commission initiative.

Incomplete:

8. Parsons will talk to Joe Larscheid about Randy Schultz serving as the new UMRCC representative on the Executive Board if McClelland is willing to take on the chair-elect position.

Complete: Joe Larscheid has agreed to serve as the new UMR sub-basin rep.

12. Conover will complete the revisions to the Aquatic Habitat Action Plan, share with the Executive Board members for approval, and upload the final plan to the MICRA website.

On-going: On the February agenda for further discussion

13. Schoenung will share the final approved Aquatic Habitat Action Plan with the MICRA delegates in a unique mailing.

Incomplete: Pending #12 above.

August 2021 Meeting

2. Conover, Schoenung, and Parsons will follow-up with DeMario to have more discussions about strategizing on the JSP and fishery commission proposal.

Complete: DeMario has resigned from AFWA and discussions are no longer occurring.

10. Smith will provide list of the primary people that each state should continually follow-up with regarding opportunities to get out in the field with agency staff to observe field work.

On-going: Smith will periodically send reminders to the MICRA Delegates. Conover schedule periodic reminders?

11. Smith will periodically contact the MICRA delegates a few times throughout the year to inquire if they are keeping in touch with their key Congressional staff to provide them with opportunities to get out in the field to observe agency field work.

On-going: Smith will periodically send reminders to the MICRA Delegates. Conover schedule periodic reminders?

13. Smith will track the Congressional calendars and inquire with fish chiefs if they have any good opportunities for field staff on dates scheduled for district work.

On-going: Smith will periodically send reminders to the MICRA Delegates. Conover schedule periodic reminders?

14. Conover will remove Asian carp terminology where possible from the MICRA website.

Complete

25. The Executive Board will invite someone from the Freshwater Mussel Conservation Society to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss the Native Mussel Committee priorities (1.2.g.h.) in the 2019-2023 Priorities Document.

Complete

30. Conover will add a discussion about an interjurisdictional fisheries symposium to the agenda for the next MICRA Executive Board meeting.

Incomplete: Delayed until we have progress on the Habitat Symposium.

34. Conover will contact Jerry Rasmussen and Bobby Reed to request pictures to be uploaded to the River Champions Award web page.

Complete: Pictures have not been uploaded to the web page

35. Committees will be asked to review the committee web pages on the MICRA website and work with Conover to update.

Complete: Request has been made of both committees. Committees are currently addressing, and no revisions or updates have been made to date.

37. Conover will reach out to Bruce Reid to inform him about the Executive Board's interest in improving the MICRA's website and gauge his interest in discussing the website with the MICRA Executive Board.

Incomplete

May 2021

7. Schoenung, Parsons, Conover, and Smith will begin developing and sharing outlines of needed commission related documents with the rest of the Executive Board for further development.

Incomplete: This has been on hold as the board has discussed other aspects of the proposed fishery commission. The board has not gotten back to the point of discussing specific communication needs for different audiences.

17) 2024-2028 Priorities Document Development

Decision Item:

The current MICRA Priorities Document is for the 5-year period 2019-2023 (see below). The board will decide if a new priorities document will be developed for 2024-2028. In making this decision, the board should consider alignment of a new priorities document with the recently finalized Joint Strategic Plan. If the board decides to move forward with development of a new priorities document, a discussion is needed on gathering input from the MICRA Delegates, and a timetable for developing the document before the end of 2023.

Discussion:

Conover's intent with this agenda topic was to develop a timeline for creating the 2024-2028 priorities document. The board has approximately 15-months to prepare a new document if they are interested in doing so. Gathering input from the delegates would likely be the first step. Priorities for the next 5-year period could be an agenda topic if the board moves forward with an all-delegate meeting. Conover asked the board members if they have a preference on how to gather input from all MICRA delegates.

We should share the 2019-2023 document with the delegates so they know what we are talking about when we request input for the next 5-year period. MICRA's first priorities document was for 2014-2018. At the end of that 5-year period, the board added accomplishments under each identified priority to track progress. The annotated 2014-2018 priorities document with accomplishments is included as an appendix at the end of the 2019-2023 document. Does the board want to similarly track progress towards the 2019-2023 priorities? We could develop an initial draft of accomplishments for the current priorities document, although we will not be able to finalize it until the end of 2023.

Will the development of a 2024-2028 priorities document be a complete rebuild of a new document or more of a revision of the current document? A review of the existing document should be a reasonable starting point for developing the next 5-year planning document. Unless the board determines that it would like to start from scratch, we are likely just looking at updating with any new priorities and deleting priorities that have been accomplished or are no longer relevant. Reminding the delegates what the current priorities are would be a great place to start.

What is the timeline for providing the delegates with the current MICRA priorities document and requesting input on the new priorities document? It would be nice to have

some initial input from the delegates ahead of the board's winter meeting. A potential timeline would be:

- Request delegate input prior to the end of 2022
- Discuss delegate input and develop an initial draft during the board's February meeting
- Provide delegates with a draft document for 2024-2028 and request input prior to the board's summer meeting
- Review delegate comments and finalize the new document during the board's summer meeting
- Review and finalize 2019-2023 accomplishments at the board's 2024 winter meeting

A sub-basin meeting format similar to the call Batten held with his delegates ahead of this meeting may be a good alternative to holding an all-delegate meeting. I'm more likely to get feedback from the other sub-basin delegates if I have a call and talk through things with them rather than counting on them to open an email and get engaged. Its hard for the delegates to find time to really dig into an email that has several action items and/or attachments. Batten thought his sub-basin pre-call was useful and plans to repeat them in the future.

The ORFMT is meeting this fall. A review and discussion of the MICRA Priorities document could be added to the agenda. Walking through this document with the ORFMT members will likely result in better input than just an email.

This document and the commission could be the basis for an all-delegate meeting. The sub-basin meetings would be a quick way to gather input and then schedule an all-delegate meeting later in the year. We could also include a discussion about implementation of the Joint Strategic Plan, with or without a commission.

- ! Conover will update the 2019-2023 MICRA Priorities document with initial accomplishments and provide the draft to the sub-basin representatives.
- ! Sub-basin representatives will provide the annotated 2019-2023 MICRA Priorities document to their respective sub-basin delegates to request initial input on 2024-2028 priorities by the end of the calendar year.



Goals, Objectives, and Priorities 2019 - 2023

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MICRA

Goals, Objectives, and Priorities

2019 - 2023

MICRA works to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance interjurisdictional fishery resources and aquatic habitats in the Mississippi River Basin through cooperative assessment and management of the basin's aquatic resources. MICRA's member agencies developed a comprehensive Strategic Plan in 1991 and completed an Activity Prioritization of the Plan's 10 goals and 133 tasks in 1992.

The MICRA Executive Board established an Operational Plan for the 5-year period 2014-2018 to focus on a much smaller subset of priorities for the partnership to accomplish during the operational period through the work of member agency delegates, the Executive Board, and committees. This Operational Plan, which is updated every five years, is intended to be a guiding document that is timely and responsive to the current biological, social, and political issues that influence fishery resource management. As such, the Operational Plan is an adaptive document that will be updated as needed to remain relevant and provide for the most effective cooperative management of the fishery and aquatic resources in the basin.

MICRA's priorities and accomplishments for the operational period 2014-2018 are reported in Appendix 1.

Goals and Objectives

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]*

Priorities

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. Committees will report to the Executive Board at least once annually on progress of priorities identified in this document.
 - c) Executive Board updates MICRA's 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 to support conservation, management, and utilization of native interjurisdictional fishes and aquatic resources.
 - a) Support continued efforts for coordinated basin-wide management of paddlefish and sturgeon species.
 - b) The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will develop a basin-wide management plan for paddlefish.
 - c) The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will continue to coordinate and manage (e.g. Regional tag coordinators) a basin-wide coded-wire tag database for paddlefish.
 - d) The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for standardized methods for documenting and reporting harvest data for paddlefish.
 - e) The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for basin-wide commercial harvest databases for paddlefish and sturgeon, including roe harvest and roe buyers.

- f) Conserve native freshwater mussels through continued support of the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society.
 - g) Native Mussel Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for standardized methods for documenting conservation strategies employed in mussel conservation.
 - h) Native Mussel Committee will develop and maintain a Basin wide list of propagation facilities and species that are being produced at each location.
3. Build consensus for compatible regulations and policies for priority interjurisdictional fishery and aquatic resources issues.
- a) Executive Board will work with the MICRA delegates to develop a Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Mississippi River Basin fisheries.
4. Determine the socio-economic value of fishery resources and related recreation in the Mississippi River Basin.
- a) Work with USFWS to provide a written economic value report for the Mississippi River Basin, including an analysis by MICRA sub-basin boundaries, using 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation data.
 - b) Work with USFWS to develop a report that includes an estimated return on dollars invested to manage fishery resources in the Mississippi River Basin based on 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation data. (Report 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 MICRA 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. The Executive Board will finalize the draft MICRA Aquatic Habitat Action Plan prepared by the Aquatic Habitat Committee.
2. Support Aquatic Habitat Committee efforts to establish regular information exchange, communication, and coordination between entities responsible for aquatic habitat management in the basin.
3. The Aquatic Habitat Committee will identify and make recommendations to the Executive Board for engaging with the National Fish Habitat Partnerships and coordinating priorities in the MICRA Aquatic Habitat Action Plan.
4. Create awareness of the needs and opportunities to increase and direct funding to implement priority habitat projects identified in the MICRA Aquatic Habitat Action Plan.

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

PRIORITIES:

9. 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.
10. Prevent, manage, and control AIS in the Mississippi River Basin by supporting the Aquatic Invasive Species Committee.
11. Promote strengthening of Injurious Wildlife provisions of the Lacey Act.
12. Aquatic Invasive Species committee will identify needs and provide recommendations to the Executive Board for promoting streamlining of the Lacey Act Injurious Wildlife Listing process and for establishing a federal screening process to evaluate risk of non-native species prior to importation.
13. Promote development of consistent basin-wide regulatory approaches for the management of AIS.
 - a) Executive Board will facilitate meetings and discussions with the diploid grass carp states, as needed, to establish regulatory consistency for grass carp as recommended in the February

2015 MICRA Grass Carp Report.

- b) Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will coordinate efforts to implement recommendations in the February 2015 MICRA Grass Carp Report.

14. MICRA Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will review and make recommendations for revising the MICRA AIS Action Plan so that it remains a relevant outreach tool.

15. Support efforts to prevent the exchange of AIS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.

16. Coordinate efforts to prevent introductions, stop the continued spread, and control established populations of Asian carp in the basin.

- a) Promote the need to expand the scope of federal agencies' Asian carp activities to include the entire Mississippi River Basin and the need for federal funding to facilitate implementation of the Mississippi River Basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks in support of the national 'Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States'
- b) Coordinate basinwide efforts to develop sub-basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks, including Action Plans for implementation.
- c) In partnership with USFWS, coordinate the collaborative development of an annual Monitoring and Response Plan to identify highest priority management actions for Asian Carp in the Mississippi River Basin each year.
- d) Coordinate the collaborative development, prioritization, and submission of annual recommendations to USFWS for federal funding assistance to implement sub-basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks.
- e) Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for standardized methods for collecting and reporting population data for Asian carp species.
- f) Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for documenting and reporting harvest data for Asian carp species.

- g) Promote consistent outreach materials and messages throughout the 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 draft, finalize, and implement a MICRA communications plan.
2. Executive Board and committees will maintain current content on the MICRA website.
3. Engage in efforts to increase awareness and action of Congressional members to improve management of fishery and aquatic resources in the Mississippi River Basin.
4. Develop outreach materials, information brochures and short publications on issues of concern to fishery resource management in the Mississippi River Basin as needed.
5. Develop a 5-year report of activities, accomplishments, and remaining resource needs identified in the MICRA priorities document.
6. Host workshops and networking opportunities at national and regional professional meeting (e.g. Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, SEAFWA, AFS Parent Society meetings) for MICRA member agency delegates, committee members, and partners.

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

PRIORITIES:

1. Pursue reliable, long-term funding sources and mechanisms for MICRA.
2. Work with MICRA member agencies to pursue formation of a congressionally funded Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission to coordinate fisheries research, control aquatic invasive species (e.g. Asian carps), and facilitate cooperative management of interjurisdictional fishery and aquatic resources among the state, tribal, and federal management agencies.

Appendix 1:

MICRA
Goals, Objectives, and Priorities
2014-2018

Goals and Objectives

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]*

Priorities and Accomplishments

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

PRIORITIES:

5. 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.
 - An all delegate meeting was held August 2016 in conjunction with the national AFS annual meeting in Kansas City, MO.
 - b) Standing committees review priorities and discuss emerging issues of concern within the basin every 3-5 years.
 - Standing committees were asked to review the draft 2019-2023 priorities document and provide input.
 - c) Executive Board updates the MICRA priorities document every 5 years.
 - This draft 2019-2023 priorities document will be finalized before the end of 2018.
6. 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.
 - Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee meets annually.
 - Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee has formed a commercial harvest state working group that is actively working on a collaborative paddlefish management plan for the basin's commercial harvest states.
 - b) Develop (recommendations for) standardized methods for documenting and reporting harvest data for paddlefish, sturgeon and other commercially harvested species of concern.
 - Assigned to Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee specifically

for paddlefish in the 2019-2023 priorities document.

- c) Develop (recommendations for) basin-wide commercial harvest databases for paddlefish and sturgeon, including roe harvest and roe buyers.
 - Assigned to Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee in 2019-2023 priorities document.
 - d) Conserve native freshwater mussels through continued support of the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society.
 - Provided financial support for FMCS meetings in 2015-2018. No financial assistance was requested in 2014.
 - e) Develop standardized methods for documenting and reporting harvest data for mussel resources.
 - Assigned to Native Mussel Committee in 2019-2023 priorities document.
 - 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.
 - Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee tasked with completing a basin-wide paddlefish management plan in 2019-2023 priorities document.
 - Asian carp control strategy frameworks have been completed for Ohio River (including Tennessee and Cumberland rivers) and Missouri River sub-basins. Frameworks for Upper Mississippi River and Lower Mississippi River (including Arkansas and Red rivers) are expected to be finalized in 2018.
7. 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.
8. 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.
 - Coordinated with the USFWS for the development of basinwide and individual basin state estimates of economic value of recreational fishing based on data in the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation. *MICRA did not receive estimates for the MICRA sub-basin units or a written report that can be cited.*
 - An updated economic analysis and written report, including estimates for the MICRA sub-basin units, using data from the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation is included in the 2019-2023 priorities document.
 - b) Work with USFWS to develop a report that includes an estimated return on dollars invested to manage fishery resources in the basin based on data in the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation. (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.)
 - Included in the 2019-2013 priorities document as a next step once the USFWS's 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation is published and the revised economic value report for the Mississippi River Basin is completed.
 - 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.)

- Included in the 2019-2023 priorities document for continued discussion with USFWS once the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation is published.

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:

5. Complete development of the MICRA Aquatic Habitat Action Plan.
 - Habitat Committee is working with the Executive Board to finalize the Aquatic Habitat Action Plan in 2018.
6. Establish a MICRA Habitat Committee for information exchange, communication, and coordination between entities responsible for aquatic habitat management in the basin.
 - Habitat Committee formed in 2015; first official committee meeting was held in La Crosse, WI, in September 2016.
7. Coordinate priorities in the MICRA Aquatic Habitat Action Plan with the National Fish Habitat Partnerships.
 - Executive Board sent a letter to the NFHAP Board in 2018 requesting MICRA participation on NFHAP Board.
 - Habitat Committee has been tasked in the 2019-2023 priorities document with considering how to best engage with National Fish Habitat Partnerships and making recommendations to the MICRA Executive Board.
8. Seek opportunities to fund and implement priority needs identified in the MICRA (Native Species) Aquatic 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:

17. 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.

- Secured and executed a 5-year financial assistance award from the USFWS to host the MRBP from July 1, 2013 through May 31, 2018.
- Applied for a new financial assistance award from the USFWS to host the MRBP from June 1, 2018 through May 31, 2019.

18. 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.

- Topic was discussed with USFWS and DOI leadership, and AFWA government affairs staff during MICRA annual visits in Washington, DC.

19. Promote development of consistent basin-wide regulatory approaches for the management of AIS.

- Organized a national symposium, hosted multiple meetings, and facilitated multi-state discussions to promote regulatory consistency for grass carp as recommended by MICRA in a project report submitted to USFWS in 2014.
- Summarized basinwide state regulations for bighead, black, grass, and silver carp in 2018.

20. Seek opportunities to fund and implement the MICRA AIS Action Plan.

- This topic was indirectly discussed with Federal agencies and Congressional offices during MICRA annual visits in Washington, DC.

21. Support efforts to prevent the exchange of AIS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.

- Submitted comment letters to USACE in 2014, 2015, and 2017 regarding GLMRIS and the Brandon Road Lock and Dam Tentatively Selected Plan.
- Actively participates on the Chicago Area Waterway System Advisory Committee to collaboratively work with diverse stakeholders to reach consensus on a set of recommendations to elected and appointed local, state, and federal officials and to the public on short and long-term measures to prevent Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species (AIS) from moving between the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins through

the Chicago Area Waterway System.

- Topic was discussed with Federal agencies and Congressional offices during MICRA annual visits in Washington, DC.

22. 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.
 - A project completion report and recommendations were submitted to the USFWS in 2014.
- b) Develop and implement standardized methods for collecting and reporting population data for Asian carp.
 - Topic was discussed at July 2014 MRBP meeting, however no specific actions were identified or taken following that discussion.
- c) Promote funding and implementation of the national 'Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States' (National Plan) to expand the scope of federal agencies' Asian carp funding and activities to include the entire Mississippi River Basin.
 - Topic is discussed perennially with Federal agencies and Congressional offices during MICRA's annual visits in Washington, DC.
 - Participated in an ACRCC Congressional briefing in 2015 to discuss Asian carp management and control activities and needs in the Mississippi River Basin.
 - Organized and sponsored Congressional briefings (in partnership with the Northeast Midwest Institute) to discuss Asian carp management and control activities and needs in the Mississippi River Basin.
 - Actively coordinating and assisting with the development of collaborative inter-agency sub-basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks to facilitate basinwide implementation of the National Plan.
 - Annually coordinates the development of a Monitoring

and Response Plan for the Mississippi River Basin to collaboratively identify the highest priority project needs for implementation of the Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River sub-basins' Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks.

- Formed an Asian Carp Advisory Committee to provide basinwide state and federal agency coordination of annual collaborative recommendations to the USFWS for financial assistance to implement the Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River sub-basins' Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks.

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

PRIORITIES:

7. Work with outreach specialists from member and entity agencies to develop a MICRA communications plan.
 - Development of a communications plan was initiated in 2014; completion of the communication plan is assigned to the Executive Board in the 2019-2023 priorities document.
8. Continue to publish the *River Crossings* newsletter.
 - *River Crossings* newsletter was published through 2015.
 - The Executive Board suspended publication of the *River Crossings* newsletter after 2015 until the MICRA communications plan is complete.
9. Continue to develop and manage the MICRA website.
 - Annually paid for a private third part to host the MICRA website (www.MICRArivers.org)
 - Contracted with a new company to redesign and host the MICRA website beginning in 2018.
10. Engage in efforts to increase awareness and action of Congressional members.
 - Actively developing relationships with AFWA and the Northeast Midwest Institute to improve effectiveness and frequency of communications with Congress.

- Sponsored Congressional visits by MICRA delegates in 2014 - 2018 to increase awareness about issues of importance to fishery and aquatic resources in the Mississippi River Basin.
 - Organized, sponsored, and participated in several Congressional briefings in 2014-2018 to increase awareness about Asian carp management and control activities and needs in the Mississippi River Basin.
11. Develop outreach materials, information brochures and short publications on issues of concern to fishery resource management in the Mississippi River Basin as needed.
- Developed a tri-fold brochure to provide an overview of the MICRA partnership (2013).
 - Developed an AIS Action Plan and tri-fold brochure for the Mississippi River Basin in 2015.
 - Annually developed fact sheets and briefing materials for Congressional visits 2014-2018.
 - Coordinated with member states to develop and update state specific AIS fact sheets for Congressional visits.
12. Develop a 5 year report of activities, accomplishments, and remaining resource needs identified in the MICRA priorities document.
- Developed this appendix to provide a summary of activities, accomplishments, and unaddressed priorities for 2014-2018.
13. Host workshops at Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, SEAFWA, AFS Parent Society meetings, etc. for members and associated partners.
- 2014 – Stakeholder Engagement and Congressional Outreach – A Workshop for MICRA Delegates; January 2014, Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference, Kansas City, MO
 - 2014 – Sponsored MICRA hospitality suite at Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference, Kansas City, MO
 - 2016 – All delegate meeting and hospitality suite at AFS annual meeting in Kansas City, MO
 - 2016 – Grass Carp Symposium at AFS annual meeting in Kansas City, MO

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

PRIORITIES:

3. Use the Joint Strategic Plan to pursue (establish) joint funding mechanisms.
4. Establish reliable, long-term funding sources and mechanisms for MICRA.
5. Seek legal guidance regarding 501(c)3 status and lobbying restrictions and implement appropriate actions.
6. 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).
 - Executive Board members met with representatives of the Atlantic States and Gulf States Fishery Commissions.
 - A representative from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) attended the August 2016 MICRA Executive Board meeting to discuss the GLFC and fishery commission concept for the Mississippi River Basin.
 - Executive Board hosted an all delegate meeting (Aug 2016) and a web ex (Jan 2017) to discuss the Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission concept with MICRA delegates.
 - Executive Board developed and shared talking points with the MICRA delegates to introduce the concept with their agency directors and administrations.
 - Executive Board initiated a discussion with the MICRA delegates regarding the development of a draft Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Mississippi River Basin Fisheries to further develop the concept of the fishery commission.

18) Young Professionals Travel Stipend

Decision Item:

Four applications were received and are provided on the following pages. The Executive Board members will consider the four applications and decide which, if any, of the applicants to award the 2022 Young Professionals Travel Stipend.

Notes:

The board budgets \$1,000 to award a single travel stipend annually. The board has received multiple applications in a single year before. The board has established selection criteria for scoring applications, however, the criteria were not included in the briefing book. The criteria are based on the bullets provided in the travel grant fact sheet provided below. The weighted scoring criteria is available if needed after the Executive Board's initial review and consideration of the applications.

Discussion:

The application from Traczyk is stretching the applicability of his work to the Mississippi River Basin. Two of the remaining applicants' projects are on invasive carp, the other is on buffalo and catfish, so all three have relevance to MICRA.

Are we considering funding one or more applications this year? There may have been a year that we funded two applicants, but they may have been with funding from two different years.

When was the last time MICRA awarded this grant? It's been a few years, it was pre-COVID.

Conover is co-located with Carterville FWCO. He spoke to the station supervisor who confirmed that funding is available for both biologists to attend their conferences without the travel grant from MICRA. Not that this should take either of these applicants out of consideration, but for your awareness that their participation is not contingent on the grant.

The letter the Jim Lamer provided for Sam Schaick indicated that his position is entirely funded by external grants. Conference attendance is typically only funded for travel forecasted in the grant application. Because of this it would be difficult to secure and justify funding for Schaick to attend the American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting in Spokane, Washington.

The projects from the Carterville FWCO applicants are similar enough that it would be difficult to fund one and not the other. One applicant has been on the job for four years and the other has only been there for one year and is less likely to have attended a conference.

A motion was made to fund the application from Sam Schaick. The motion was seconded. There was no further discussion. The motion passed.

- ! The Executive Board decided to award the Young Professionals Travel Stipend to Sam Schaick with the Illinois Natural History Survey.
- ! Conover will notify the Young Professionals Travel Stipend applicants of the board's decision regarding the 2022 award.

MICRA'S YOUNG PROFESSIONALS TRAVEL GRANT

The Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA) may award an annual travel grant (reimbursement of actual expenses up to \$1,000.00) to a professional staff member of one of MICRA's member state or federal agencies. The grant is intended to provide individuals who have recently begun their professional career (≤ 5 years) with travel funds to attend a professional meeting or conference that they would not otherwise be able to attend.

Announcements for the travel grant will be made through *River Crossings* and direct mailings to agency administrators. Applications may be submitted beginning July 1 and the **deadline for submissions will be January 15th, annually**. Applications should be completed on the attached form and include a detailed abstract (not to exceed 1-page). A letter requesting support from the appropriate agency administrator accompanying the application is strongly recommended. The MICRA Executive Board will rank applications using a weighted scoring system. Applications will be evaluated based on the following:

- Abstract
- Scientific Value
- Relevance to large river fisheries and aquatic resource management
- Importance to MICRA
- Applicant's reason for attending meeting (e.g., poster or oral presentation, training or workshop, active role in technical committee or another working group meeting)
- Administrator or supervisor's written recommendation

The MICRA Chair will notify the successful candidate and the respective agency administrator in writing within 30 days of the application deadline. In the event the annual travel grant is not awarded, the MICRA Executive Board will consider applications for the travel grant on an individual basis throughout the remainder of the calendar year.

Completed applications should be submitted to MICRA@MICRARivers.org, or mail to: MICRA, 292 San Diego Road, Carbondale, Illinois 62901.

APPLICATION FOR MICRA TRAVEL GRANT

NAME: Garrett Johnson AGENCY: USFWS - Cartersville FWCO

ADMINISTRATOR / CONTACT: Benjamin Marcek

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER? 4 years

WHAT MEETING ARE YOU PLANNING TO ATTEND? 83rd Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference (February 2023)

WILL THE INFORMATION PRESENTED AT THE MEETING BE PUBLISHED IN A PEER-REVIEWED MANUSCRIPT BASED ON YOUR PRESENTATION AT THE CONFERENCE? Possibly

IF YES, EXPLAIN: The ideas in this presentation are preliminary and additional analyses will be necessary to determine if this research merits publication

IS A WRITTEN RECOMMENDATION FROM YOUR AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ENCLOSED? X, OR BEING PROVIDED SEPERATELY? _____

REASON FOR ATTENDING MEETING:

The topic of this presentation is relevant to attendees of this conference. Many fisheries professionals in the midwest conduct research or are involved in management efforts on large rivers. This topic is also directly applicable to Silver Carp management, a topic of great concern throughout the Mississippi River Basin. This conference will also include presentations relevant to work being conducted at the Cartersville FWCO. My attendance of this conference will, therefore, facilitate my professional advancement as well as that of the office in general.

TITLE OF PRESENTATION:

Evaluating large-scale spatial patterns in fish size and density within and among three Ohio River pools using a split-beam echosounder

ABSTRACT: ATTACH ON A SEPARATE PAGE (NOT TO EXCEED 1-PAGE)

Evaluating large-scale spatial patterns in fish size and density within and among three Ohio River pools using a split-beam echosounder.

Garrett Johnson¹, Nicholas Pretto¹, and Benjamin Marcek¹

¹U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cartersville Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, 292 San Diego Road, Carbondale, IL, USA

83rd Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference February 12–15, 2023, Overland Park, KS.

Oral Presentation

Large river impoundments (pools) often consist of lentic habitats near the impoundment and transition to more lotic habitats farther upstream. These transitional habitats may result in size and density gradients in fish communities within a pool. Because invasive species (e.g., Silver Carp) can become dominant in terms of density and within a specific size range, identifying size and density gradients within pools can help managers locate areas where management efforts will be most effective. To examine longitudinal gradients in fish size and density, we collected split beam echosounder data throughout the main channel of three Ohio River pools with established Silver Carp populations (Cannelton, Newburgh, and J.T. Myers) during fall 2021. We analyzed the data (mean length and mean \log_{10} -transformed fish density, hereafter “mean density”) using linear regression. Models of mean length and density included pool, distance from the downstream dam (hereafter “distance”), and their interaction. The pool x distance interaction had a significant effect on mean fish density indicating differences among pools in the magnitude of mean densities and their rate of change with distance from the dam. Mean fish length was significantly affected by both pool and distance but not their interaction. Mean fish length was smaller in Cannelton Pool relative to J.T. Myers and Newburgh pools but no differences in mean fish length existed between J.T. Myers and Newburgh pools. In all pools, mean length decreased as distance increased. Our results identify longitudinal patterns within Ohio River pools that highlight the potential for split-beam echosounder data to improve the efficiency of management actions in large rivers. For instance, by using large-bodied fish targets as a proxy for Silver Carp (where appropriate), managers could improve the efficiency of removal efforts by directing fishers to areas that would maximize catches of large-bodied fish.



United States Department of the Interior



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
 Cartersville Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office
 292 San Diego Rd
 Carbondale, Illinois 62901
 (618) 997-6869

Dear MICRA travel committee:

I am writing in support of Garrett Johnson's application for the MICRA travel grant. Garrett began working for my office as a fish biologist in July 2020 following an appointment with the Ohio DNR designed to train recent graduates the intricacies of working as a fish biologist. Since beginning his position with the Fish and Wildlife Service, Garrett has taken on responsibilities above and beyond those expected of a field biologist including leading the Cartersville Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office's (FWCO's) hydroacoustic program, acting as the point of contact for several smaller interagency projects, analyzing data, and authoring reports and peer-reviewed publications. In addition, Garrett has worked to mentor technicians and other staff and participate in outreach events. Garrett has also shown an interest in professional development through participating in and leading workshops focused on data management and analysis and presenting data and analyses to professional audiences to gather feedback and ideas about how to answer questions relevant to fisheries management.

Garrett's attendance of the 83rd Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in February will be an excellent opportunity to further his professional development through delivering an oral presentation of original research relevant to hydroacoustic surveys (especially in large rivers) and silver carp management, both of which are areas of interest for managers and researchers in the Midwest. Additionally, Garrett will have the opportunity to attend a workshop, presentations, and the poster session. Attendance of conferences such as this present many opportunities for personal and professional growth as well as a space to develop potential collaborations to further research in fisheries science. Garrett has proven to be an excellent scientist and communicator and I think he could benefit greatly from attending this conference.

Thank you for your time and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Benjamin J. Marcek, Ph.D.
 Aquatic Invasive Species Branch Supervisor
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Cartersville Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office
 292 San Diego Rd., Carbondale, IL 62901
 618-997-6869 ext. 122 benjamin.marcek@fws.gov

APPLICATION FOR MICRA TRAVEL GRANT

NAME: Nicholas Pretto AGENCY: USFWS - Cartersville FWCO

ADMINISTRATOR / CONTACT: Benjamin Marcek

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER? 1 year

WHAT MEETING ARE YOU PLANNING TO ATTEND? 83rd Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference (February 2023)

WILL THE INFORMATION PRESENTED AT THE MEETING BE PUBLISHED IN A PEER-REVIEWED MANUSCRIPT BASED ON YOUR PRESENTATION AT THE CONFERENCE? No

IF YES, EXPLAIN: _____

IS A WRITTEN RECOMMENDATION FROM YOUR AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ENCLOSED? X, OR BEING PROVIDED SEPERATELY? _____

REASON FOR ATTENDING MEETING:

The information that I will present is relevant to the management of Silver Carp in the Mississippi River Basin. As such, it will be beneficial to managers and researchers involved in these efforts. Furthermore, this is my first opportunity to attend and present research at a professional conference. I believe that the experience I will gain by attending this conference will help me grow as a professional by giving me a broader perspective of the state of fisheries research as I consider the next steps in my career.

TITLE OF PRESENTATION:

Variation in Silver Carp Movements and Habitat Use in the Ohio River

ABSTRACT: ATTACH ON A SEPARATE PAGE (NOT TO EXCEED 1-PAGE)

Variation in Silver Carp Movements and Habitat Use in the Ohio RiverNicholas Pretto¹, Garrett Johnson¹, Benjamin Marcek¹, and Joseph Amundson¹¹US Fish and Wildlife Service, Cartersville Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office

83rd Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, February 12-15, 2023, Overland Park, KS

Oral Presentation

The proliferation of invasive Silver Carps within the Ohio River Basin may negatively affect native fish abundance and condition via competition. To lessen these negative impacts, managers lead removal events in areas with established Silver Carp populations. Information regarding Silver Carp behavior (e.g., habitat use and movement) could increase the efficacy of these removal events but is lacking. To evaluate Silver Carp habitat use, we compiled acoustic telemetry detection data for 337 Silver Carps in McAlpine Pool during 2017-2020. Receiver locations were categorized as main channel or tributary and the proportion of days within each month that an individual was detected in each habitat calculated. To determine the maximum distance moved by individual fish, we used the distance between the most upstream and downstream detections in a month. We used a generalized linear model with month, year, and their interaction as covariates to identify changes in Silver Carp movement throughout the study period. Across years, the proportion of days that Silver Carps were detected at tributary receivers was generally greater than for main channel receivers regardless of month. Maximum distance traveled, however, differed by month within year. During 2017 and 2018, the mean maximum distance traveled by Silver Carps was generally greater from May to July relative to August – November. During 2019 and 2020, differences in the mean maximum distance traveled by Silver Carps were inconsistent. These results provide information that can help managers identify months and habitats that could be targeted to optimize Silver Carp removals and better understand movements of these fish throughout the year. Further investigation is needed to determine if the patterns of habitat use detected in McAlpine Pool are representative of those in other Ohio River pools, to identify locations for removal efforts, and to identify environmental factors influencing Silver Carp movements and habitat use.



United States Department of the Interior



U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
 Carterville Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office
 292 San Diego Rd
 Carbondale, Illinois 62901
 (618) 997-6869

Dear MICRA travel committee:

I am writing in support of Nicholas Pratto's application for the MICRA travel grant. Nick began working for my office as a biological science technician in June 2021 after finishing his B.S. in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point. Since beginning his position, Nick has been an invaluable resource to our office and has made substantial contributions by participating in field work as well as helping to maintain vehicles, vessels, and equipment. Furthermore, Nick has shown an interest in furthering his career by working with biologists in the office to develop relevant hypotheses about fish ecology and learn to analyze data with the goal of presenting the results of these analyses at a professional conference.

Because Nick is still very early in his career, this is his first opportunity to attend a professional conference and present original research. I see Nick's attendance of the 83rd Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in February as an excellent opportunity for his professional development because it will allow him to present research and receive feedback on his presentation (a First-Time Presenters Symposium is planned for the conference), he will be able to attend a workshop relevant to our field, and, by attending presentations and the poster session, he will see the current state of research in fisheries and wildlife sciences. This last point is especially important because he has indicated an interest in pursuing a M.S. in the near future and understanding the current knowledge and outstanding questions in the field is vital to charting a path forward.

Thank you for your time and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Benjamin J. Marcek, Ph.D.
 Aquatic Invasive Species Branch Supervisor
 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | Carterville Fish & Wildlife Conservation Office
 292 San Diego Rd., Carbondale, IL 62901
 618-997-6869 ext. 122 benjamin_marcek@fws.gov

APPLICATION FOR MICRA TRAVEL GRANT

NAME: Sam Schaick AGENCY: Illinois Natural History Survey

ADMINISTRATOR / CONTACT: Dr. Jim Lamer

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER? 3+ Years

WHAT MEETING ARE YOU PLANNING TO ATTEND? 152nd Annual American Fisheries Society meeting in Spokane, Washington

WILL THE INFORMATION PRESENTED AT THE MEETING BE PUBLISHED IN A PEER-REVIEWED MANUSCRIPT BASED ON YOUR PRESENTATION AT THE CONFERENCE? Yes

IF YES, EXPLAIN: I plan to submit a manuscript incorporating data used in the presentation at this conference.

IS A WRITTEN RECOMMENDATION FROM YOUR AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ENCLOSED? OR BEING PROVIDED SEPERATELY? Yes

REASON FOR ATTENDING MEETING: I will be presenting research findings on Illinois River channel catfish, flathead catfish, and smallmouth buffalo populations.

TITLE OF PRESENTATION: Catfish and Buffalo Populations in Upriver Versus Downriver Pools of the Illinois River

ABSTRACT: ATTACH ON A SEPARATE PAGE (NOT TO EXCEED 1-PAGE)

Catfish and Buffalo Populations in Upriver Versus Downriver Pools of the Illinois River

Sam Schaick, Brandon Harris, Michael Spear, Taylor Bookout, Jesse Williams, Levi Solomon, Kristopher Maxson, and James Lamer

Buffalo (*Ictiobus* spp.) and catfish (Ictalurid) are the two most commercially harvested groups of native fishes in the Illinois River (IL). Channel Catfish *Ictalurus punctatus* and Flathead Catfish *Pylodictis olivaris* are also among the most recreationally harvested fishes in the Illinois River. Additionally, Smallmouth Buffalo *Ictiobus bubalus* are vastly the most abundant buffalo species. Within the Illinois River, commercial fishers are allowed unregulated buffalo harvest and unlimited harvest of catfishes over 15 inches. Aside from invasive carps, commercial harvest above Route 89 near Spring Valley, IL is prohibited due to increased contaminants in the Upper Illinois River. In addition to the difference in commercial fishing regulations, these upriver pools have substantially more rocky substrates, while the downriver pools are dominated by sand and silt. We investigated the potential effects that these different regulations and habitats may have on Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, and Smallmouth Buffalo relative abundance, size structure, and condition. Because the Route 89 bridge is within the Peoria Pool of the Illinois River, this pool was used as a buffer between the lower, commercially harvestable pools (Alton and La Grange) and the upper, non-commercially harvestable pools (Marseilles and Starved Rock). From June-October of 2019 - 2021, the aforementioned species were sampled using paired small and large hoop nets baited with soybean cake. Fishes were measured to the 10mm bin from June-September 15. From September 16-October 31, fishes were measured to the nearest millimeter and weighed to the nearest gram. Relative abundance was calculated using catch per unit effort (CPUE) as fish per hoop net set. Also, we used relative weight (W_r) to compare condition and proportional size distribution (PSD) to examine size structure.



PRAIRIE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Illinois Natural History Survey
1816 S. Oak Street
Champaign, IL 61820

15 July 2022

Dear MICRA Young Professionals Travel Grant Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of Sam Schaick's application for the MICRA Young Professional Travel Grant. I am Sam's supervisor at the Illinois River Biological Station, Illinois Natural History Survey. Sam's employment, research, and professional travel are paid on external grants. These grants require explicit language detailing which conferences the scientist plans to attend. Sometimes this is difficult to forecast in advance given the dynamic nature of research and unexpected findings or additional research pursued along the way. Sam has pursued research questions that fall just outside the specific scope and objectives of the grants he has been funded on and the National AFS venue was not anticipated as a preferred conference. Therefore, it will be more difficult to secure and justify funding to have Sam present in Spokane this fall. Because of this, I'm hopeful the committee will consider awarding Sam a MICRA young professional travel grant to defray those costs. Thanks for your consideration and please reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

James T. Lamer

Large River Ecologist
Director, Illinois River Biological Station
Illinois Natural History Survey
704 N. Schrader Ave.
Havana, IL 62644
309-543-6000

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

217-333-6880 • inhs.illinois.edu

7/8/22 2:19 PM

Mall - Conover, Greg - Outlook

[EXTERNAL] Fwd: Re: ask

MICRA , <micra@micrarivers.org>

Fri 7/8/2022 2:03 PM

To: Conover, Greg <greg_conover@fws.gov>

2 attachments (887 KB)

Young Professionals Travel Grant - additional materials.docx; Young Professionals Travel Grant 1 - additional_materials.pdf

This email has been received from outside of DOI - Use caution before clicking on links, opening attachments, or responding.

----- Original Message -----

From: Ryszard Traczyk <ryszardtraczyk@gmail.com>

To: MICRA@micrarivers.org

Date: 07/08/2022 12:32 PM

Subject: Re: ask

Dear Sir

In attached application for a travel grant I show that my presentations are large connected to rivers and will show new way learning of fish life with experiments

Sincerely Yours,

Ryszard Traczyk

On Fri, Jul 8, 2022 at 2:52 PM <MICRA@micrarivers.org> wrote:

Thank you for submitting an application for the Young Professionals Travel Stipend. Your application will be reviewed by the MICRA Executive Board in early August. I will respond to all applicants following the board's review and consideration.

Greg Conover
MICRA Coordinator

On 07/07/2022 8:21 AM Ryszard Traczyk <ryszardtraczyk@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Sir

I am writing an application for a travel grant below or attached and sent. I don't have a job. I have doctoral exams by the end of this year. So I filled You as a contact person.

NAME: Traczyk Ryszard; AGENCY: AJS

https://outlook.office365.com/mail/keepink?cc=eYJhY2Ns3N6G9rZiW4f0nsibmJmJlp7mVzc2VudGlnbGCI@dHU1ZSwdmFsdm/UCIIXNJU3MeA3Nze4h... 1/4

APPLICATION FOR MICRA TRAVEL GRANT

NAME: Traczyk Ryszard _____ AGENCY: AFS _____

ADMINISTRATOR / CONTACT: Kelly Kotche

Membership Manager

American Fisheries Society

Office: 301-897-8616, x205

Mobile: 443-306-9834

Email: kkotche@fisheries.org

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED IN YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER? Volunteering 7 years _____

WHAT MEETING ARE YOU PLANNING TO ATTEND? AFS Spokane 2022 _____

WILL THE INFORMATION PRESENTED AT THE MEETING BE PUBLISHED IN A PEER-REVIEWED MANUSCRIPT BASED ON YOUR PRESENTATION AT THE CONFERENCE? YES _____

IF YES, EXPLAIN: Article in Water Biology and Security _____

IS A WRITTEN RECOMMENDATION FROM YOUR AGENCY ADMINISTRATOR ENCLOSED? No OR BEING PROVIDED SEPERATELY? _____

REASON FOR ATTENDING MEETING:

- 1) An in-person 2 oral presentations that will be part of the session: Fish Conservation-2 on Thursday, August 25, 2022 from 1:20 PM - 5:00 PM and Part of: Adaptation and Plasticity in Fishes in Warming Environments - Day 2 Tue, August 23 111A Symposium
- 2) Meet the friends; search for job; practice English to pass exam language

TITLE OF PRESENTATION:

- 1) Change of the Life Strategy of Icefish
- 2) Age estimation of Antarctic icefish from otolith microstructure

ABSTRACT: ATTACH ON A SEPARATE PAGE (NOT TO EXCEED 1-PAGE)

Change of the Life Strategy of icefish. Abstract. The white-blooded icefish (Channichthyidae) are family endemic to the Antarctic Ocean. Due to the unpopulated nature of Antarctica, icefish can be said to belong to the treasure of all humankind. Biomass assessments of icefish in overall, indicated biomass decrease by about 75% less than virgin resources. They fulfill their ecological role as zooplankton predators also at the maxima of temporal and spatial temperature oscillations. In cold years and periods, *Pseudochaenichthys georgianus* is the most numerous species, while in warmer years there is the dominant *Chaenocephalus aceratus*, less dependent on low temperatures, creating a biological buffer. In view of this adaptation, the reduction in icefish stocks seems to be driven by a decrease in the availability of krill as food. The continuous presence of krill throughout and between the Scotia Arc island shelves, recorded in the 1970s and 1980s, was accompanied by a homogeneous distribution of about 100% krillivorous *Champscephalus gunnari* across the shelf. In later years, in those krill continua, there appear water deserts, huge areas lacking ice coverage (eliminated by warming) and associated krill feeding on ice algae under the ice. This contributed to the formation of pelagic small krill (its growth is slow in warm waters) shoals that fed on shoals of pelagic plankton. The water deserts determined the corresponding change in the organizational level of the occurrence of pelagic *C. gunnari* to previously unregistered high-density pelagic shoals, which have a greater chance of encountering krill shoals. Similar semi-pelagic *Ps. georgianus* also change their strategy and focus on the vortices accumulating krill at the shelf of S. Georgia. Icefish *C. aceratus* migrate to the bottom for permanent demersal life and changes in food from krill to demersal animals, becoming independent from the pelagic krill resource. Change of life strategy displays otolith shape: pelagic has circular, semi-pelagic high picked, bottom elongated - built by changes in microstructure growth.

Age estimation of Antarctic icefish from otolith microstructure. Abstract:

Antarctic fisheries are now required to use restrictions and catch limits to ensure the long term sustainability of the fishery. Fishing limits have fixing levels appropriate to a good state of biomass. Estimate biomass needs age estimates that for icefish give otoliths.

It was discovered that the microstructure constitute the basic smallest element period of otolith growth tropocollagens (300 - 280 nm) aggregated at the same time in one day into a surface network of diamond-shaped mesh fibres and needles of aragonite crystallized in them later on the same day. Daily increments arranged from the same length elements of tropocollagen (260 nm) should be similar. And in fact, for example for young *C. aceratus* were 0.0016 mm and for

young *C. gunnari* 0.0024 mm. Changes between developmental stages and interspecies changes in the width of otolith increments result from different swimming strategies under different habitat conditions, changing with the change of the developmental stage, which affects the shape of the otolith. The young of *Ps. georgianus* during development to maturity make wide vertical migration to deep-water for feeding on krill larvae, which increases the width of the dorsal otolith increments and creates an additional growth centre. This makes otoliths greater in height than in length, which further reduces deviations in vertical migration. On the other hand, in mature individuals swimming faster and feeding on larger krill at shallower depths, carrying out horizontal migrations, otoliths with additional growth centres increase the length of the otolith, which reduces the deviation in horizontal migration. Changes in the shape of the otolith due to changes in speed and swimming strategy increase their directional accuracy and the success of catching krill. The pattern can be determined and verified with tests for the smallest constant-periodicity. They can be replaced by the constant mass increment of the otoliths.

- Importance to MICRA
- Applicant's reason for attending meeting (e.g., poster or oral presentation, training or workshop, active role in technical committee or another working group meeting)

Administrator or supervisor's written recommendation

Mississippi together with Colorado, Amazon and Parana are dumping warm water about $10 \cdot 10^{12}$ $\text{km}^3 \cdot \text{year}^{-1}$ into the current of North Atlantic Surface Water (NASW) of great thermohaline circulation: NASW of surface Atlantic Ocean flow to \rightarrow surface Arctic Sea (cooling & sink \downarrow to bottom water) \rightarrow bottom Atlantic Ocean \rightarrow bottom Pacific Ocean (warmed \uparrow into surface water by Mekong, Yangtze, Ganges & Indus) \rightarrow and back to surface Atlantic Ocean (warmed by Nile, Niger & Congo) & connect with NASW \rightarrow surface Arctic Sea (cooling & sink \downarrow to bottom water) & repeat... So large rivers goes into the sea currents – and constitute them. So the sea currents are the sea rivers.

My presentation is about: "Change of the Life Strategy of Icefish" – fish that live in the sea currents of the largest current in the world: the West Wind Drift or Antarctic Circumpolar Current (ACC) – live i.e. in rivers (of sea) such as the Mississippi or Amazon.

The fish change life strategy because of lack of food caused by warming that could also decrease or change type of food in rivers.

So in lack of food:

- 1) One species of fish it concentrates in shoals that are more likely to encounter food. Similarly, shoals of small fish can form in rivers. And such a school follows those who have encountered food.
- 2) Another species of fish gathers in vertical vortex locations that gather – draws plankton food from all over the area. Similarly, in rivers, in bends there are local eddies that concentrate plankton from the river. That food in eddies focuses of fish.
- 3) Another species migrates vertically to deeper, colder, bottom waters, and feeds on bottom-dwelling animals that are safe from the effects of warming. Similarly, in rivers, some fish can swim to deeper, colder waters to find food from the bottom.
- 4) Another species migrates horizontally using the currents to other remote food-rich places. Similarly, some fish living in rivers can swim with the currents and discover new places, oxbow lakes, lakes rich in food. Likewise, fish larvae migrate from shallow hatching sites to adults deep one where there is food for large fish.

How to know which species of fish and in what way it will change the behavior of life. Otoliths that mirror the way they swim can be explored that show my second above mentioned presentation.

We can test for ourself whether a species lives in shoals as a result of evolution or result of changes in environmental conditions.

In my room I made a model of rivers and canals 6 meters long, connecting 6 large, 20-liter reservoirs on the surface and at the bottom. In former live and study at a fishing school by the river – I caught small fish and other small aquatic animals. Now I live in the city and bought small fish in the store, the seller assured that they live in shoals - showing in his large one aquarium all their shoals driven by the current from the rotor. When I put 2 fish in one tank, one was placed at the surface and the other at the bottom. When I placed them in a system of connected large reservoirs, rivers and canals: some of them were placed separately: one or two in different large reservoirs, and in different rivers, and separately in underwater channels. When I added another species, some separated from another species, but others merged their living places. There were changes in the distribution with changes in plant density, water temperature, and the amount of light. So the fish only at the seller's shop lived in a school in one large aquarium, concentrated and guided by the

current - but not in a system similar to the nature of various rivers, canals, reservoirs and lakes. In this way we can study fish behavior, seems more interesting, that I can present in Spokane. In view of my activity for AFS I made 9 presentations at AFS meetings and 10 presentations in another countries:

International Meetings, Working Groups and Conferences.

Traczyk Ryszard Jacek 2017: Stock of South Georgia icefish (*Pseudochaenichthys georgianus* Norman, 1937) in 1976-2015. W: 147th American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, 20-24 August 2017, Tampa, Floryda, 2017

Traczyk Ryszard Jacek 2017: Concrete riverbeds dumping the fresh water, sands to the currents of the sea triggers barren lands, unproductive aquatic reservoirs, pollution and are more harmful to world than volcanoes. W: 147th American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, 20-24 August 2017, Tampa, Floryda, 2017, s.114-114

Traczyk Ryszard Jacek 2017: Embryogenesis in otoliths icefish *Pseudochaenichthys georgianus* and phylogeny of the development of the body and brain along with the perception of changes in position, speed swimming and sounds, W: International Conference on Engineering and Ecohydrology for Fish Passage: June 19-21, 2017: Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon (USA): presentation abstracts, 2017, s. 92-92

Traczyk Ryszard Jacek 2017: Human work on inland waters and its influence on the pattern: river - sea - ocean; development of inland fisheries hope for reversing warming, W: 147th American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, 20-24 August 2017, Tampa, Floryda, 2017, s.80-80

Traczyk Ryszard Jacek 2017: Present and future with dioxins: deadly bidirectional arrows occurring in the rivers, seas, in living organisms and in our homes, W: 147th American Fisheries Society Annual Meeting, 20-24 August 2017, Tampa, Floryda, 2017, s.80-80

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19) Mississippi-Yangtze River Basins Symposium Sponsorship Request

Decision:

The Executive Board will make a decision regarding the request MICRA received for financial support of the Mississippi-Yangtze River Basins Symposium to be held at this year's AFS Annual Meeting in Spokane, WA. The symposium has been a biennial event rotating between the U.S. and China since 2013. As of July 3, only \$1,000 had pledged of the anticipated \$12,000 needed for the symposium. Additional information is provided in the correspondence provided below.

Notes:

It was about a month ago when Conover received a request for MICRA sponsorship of the Mississippi-Yangtze River Basins Symposium. He was told that it would not be too late if the board discussed and made a decision during their meeting this week. He did not receive an answer to a question he asked about benefits for different sponsorship levels. MICRA previously participated in an early US-based symposium in Memphis. Staff from several MICRA member agencies have traveled to China to participate in previous symposia hosted in China.

Discussion:

Is the funding support needed to pay for speaker travel to the symposium? No, most of the cost is associated with providing the streaming capability for the Chinese speakers to participate remotely.

Several professors from UABP have been involved with this for years. There is a nexus for MICRA that is worth considering.

MICRA has a history of supporting these kinds of symposia in the past? Yes, for example MICRA provided sponsorship for the two Catfish Symposia that have been held in the basin.

What does MICRA's treasury look like? Strong. At the last board meeting, we discussed how MICRA's yearend balance has continued to increase slightly over the last several years despite budgeting for full expenditure of annual income each year. A lot of that is due to reduced travel.

What level of support are we talking about? \$1,000 sponsorship has been a typical level of support from MICRA for these types of events in the past.

Joe Larscheid made a motion for MICRA to provide a \$1,000 sponsorship to support the 2022 Mississippi-Yangtze River Basins Symposium at the 152nd Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society. Fiss seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. The motion passed unanimously.

- ! The Executive Board agreed to provide \$1,000 sponsorship for the Mississippi-Yangtze River Symposium at the 152nd Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society.
- ! Conover will notify Hae Kim of the board's decision that MICRA will provide \$1,000 sponsorship for the Mississippi-Yangtze River Symposium at the 152nd Annual Meeting of the American Fisheries Society.

7/27/22, 4:54 PM

Mail - Conover, Greg - Outlook

RE: [EXTERNAL] MYRIBS Symposium Sponsorship Request

Kim, Hae <HaeKim@MissouriState.edu>

Sat 7/3/2022 9:59 PM

To: Conover, Greg <greg_conover@fws.gov>

Thanks for the response. I am working on getting the most accurate answers. Have to run most of these questions by the committee, but I'll answer what I can so far. Our group is expected to cover out of our pocket, these expenses. Currently there is no monetary support from AFS or the USFWS specifically for this symposium. As far as the entire meeting, USFWS may be a sponsor, but I do not know that one for sure. I've reached out to Amy McGovern after receiving her contact from Neal. So far, we only have \$1,000 of the total needed, that's through one sponsor. The uncertainty of Chinese scientists being able to travel and trying to organize streaming options delayed much of this aspect of planning. I'm waiting on a response for what we can offer for the various levels. But I will get back to you as soon as I find out. Thanks and hope you have a great 4th!

From: Conover, Greg <greg_conover@fws.gov>**Sent:** Friday, July 1, 2022 11:46 AM**To:** Kim, Hae <HaeKim@MissouriState.edu>**Cc:** Phelps, Quinton <QuintonPhelps@MissouriState.edu>**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] MYRIBS Symposium Sponsorship Request

CAUTION: External Sender

Hello Hae,

I can present your request to the MICRA Executive Board for consideration. The board is scheduled to meet the first week of August so I should be able to have a response by August 4 or 5. Does that timing work? I anticipate I will be asked for additional information. Can you respond to any of the questions below? Thanks,

Greg

1. Are sponsorship funds for the MYRIBS symposium used to reimburse AFS and minimize the society's overall costs for the annual meeting?
2. USFWS usually has a substantial role in these conferences. Has USFWS provided financial support as a sponsor or otherwise for this conference?
3. How much of the anticipated \$12,000 expense has been pledged or is anticipated? Or, what is the remaining sponsorship need?
4. Are there any benefits for the different sponsorship levels? For example, are sponsors provided access to virtually attend the conference?

Greg Conover

MICRA Coordinator

Large Rivers Coordination Office

292 San Diego Road

Carbondale, IL 62901

618-889-9600 (cell)

618-997-9185 (fax)

From: Kim, Hae <HaeKim@MissouriState.edu>**Sent:** Thursday, June 30, 2022 11:37 AM**To:** Conover, Greg <greg_conover@fws.gov>**Cc:** Phelps, Quinton <QuintonPhelps@MissouriState.edu>**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] MYRIBS Symposium Sponsorship Request

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7/27/22, 4:54 PM

Mail - Conover, Greg - Outlook

responding.

Hi Greg,

Hope all is well! I am reaching out today to ask if there is potential for supporting the Mississippi-Yangtze River Basins Symposium (MYRIBS). This series has been a biannual event in either the US or China since 2013. This year at the AFS annual meeting in Spokane, our symposium will represent the largest contributed symposium with researchers presenting on topics across multiple basins, countries, and continents. These talks range from river management to ecology and span various taxa. Unfortunately, due to global travel restrictions, many international colleagues will not be able to physically make the meeting. In order to continue international collaboration and facilitate dialogue across the globe, we will be offering a live-streaming option for international researchers. Many of the contributed talks specifically focus on the Mississippi River Basin and spans many states along the basin. These contributed papers will ultimately benefit and help fulfill knowledge gaps in the UMR basin. Enclosed is the most recent symposium program, along with a formal donation request letter and sponsorship levels. Any and all support is greatly appreciated and will be acknowledged accordingly. All support will help cover costs directly associated with livestreaming and connecting with our international scientists. Thank you and the committee's consideration regarding this request. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out. Thank you.

Hae Kim*Research Specialist**Applied Fisheries Management Lab | <https://ahel.psa.fml.wixsite.com/fishlab>**Department of Biology*

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20) Schedule Fall Conference Call and Winter Executive Board Meeting

Decision:

Executive Board members will schedule a Fall conference call and Winter Executive Board meeting.

Discussion:

Should the Winter meeting be an All-Delegate meeting or an Executive Board meeting only? Would it be better to hold an All-Delegate meeting after the DC fly-in and once we have a draft Priorities Document? It may be helpful for the board to meet again before we plan an All-Delegate meeting. The board agreed to meet in early February ahead of the 2023 DC fly-in. NISAW 2023 is February 20-24. The board agreed to target early March for the DC fly-in.

Smith recommended the board plan for a MICRA Congressional briefing in late November or early December. The board agreed to hold a fall conference call in early November to allow time to plan for a Congressional briefing.

- ! The Executive Board will target March 6-10, 2023, for agency and Congressional visits in Washington, DC.
- ! The Executive Board will target the week of February 6-10, 2023, for a Winter meeting in Mississippi, Alabama, or Louisiana.
- ! Conover will follow-up with MICRA delegates in Mississippi, Alabama, and Louisiana, and Ashlee Smith, to identify a meeting location and options for an Executive Board meeting the week of February 6-10, 2023.
- ! The Executive Board will target December 6-7, 2022, for a Congressional briefing.
- ! Smith will work with the Executive Board to organize a Congressional briefing December 6-7, 2022. Briefing should include an overview of USFWS and USGS work in support of the sub-basin partnerships.
- ! The Executive Board will hold a fall conference call from 1:00-3:00 pm (Central) on November 1.

21) Other New Business / Parking Lot

Discussion:

Executive Board members will address topics added to the parking lot during the meeting and additional business items not on the agenda that board members would like to bring up for discussion.

Notes:

The board returned to a discussion about the potential for MICRA to work with Innovasea to establish a product incentive program for telemetry work in the Mississippi River Basin was initiated following the presentation on the FishTracks database (agenda item #5) and moved to the parking lot for further discussion later in the meeting.

Discussion:

Innovasea would be willing to facilitate network through a product incentive program similar to what they provide for GLATOS in the Great Lakes. They would like to know about the current status of the network. E.g., how many receivers are on the landscape, what are the receiver locations, number of tags, and the number and types of projects in the basin. They would like to see evidence of collaboration and information synthesis. Innovasea would like to be able to show how this collaboration is working to demonstrate the value of their products.

The initial discussions came about organically through the Lower Mississippi River FWCO but would be best handled through MICRA from this point forward. The next step with Innovasea would be a discussion and demonstration regarding the collaboration on telemetry projects in the basin.

During the initial discussion with Innovasea, Aldridge showed them the MICRA website and referred them to the invasive carp documents. He also showed them a screenshot of the telemetry array from FishTracks as a visualization of the network in the Upper Mississippi and Illinois rivers. Thirdly, he showed them a visualization of the network in the Lower Mississippi River that his office has been working on. Innovasea was interested in more discussion.

Are there concerns about creating contracting problems for agencies related to sole sourcing telemetry products? Innovasea is associated with both Vemco and HTI, which are the two technologies that are widely used in the basin so this does not create a contracting problem from that perspective.

USGS and other Federal agencies are currently getting a 9% discount because of the network established in the upper part of the basin. It should not be a difficult lift to get Innovasea to provide the same, or possibly a larger discount, to other agencies in support of the Mississippi River Basin network.

Do we have another option if they don't want to offer us a discount? If we don't have other options and they know the agencies have developed this large network reliant on their equipment, what's the likelihood that they will continue to provide this discount or work with the agencies to keep the prices down? If it appears that there is an agreement with Innovasea to use their equipment, this could still create some contracting issues for some states.

Does any sub-basin not see movement shaking out as a priority? Tennessee-Cumberland may be scaling back on basic movement but expect to increase again in specific locations to evaluate deterrent projects. There will be more telemetry work with native fish when evaluating deterrents. Innovasea did ask if this network was limited to invasive carp only or other species. They would be interested in creating different codes to track purchases for different projects and purposes.

How broadly do we think this could be applied to work with other species in the basin? It should be easy to demonstrate that the network is supporting native species projects. There may be some limitations for smaller, local-level projects (not interjurisdictional in scope) or to specific tag types that are being used for the largest projects.

It would be good to know how broadly the federal agencies are already getting a discount for telemetry work in the Mississippi River Basin.

- ! Conover will follow-up with Gaikowski and a few USFWS field offices regarding Innovasea discount pricing of telemetry equipment.

Do we need a letter on MICRA letterhead sent to Innovasea to initiate this discussion? Did Innovasea ask about specific agencies that are collaborating on the telemetry projects? They did not request specifics. We may be able to start with a phone call to determine exactly what information they would like from MICRA. We can then work through the sub-basin and partnership coordinators to gather needed information.

- ! Aldridge will send Conover notes regarding his discussion with Innovasea.
- ! Aldridge will organize a call with Innovasea to introduce Conover to discuss potential discount pricing for MICRA member agencies.