

Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association

- Executive Board Meeting Minutes -

Mille Lacs, Wisconsin

July 30-31, 2008

Action Items and Decisions

1. Conover will look into AOL, GoDaddy.com, and other opportunities to set-up a free web-based MICRA email account and web page (e.g., www.MICRA.com) that could be directed to the current web site maintained on the USGS server.
2. Conover will work with FWS to create an MOU with MICRA to exclude the MICRA laptop and/or data from a FWS FOIA request.
3. O'Bara will send out a request to MICRA delegates for a new Gamefish Committee Chair.
4. MICRA Executive Board members were asked to review the draft RFP prepared by the MRBP and to provide comments to Keller by August 8. Decision points:
 - a. Approve RFP.
 - b. Should MICRA/MRBP move forward with presenting the RFP at Triploid Grass Carp Workshop in August?
 - c. Should a MICRA or MRBP representative present the draft RFP and request stakeholder involvement?
 - d. Should MICRA/MRBP forward the draft RFP to Triploid Grass Carp Workshop participants for review prior to workshop for discussion at the workshop?
 - e. Should MICRA/MRBP forward draft RFP to other ANSTF Regional Panels or other entities to seek support beyond the Mississippi River Basin?
5. \$15,000 previously obligated for the ERDC sturgeon egg check mortality study was de-obligated.
6. Scholten and Grady will work with Dan Burluson (FWS) to develop, prior to the next MICRA Executive Board meeting, an accurate estimate of funding needed to develop (and manage) the LE/biologist roe fish harvest database.
7. Scholten will provide MICRA with a specific funding request at the winter Executive Board meeting to assist with printing costs for the Paddlefish Symposium Proceedings.
8. Benjamin agreed to Chair a MICRA committee to plan a large rivers habitat symposium at the 2010 AFS meeting in Pittsburgh during 2010. Thompson, Boxrucker, and Mac agreed to assist Benjamin plan for this symposium. Benjamin will contact Dave Day in Pennsylvania.
9. O'Bara and Conover will clean-up the draft sturgeon SOA document and distribute to all MICRA delegates for review.
10. An Executive Board conference call was scheduled for Wednesday, August 13 (9:00 am CDT) to discuss the draft sturgeon SOA document. A role call vote to send the draft document to the FWS will be held during the conference call.
11. The Executive Board will address the sponsorship request for the 2nd International Catfish Symposium during the winter meeting.
12. The Executive Board approved spending \$7,500 to match funds from Illinois, Kentucky, and

Missouri (\$2,500/each) for genetic identification/verification of commercially harvested sturgeon during the 2008/2009 fishing season. This work is in support of the shovelnose sturgeon SOA project proposed by the Sturgeon Working Group.

13. O'Bara requested the sub-basin representatives to be more active in communicating MICRA activities and issues with the fish chiefs in their respective sub-basins.
14. O'Bara will query fish chiefs to update the state delegates. The Chair and Executive Board need to take an active role in keeping all of the delegates informed of MICRA activities and issues.
15. The Coordinator was asked to publish one or two issues of the *River Crossings* newsletter during the remainder of 2008.
16. Executive Board members were asked to send links and sources for the newsletter to the Coordinator.
17. The Executive Board approved the Coordinator to spend up to \$5,000 to work with Jerry Rasmussen or another consultant to assist with publishing the newsletter during the remainder of 2008.
18. Conover will talk with the accountant regarding MICRA's financial status and obligations.
19. Benjamin will send the UMRCC legal opinion to the Executive Board to review.
20. Reed will check on the availability of meeting room space on Wednesday, January 28, 2009 to hold the winter MICRA Executive Board meeting in conjunction with the Southern Division AFS meeting in New Orleans, LA.
21. O'Bara will send a letter to the fish chiefs to inform them about the winter Executive Board meeting.
22. The Coordinator to develop a briefing book for the winter Executive Board meeting.
23. All Executive Board members will provide the Chair and Coordinator with agenda items including informational issues, decision points, and budget requests at least 30 days prior to the scheduled meeting date so the briefing books can be prepared and distributed in advance of meetings.
24. Benjamin and Scholten will e-mail their copies of the MICRA priorities document to the Executive Board for review.
25. O'Bara will draft survey questions for fish chiefs to identify their highest priority and emerging issues, seek feedback on MICRA's effectiveness and input on ways the organization can improve, and to gauge interest in MICRA holding all delegate meetings.
26. Executive Board will review the MICRA charter and Federal agency representation during the winter Executive Board meeting.

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Welcome and introductions

- [Attachment 1](#)

Review of agenda

- [Attachment 2](#)

Coordinator's report

Conover said that since starting as the MICRA coordinator in early March he has been working on moving the MICRA office to Marion, assisting the Mississippi River Basin Panel (MRBP) on Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) with projects and meetings, assisting with the shovelnose and pallid sturgeon issue, getting a handle on MRBP and MICRA financial issues, and getting his feet under him in his new position.

Conover provided handouts and gave an update on the MICRA budget ([Attachment 3](#)). He said that MICRA's available balance as of April 30, 2008 was \$93,040.52. As was the case in year's past, the accountant shows a higher balance (\$102,642.67) than does the coordinator's spreadsheet. The difference (\$9,602.15) was the same on April 30, 2008 as it was on December 31, 2007, so the difference in the two reports has remained consistent. Conover said that MICRA received \$50,000 from the FWS for hosting the MRBP on May 5, 2008. MICRA submitted an invoice for \$48,000 in June and will submit another invoice for the remaining \$50,000 owed MICRA through 2008 once the \$48,000 is received. He is optimistic that the MRBP finances will be straightened out by the end of 2008, if all continues to progress favorably with the FWS.

Chairman's report

O'Bara said that he has worked with the FWS to establish some new processes to make sure that the Coordinator is working within FWS policy. He worked with the FWS to create a budget for the Coordinator to cover MICRA related equipment, travel, and operational expenses. Coordinator is a FWS employee and has to work within FWS policy. O'Bara talked with FWS regarding travel and was told that approval of the Coordinator's travel for MICRA would not be an issue and so far it has not. MICRA transferred funds to the FWS to cover the Coordinator's expenses, including set-up of office space in Marion.

Rasmussen said that the reason MICRA had the PO Box was to provide separation between the FWS and MICRA to avoid creating a perception with the public that MICRA is an arm of the FWS. Rick Schuldt said that it is best to have official correspondence going to and through the Chair. If a PO Box would help that is something to consider. Rasmussen said this separation of MICRA from the FWS is also the reason for setting up the AOL email address. Anything sent to the FWS address is FWS property and is subject to a FOIA. AOL has free accounts. O'Bara said that it was necessary for the Coordinator's computer to be purchased and set-up within FWS policy so that the Coordinator can use one computer for FWS and MICRA responsibilities. O'Bara asked how the website is handled. Mac said that the website is provided through USGS

and does not present any problems as far as conflict of interest.

Schuldt said that the FWS has a similar situation with a person working for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and the UMRCC coordinator. Schuldt will check but does not see a problem with the Coordinator maintaining an AOL email account for MICRA on his FWS computer. Thompson suggested that a website and email account could be established through an outside party such as GoDaddy.com and would be relatively inexpensive, perhaps \$100-\$150. Scholten said that MICRA should consider setting up a simpler web address (e.g., MICRA.com). If MICRA wants to keep the website on the USGS server the website can be set-up to be redirected or mirrored to the existing server.

O'Bara has been working with FWS and Coordinator to get MRBP funding situation straightened out. Coordinator said that as of the beginning of 2008, MICRA had not received funds for hosting the MRBP since 2005. The MRBP is supposed to receive \$50,000 in funding each year. These funds are provided to MICRA. The FWS signed a grant with MICRA for \$98,000 in January to provide funds owed for hosting the MRBP in 2006 and 2007. The FWS reduced the grant by \$2,000 to cover MRBP chair's travel to Washington DC to meet with ANSTF staff during 2007. A payment of \$50,000 was received in May and an invoice for the remaining \$48,000 was submitted to the FWS in July. A contract modification requesting an additional \$50,000 for 2008 MRBP funding was also submitted in July. Once the \$48,000 is received and the requested modification is approved and paid, FWS funding will be current. O'Bara said that some of the problem may have been a question within the FWS of why the FWS is providing \$50,000 to MICRA to host the MRBP when the FWS provides a full time coordinator for MICRA. MICRA formally adopted MRBP as an official committee of MICRA to help justify the Coordinator's time spent working as a coordinator for MRBP. Keller said that we are on track fiscally with the MRBP, if all of the funds are paid by the FWS as expected.

O'Bara said that the majority of his time for MICRA has been spent working on the shovelnose/pallid sturgeon issue. MICRA has had several technical committee meetings including four face-to-face meetings to work on these issues. O'Bara met with FWS Region 3 Office yesterday. O'Bara said that MICRA has a chance to shine if we can be a leader in resolving this issue. We have expended some MICRA funds to make sure that members could travel to and participate in meetings. O'Bara has been talking with many fish chiefs to solicit their input, especially from areas that have not been able to attend meetings.

O'Bara commented that some states have not been paying dues and asked if this is a concern. Rasmussen said that dues were made voluntary when states signed on to the original agreement. It is probably in MICRA's interest to keep all states as members of MICRA whether or not the members are contributing dues.

Standing Committee Reports

Gamefish Committee

O'Bara provided the following written report prepared by Kyle Austin for the Gamefish Committee.

I won't be able to attend Chris. The note below is what I sent Greg back in June. As I mention below, I have nothing new to report on as Gamefish Chair. I was working with Tim Churchill of the TWRA on trying to initiate a project "to estimate the value of sport fishing from Minnesota and Montana to New Orleans", but Tim has taken on new responsibilities in TN and Bill Reeves has assigned Pat Black to be Tim's replacement.

The reason I was working with the TWRA on this new project is because it was their suggestion to do this project a couple of years ago when the Gamefish Committee surveyed MICRA delegates on potential gamefish projects. I have not contacted Pat yet to see if he would be willing to help put together a proposal. My role here with Kansas has changed in the past few months. I now supervise our fish culture section in addition to acting as special assistant to the Chief of Fisheries (Doug Nygren). Time management has not allowed me to write a proposal and be very active as gamefish chair. I apologize for that. I hope you have a good meeting next week and I'm anxiously awaiting the minutes.

Marion Conover expressed concern that the role of Gamefish Committee Chair, Kyle Austin, within Kansas has changed and he may not be able to participate with MICRA as he has in the past. O'Bara is concerned that although not stated directly by Austin, he may be interested in stepping down as chair. Rasmussen said that Austin set-up a Gamefish Committee meeting when he first took the chairmanship, but only Austin and Rasmussen showed up to the meeting. Austin has made attempts but there has been a lack of involvement from everyone within MICRA.

Schoenung said that it is hard to find interjurisdictional game fish issues; habitat may be an issue that the states could approach at the sub-basin level. O'Bara said that the Ohio River Basin states have struggled to work on game fish issues on a sub-basin level. It is more common for neighboring states to work together. Habitat may be a good direction for this committee to go.

Rasmussen said that the reason the Gamefish Committee was formed is because some states would only participate in MICRA if MICRA included a Gamefish Committee. The economic value question has been out there since day one. Mac suggested that not having a game fish committee or game fish activity may not be looked upon favorably by some of the state members. Rasmussen suggested that perhaps we should consider a species by species approach when issues arise. Boxrucker suggested that if the committee is not working there is probably a reason for that, and we may not want to force them to work. He concurred that there are not a lot of interjurisdictional game fish issues out there. Benjamin stated that the UMRCC has many committees that fluctuate in level of activity, some go dormant, but they never eliminate a committee because you don't know when issues or interest in the committee will arise. The sauger project was a good example of a valuable game fish project. Scholten wonders if some states would have a harder time paying dues if there is not a game fish committee, some states may be using sport fish dollars to pay dues. O'Bara said that many fish chiefs he talks with ask what MICRA has been up to, but he has not had anyone complain that the game fish committee is not doing enough. He agrees with Benjamin that we should not eliminate the committee but he does not know how to jump start the committee.

O'Bara said that states would have a hard time with the economic value issue above and beyond what the FWS already does. Mac stated that NE and MO have been working on a project to estimate recreational value of Missouri River and may have a template that could be used by other states. Usually the committee receives \$5-10,000 to complete projects. One strategy might be to look to USGS Coop leaders to see if there is any interest in a 3-year project. This would allow a Coop Leader to bring on a student and not take on additional duties himself. MICRA would be able to have some guidance on such a project and \$7,000 a year should be feasible for MICRA.

Thompson asked why we are interested in estimating economic value on a basin-wide level. Benjamin stated that it is because we need to be able to communicate the ecosystem goods

and services and justify the funding that is needed for environmental projects. Thompson said that is much broader than just sport fish. Benjamin said that it is a piece. Maybe that is what a student could do is to identify the different pieces of the problem/issue and the data gaps. We have not been able to show value of rivers. Public sees value to recreational lakes and even pools, but generally don't see the value of the rivers themselves. Hill said there has been a lot of value knowing the economic value of the sport fishery of the Great Lakes and the upper Missouri River. Thompson agreed with the value in knowing and communicating economic value, but asked why MICRA is looking at the economics as a whole versus for specific portions of the basin. The estimated value for the Basin as a whole will be astronomical and may not be meaningful to some legislatures.

Marion Conover said that he agrees with Benjamin and feels that a lot of the information is already out there. It may not be necessary to spend a lot of money to do our own surveys. A grad student may be a good approach. Are we talking about the mainstem river only, or are we also talking about tributaries and the entire basin? He believes the project is doable and may not be as big of a project as perhaps we are making it out to be. Schoenung said this is a similar approach to what was used for the sauger project. O'Bara said that talking to Austin the difficulty was finding somebody to do it. Universities have not expressed interest because it is not a true "research" project. He doesn't know if that information is worth \$50,000 to MICRA, but perhaps the same outfit that did the sauger project would do a good job. What can we do with the FWS? Can we add additional questions to the FWS survey to get additional information? May want to look at the FWS survey to see what additional information MICRA is interested in collecting.

O'Bara said the general sense he gets is that there is interest in keeping the gamefish committee and interest in looking into the economic value aspect. Boxrucker said that it might be possible to get an economics student to do an evaluation to find the holes and then request funding from AFWA to fill the identified gaps. Schuldt said that the FWS is also looking at this and Linda Kelsey may be a good contact. Scholten suggested that we may need to find a new committee chair and assign this project to the committee. Stauffer suggested that we leave the door open to other projects in case someone interested in being chair is more interested in a different project.

O'Bara asked if there are other projects of interests for the gamefish committee. None were made. He suggested that fish health is an issue that the gamefish committee could consider. Fish health is a growing issue and will likely effect game fish. MICRA could play an important role in providing communication between the states. MN/WI and the MRBP have had some experience. Keller said that the ANSTF has told the Regional Panels that they can consider viruses and diseases as AIS. O'Bara said that he is not sure who this is a role for.

Schoenung said that MICRA is not active on any of the Fish Habitat Partnerships. O'Bara asked if the UMRCC or LMRCC are represented on any of the partnerships. Boxrucker said that SARP is just starting an evaluation of the Sabine River. Stauffer said MICRA involvement may come more at the project level, rather than at the executive committee level. Marion Conover said that the candidates are a couple of years out from being added as partnerships. Benjamin suggested that the Coordinator get on the mailing lists for each of the partnerships and provide updates/summaries to MICRA to keep us informed. Thompson suggested that there is some benefit to being involved in the candidate status. There are some activities occurring at the candidate level that may be of interest to MICRA.

O'Bara said that we need to find a new gamefish committee chair and the committees number

one charge would be to look at this economics issue in a similar approach to the sauger project. He asked for suggestions or recommendations of individuals he could contact about being chair. Pat Black may be interested but he would be the third committee chair from Tennessee. O'Bara will send out a request.

Native Mussel Committee

O'Bara reviewed the following report submitted by Don Hubbs for the Native Mussel Committee.

Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society

FMCS held its 2008 workshop jointly with the Society for Conservation Biology 22nd Annual Meeting in Chattanooga, Tennessee July 13-17 giving FMCS international exposure and numerous opportunities for sharing, networking with SCB members. Approximately 50 members of FMCS/SCB attended an all day field trip to the Duck River to view its diverse fish and mussel fauna. A joint symposium: Beneath the Surface – The Freshwater Mollusks of the Southeastern United States was held on Monday July 14. Nine different presentations describing the status, diversity, life history, ecology, culture and propagation of freshwater mollusks informed attendees of the current conservation biology of this imperiled group. On Tuesday, the FMCS workshop titled “The Road to Recovery: Science to Secure Freshwater Mollusk Biodiversity” featured a morning session covering recovery science and policy, a panel discussion dealing with genetic tools for propagation and re-introduction, and an afternoon session on life history and habitats. FMCS members setup and staffed the FMCS information booth in the exhibit hall throughout the meeting providing membership information, selling hats and t-shirts, and showing informative videos to meeting attendees. The workshop and symposium were well attended and concluded successfully on Thursday. The 2009 FMCS symposium: *Healthy Mollusks = Healthy Rivers = Healthy People* is scheduled for April 19-24, 2009 in Baltimore Maryland.

Commercial Shell Market Outlook for 2008

This past January, I surveyed the traditional commercial mussel harvesting states to ascertain the status of their fishery and cost of permits and compiled them in the table below.

Several states have closed their mussel fishery, while others (Kentucky and Texas) have limited entry to previous permit holders. Please let me know if there are any corrections or omissions.

Most of the 2008 harvest is expected to come from Tennessee, Alabama, Arkansas, and Kentucky; but other states with closed or limited seasons should diligently guard their mussel resources against commercial mussel poachers as the market is shifting toward larger sized shells and prices for these shells are increasing.

Tennessee wholesale mussel dealers reported purchasing 2,505,205 pounds (1,253 tons) of mussels from Tennessee waters during 2007. The harvest value was estimated at \$2,378,398 compared to \$2,336,027 paid for 2,800,901 pounds (1,400 tons) in 2006. Mussel shells imported from other states equaled 37,030 down from 219,072 pounds in 2006, and comprised 1.5% by weight of the total Tennessee market. Higher average prices were paid for the larger sized categories of mussels, and buyers were actively trading during the summer, thus the harvest level was similar to 2006. Increased prices attracted additional harvesters, the number of licensed harvesters

increased from 250 in 2006 to 334 in 2007. Decreased demand for smaller sized shells drove the average price of 2 3/8" ebony shells down \$0.13 from \$0.61 to \$0.48/lb, while the 2 5/8" increased \$0.14 from \$0.74 to \$0.88, and the 2 3/4" increased \$0.11 from \$0.89/lb to \$1.00/lb. Greater demand for lake mix shells drove the 2 5/8" price up \$0.28 from \$0.97 to \$1.25/lb, while 2 3/4" lake mix shells increased \$0.14 to \$1.25/lb. Minimum sized 4.0" lake washboard (*Megaloniaias nervosa*) prices increased \$0.22 to \$1.28/lb.

The lower priced 2 3/8" and 2 1/2" (ebony and monkey-face *Q. metanevra*) categories combined, comprised 33% of the harvest weight but only 17% of the total value. Ebony shell in the 2 5/8" to 2 3/4" size comprised 15% by weight and 15% by value of the harvest. All size categories combined, the ebony shell produced 48% by weight and 32% by value of the 2007 harvest. Increased landings of lake mix categories (2 5/8" and 2 3/4") produced 47% of the harvest weight and 62% of the total value (Table 2). Lake grade washboards 4.0" and larger produced only 5.02% by weight and 6.77% by value of the 2007 shell harvest. River grade washboard production decreased from 12,509 in 2006 to 360 pounds in 2007. The market for colored shells (pinks) was very limited, producing only 0.02% by weight and 0.03% by value. These shifts in species and sizes of commercial shell landings were attributed to a general increase in market demand for lake mix shells. Weighted average wholesale price paid to harvesters (\$0.95/ lb in 2007), has maintained a steady increase during the last five years.

Current (as of Jan. 2008) License Cost for Commercial Musseling Permits.

License Type	Season	Harvester	
		Resident	Non-Resident
Arkansas	Open to residents	\$100	NA
Kentucky	Open to residents	\$400	\$1,600
Kansas	Closed through 2012	\$75	\$1,000
Iowa	Closed		NA
Illinois	Open to residents	\$50	NA
Mississippi	Closed		NA
Texas	Open to residents	\$36	\$960
Wisconsin	Closed	\$30	NA
Indiana	Closed		
Alabama		\$251	\$751
Georgia*		\$10	\$118
Louisiana*		\$155	\$1,460
Missouri		\$150	\$1,000
Oklahoma*		\$50	\$1,000
Tennessee		\$200	\$1,000

*Includes cost of required commercial fishing license

NA = Not Available

Mississippi River Basin Panel

MRBP Funding

MRBP finances were discussed earlier during the Chairman's report. Funding appears to be on track.

2008 Workplan

Keller said that the MRBP is unlike other panels and is able to spend most of their money on

projects rather than on a coordinator.

Projects for 2008 include:

1. Print a field guide to Aquatic Nuisance Species
2. Supporting ANS and boater surveys in Indiana, Illinois, and Oklahoma this year. \$5,000 is being provided to each of the three states to assist with completion of the surveys. Surveys gauge level of boater awareness, assess where boaters get information on ANS, and what boaters do to prevent spreading ANS. Ideally you conduct an initial survey as a baseline, implement information and education programs, and evaluate effectiveness of programs by repeating the survey several years later. These are baseline surveys. Who receives the survey? Indiana wanted to concentrate only on registered boaters but the state's Department of Motor Vehicles wanted too much money for that data so instead, Indiana is doing a random selection of anglers throughout the state. Oklahoma is conducting their survey among registered boaters. Marion Conover said that Iowa is conducting courtesy boat checks on some Holidays and weekends to raise awareness. Minnesota conducts similar activities and has their own am radio broadcast (AM 1601?) with a stop aquatic hitchhiker program message. O'Bara asked if funds are available to assist all states in Basin with these surveys. Keller said that all of the 2008 funds have been allocated, but projects can be submitted for FY09 funds.
3. Printing of proceedings of the International Asian Carp Symposium
4. Printing Hydrilla and Brazilian Elodea Watch Cards
5. Purchased 9 transmitters for early detection of Asian carp in the Illinois River near the dispersal barrier
6. Providing funding to support a PhD project (Leah Sharpe, University of Minnesota) to develop a Decision Support System (DSS) for ANS in the Mississippi River Basin
7. Planning an Incident Command System (ICS) based Rapid Response exercise in the Mississippi River for November 2008

2009 Workplan

Potential projects for the 2009 workplan were discussed at the June MRBP meeting in Milwaukee, WI, but the workplan has not been developed yet. Potential projects in 2009 may include a risk assessment of movement of fish to pay lakes. The MRBP Executive Committee will evaluate projects submitted by the panel's committees and rank the projects for funding in 2009. The 2009 work plan will be prepared and submitted along with a request for 2009 funding (\$50,000) to the ANS Task Force after October 1.

Collaborative Plan for ANS

The Great Lakes have completed a regional collaboration plan and there is interest in developing a similar plan for the Mississippi River Basin. The plan would identify the highest priority vectors, issues relative to each vector, and funding needs to address the vectors. Interest and potential for developing a regional collaboration plan for the Mississippi River Basin will be explored during the next MRBP meeting, tentatively scheduled for March 2009 in Oklahoma.

Triploid Grass Carp Inspection and Certification Program Review RFP

A Triploid Grass Carp Program workshop is being held in St. Louis August 27-28, 2008. States utilizing the triploid certification program have historically not been involved in discussions regarding the program. The workshop is intended to bring states into discussions about the program with the FWS and triploid grass carp producers. States requiring FWS triploid

certification need to be involved in management of the program (able to provide feedback) for the certification program to be most effective.

At the request of MICRA, the MRBP has developed a draft RFP ([Attachment 4](#)) seeking an external review of the FWS triploid grass carp program as recommended in the Asian Carp Management and Control Plan. The draft RFP seeks a review of the complete process of using grass carp as a management tool, including procedures at commercial triploid grass carp producer facilities, FWS triploid grass carp program effectiveness in preventing shipment and stocking of diploid grass carp, and quality assurance programs by states receiving shipments of certified triploid grass carp. MICRA had previously decided (December 2007) to present the draft RFP at the workshop and to request stakeholder, specifically aquaculture industry, involvement in finalizing the draft RFP. The MRBP would like MICRA Executive Board to review the draft RFP before it is sent to workshop participants; the workshop is scheduled for the end of August.

Mac asked if there is some mechanism to implement our recommendations. Greg Conover replied that the FWS, Region 4, has the lead on the national program and is working hard to make improvements; that is the purpose of the workshop next month. Recommendations resulting from a review of the program would be provided to the FWS, but there is nothing that would require the implementation of any recommendations.

O'Bara said that the Executive Board needs to be comfortable with this RFP because MRBP is a committee of MICRA and MICRA will ultimately be funding the project since the FWS provides MRBP funds to MICRA. There may be interest in expanding support of this project beyond the Mississippi River Basin. MICRA may want to present the RFP at St. Louis meeting. It would be best to get the draft out to MICRA states and producers to review before the state workshop. O'Bara requested members to review and we will discuss and vote on this tomorrow.

Reed asked if the review would be limited to the bullets listed on the draft or if these will be minimum requirements. He gave an example of shipments of farm raised largemouth bass received in LA that were contaminated with diploid grass carp. He would like to see the review go a step further to address this issue of contamination in shipments of other species. Could the review look at operations on the whole farm that could result in contamination or other issues? O'Bara said that movements of fish may be something that we want to look at separately. Contamination of shipments is a real concern.

O'Bara asked if MICRA should send the RFP to other ANS Task Force Regional Panels or other entities to see if there is national support for this project rather than just being a Mississippi River Basin issue.

MRBP Membership

Jason Goeckler (Kansas) just elected as First-Year Co-Chair. Doug Keller (Indiana) now the Second Year Co-Chair and Kim Bogenschutz (Iowa) is the Immediate Past Co-Chair, replacing Mike Hoff (FWS). Steve Shults (Illinois) is the Prevention and Control Committee Chair, Duane Chapman (USGS) is the Research and Risk Assessment Chair, and Steve Schainost (Nebraska) is the Education and Communication Committee Chair. Co-chairs, committee chairs, and coordinator comprise the MRBP Executive Committee. Conover said there has been some talk with the Executive Committee of adding a FWS Regional ANS Coordinator to the MRBP's Executive Committee. The MRBP Executive Board has spent time this year looking at membership and trying to fill vacant membership spots. There are several

membership vacancies for tribal authorities, local watershed groups, and private commercial interests. MRBP has 24 of 26 states represented, with only Georgia and New York not represented in the membership. Conover said that Georgia is represented as a non-voting Interested Party and has requested to not be a voting member due to their lack of involvement with the MRBP.

Screening Tool

The MRBP completed development of a screening tool in January 2008 for states to use to determine which ANS warrant full risk assessment. The MRBP also sent a letter co-written with the Great Lakes Panel to the ANSTF requesting the evaluation of current risk assessment tools, including a report on strengths and weaknesses of available approaches, and to recommend risk assessment tools to be for species and ecosystems. The idea is to use the best approaches from all of the available tools to develop a gold standard.

Rapid Response Exercise

The MRBP is planning an Incident Command System (ICS) based rapid response mock exercise to be held November 5-6, in Sparta, IL. The exercise will focus on VHS, but will also include a snakehead component. The MRBP is working with Tetrattech to plan and execute the exercise. Tetrattech is the company conducting the snakehead ICS exercise in Pennsylvania this week. Some of the MRBP members planning the Mississippi River exercise are in Pennsylvania this week observing the Pennsylvania exercise and will use what they learn to improve the exercise being planned in Illinois. Rasmussen asked if barges are being considered as a vector for dispersing VHS.

Northern Snakehead Status Report

Keller provided an overview of a Snakehead Status Report presentation prepared by Mike Armstrong and shared with the MRBP ([Attachment 5](#)). Marion Conover stated that this is exactly why we need a national clean list for imports, even though this would take away some of the state's rights on this issue. Under state regulation the basin is only as strong as the weakest regulation in the basin and so far the states have not been able to provide adequate protection. Federal assistance is needed to get a national list to protect the states from themselves. Iowa has developed a clean list. Benjamin said that WI is trying to develop a clean list. Scholten asked how the clean list addresses aquarium fish. Keller stated that this is another reason that we need screening and risk assessment tools. Mac asked if there is a weir or the possibility of putting a weir at the lower end of the watershed in Arkansas where snakeheads have been found. Reed said that green sunfish survive in crawfish burrows in rice fields during the dry periods in Louisiana, and snakeheads may have similar survival adaptabilities in and around the ponds, ditches, and canals in which they have been found in Arkansas.

Hydrilla

Keller reported on some success that Indiana has had in controlling Hydrilla in Lake Manita (735 acres). Indiana conducted a whole lake Sonar treatment in 2007, maintaining a lethal concentration from May through October. Indiana saw an 86% reduction in tubers after the first year of treatment. Cost \$350,000 for sonar treatment in 2007. Indiana is performing a whole lake treatment with Sonar again during 2008, maintaining a 3-6 ppb concentration from mid-May to mid-October. The formulation was adjusted for 2008 to reduce damage to non-target species. Indiana expects the cost for the 2008 treatment to range from \$350,000 to \$400,000.

Flouridone is the active ingredient in Sonar, which comes in liquid and granule form, but no surfactant is involved.

Indiana closed the lake after Hydrilla was detected in fall 2006 – residents were locked on the lake and non-residents were locked off the lake. Indiana relaxed the closure in early July this year following an assessment of the lake. The state will close access on the lake for about a 2 month period each spring to allow treatment and a survey prior to allowing access for the remainder of the year.

There has been a lot of interest from neighboring states. Indiana continues to do survey work in neighboring lakes within a 60 mile radius and has not detected any other lakes with Hydrilla. The source may have been boat traffic, but Wisconsin found Hydrilla tubers in vegetation purchased from a nursery.

Asian carp

Marion Conover said that just last week Iowa had confirmed a collection of silver carp above Lock and Dam 19 (Pool 18). O'Bara asked if MICRA should have an official position on the commercial exploitation of Asian Carp. Reed said that LSU Sea Grant has been looking at bighead and silver carp as a source of crawfish bait in Louisiana. There are problems with the cutting machinery as the bony heads of these fish tend to jam the mechanism.

Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee Report

Commercial Roe Fish Harvest Database

Hill said that Joanne Grady (FWS) met with Dan Burluson (FWS) to initiate development of a roe harvest database that would assist LE officers as well as field biologists. Columbia NFWCO submitted a request to FWS Region 3 LE office for \$10,000 to construct the database. LE came up with \$3,000 and asked Fisheries Program to pay \$3,000. Fisheries did not have the funds available. Scholten asked if it would be helpful for MICRA to send a letter to FWS expressing their support for the database. Hill said that it is possible that it could help.

Hill said that Grady may be able to start working on the database in September once she has completed other contractual obligations. Scholten said that he and Grady plan to work on the database in more detail in September to provide a more accurate description of needs. Hill said that unless money is put toward this effort it will only be worked on in an "addition to assigned duties" basis. Hill's shop needs \$10,000 to work with LE and design the full database. Depending on the volume of records and the types of requests, additional funds may be needed annually.

O'Bara asked if there would be an issue having a 3rd party construct the database. Andy Loftus (MARIS) is willing to look into the database needs and may have money to develop the database, but would not want to maintain the database. Is there a problem having a 3rd party develop the database? Hill said that Columbia NFWCO has the ability to develop the database, but needs the funds to develop it. Benjamin said that the UMRCC has a database summarizing commercial harvest. Data is up to two years old for some states.

Sturgeon Genetics Study

Scholten said that the Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee has requested \$7,000 for this study that will be talked about more during the SOA discussion.

Egg Check Study

Scholten said that the Paddlefish/Sturgeon committee considered two proposals last year to investigate mortality associated with egg check wounds. A project proposed by Columbia NFWCO for \$19,500 could not be completed last year because of timing and was not funded. Doyle said it would be best to plan for this project to be started in the fall and that Columbia NFWCO could conduct the study this fall if it is still desired.

The second proposal from ERDC is a complimentary study that evaluates mortality outside of a hatchery setting. This project was funded for \$15,000. The project was started earlier this year but was stopped because the facility was not large enough. The funds allocated for that project will not be used. The need for the two studies will be revisited during the Paddlefish/Sturgeon committee meeting in January.

Scholten made a motion to de-obligate the \$15,000 funds for the egg check study. Schoenung seconded the motion. The motion passed without objection.

Schoenung made a motion that MICRA obligate \$15,000 to be used to develop the commercial roe fish harvest database. Benjamin seconded the motion. Scholten said that he and Grady will have a better understanding of what is needed to develop the database after he and Grady get a chance to explore the database more this fall. If the next MICRA Executive Board meeting is held after the Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee meeting in January 2009, then a more accurate request could be submitted for consideration then. Schoenung withdrew the motion.

O'Bara requested Scholten work with Grady and Burluson to provide an estimate on the database.

Paddlefish Symposium Proceedings

Scholten reported that seven chapters have been finished, and five more chapters are due in August. He anticipates the book will be published during 2008. AFS requested \$25,000 assistance for publication cost of the proceedings. Scholten and Craig Paukert have requested funding assistance for the symposium proceedings from a number of sources and he expects to raise at least \$10,000 by the end of the year. He presented 3 options regarding funding assistance from MICRA:

- 1) match up to \$12,500;
- 2) provide the difference in funding;
- 3) agree to contribute a set amount.

Boxrucker asked if AFS will be sharing book sale profits with MICRA and other contributors if they fully re-coop their costs. Scholten said that AFS does not expect to re-coop their costs even with the \$25,000 requested to cost share printing. He said that AFS will publish the book regardless of whether the full \$25,000 is raised or not. Scholten will know how much money has been raised by the end of 2008. Boxrucker suggested sending a \$5,000 request to AFS sections (e.g., Management section) asap, but the deadline for requests may be past with the AFS meeting being next month. O'Bara requested Scholten report back after he has all contributions and can present MICRA with a specific request.

Habitat Symposium

Benjamin sent out an e-mail following the December MICRA Executive Board meeting asking simple questions regarding format for a habitat symposium. He received three general responses, but nothing specific regarding format. He requested more guidance on how to

organize such a symposium. MICRA has talked about doing the symposium as a stand alone meeting or in conjunction with AFS or Midwest type meeting. O'Bara suggested that we shoot for an AFS meeting (Nashville 2009 or Pittsburgh 2010). Thompson said Pennsylvania has a habitat section that can assist with planning. O'Bara recommended that we shoot for Pittsburgh in 2010. Perhaps have some key note speakers but focus on large and medium sized river examples. Benjamin said that there are great examples of projects in the UMRCC.

Pat Mazak in West Virginia is the program chair, but there has been no work on the 2010 Program yet. Rasmussen said that when MICRA considered this years ago, it was planned to be a stand alone 2-day workshop involving USACE and decision makers. Benjamin will start sending emails again but he needs input and guidance from people. Mac asked if we have narrowed down the idea from the broad word of "habitat". Rasmussen suggested that we are looking at habitat improvement overall. Hill said 2-day symposium was too long for the sturgeon symposium in San Francisco. O'Bara recommended that Benjamin contact Dave Day in Pennsylvania. Benjamin will continue as Chair for this project. Thompson, Boxrucker, and Mac will assist with visioning for this symposium. Mac asked if AFS expects monetary sponsorship for symposia. Boxrucker said that recent experience shows that stand alone symposia are not generally well attended.

Cormorant Plan

O'Bara has been involved in some discussions with Mike Armstrong regarding the cormorant regional management plan.

Sub-Basin Reports

Tennessee-Cumberland Sub-basin

O'Bara presented the following written report submitted by Bill Reeves:

There has not been an official MICRA sub basin group meeting in several years. However the event that has brought many of us together in the last year or so is the leak repair at Wolf Creek Dam on the Cumberland River in Kentucky. The USACE repair plan has affected fisheries management above the dam in Lake Cumberland, KY (50,000 acres), the immediate trout tailwater (KY) and the 4 reservoirs (first 3 coolwater) below the dam (TN). Fisheries potentially affected include trout, walleye, sauger, striped bass, and relict mussel beds. To accommodate plugging leaks with grout the USACE has lowered the normal full pool level significantly in Lake Cumberland and is passing inflow water through all downstream reservoirs vastly altering historic flow and temperature regimes. The coolwater flow was also used by TVA to cool discharges from two fossil fuel electrical generating plants. The downstream temperature below the Cumberland steam plant last year exceeded water quality standards by several degrees from the surface to the bottom. Also, in late summer and fall, the USACE uses the normal drawdown pool of Lake Cumberland to float barges in the Mississippi below it's confluence with the Ohio. This water is currently being obtained from other reservoirs in the Tennessee-Cumberland system. If you are interested in additional information see the web site: <http://www.lrn.usace.army.mil/WolfCreek/>.

LMRCC

Reed said that this has been a record high water year in the LMRCC. Water was diverted through the Bonnet Carr spillway for the first time this spring. Extensive sampling was conducted after the 28-day water diversion. Several shovelnose and pallid sturgeon were entrained below the diversion structure. Water is diverted from the river (north of New Orleans)

into Lake Ponchartrain; fish that are entrained are unable to get back to the Mississippi River. The dead zone in gulf is predicted to be the second largest size ever at approximately 8,000 square miles. Hurricane Dolly was reported to have broken up the dead zone. Reed had nothing to report on the recent oil spill (fuel oil).

O'Bara presented the following written report submitted by Paul Rister (KY):

Check out the LMRCC webpage at www.lmrcc.org, which now lists each lower Mississippi River state's sport and commercial fishing regulations. On this site you will find information about the Island 63 Fish Passage project, as well as other news in the summer newsletter. One story highlighted in this newsletter is the Loosahatchie Bar project. Loosahatchie Bar x Redman Point is located on the west bank (Arkansas side) of the Mississippi River, slightly upstream from Memphis, Tennessee (Mississippi River mile 739). Historically, the Mississippi River meandered widely through this area. A complex maze of secondary channels existed, which provided wetland habitat; and fish habitat during spring and early summer. In the 1960s, stone dikes were constructed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Memphis District to divert flow away from the Loosahatchie Bar x Redman Point secondary channel complex into the Mississippi River navigation channel. Over time the dikes served their purpose and sedimentation accumulated filling these secondary channels causing a loss to the aquatic habitat.

In 2006 the Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service began discussing potential construction of environmental restoration features in Loosahatchie Bar area. Several branches of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers worked together to developed a viable construction plan in 2007. Beginning in 2008, the LMRCC will use funding provided by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service Fish Passage Program and several non-governmental conservation organizations to construct 12 Corps of Engineers designed notches in nine existing dikes. These notches will require moving more than 26,000 tons of stone to restore flow in more than 11 miles of secondary channel in the Bar and improve water quality during all but extremely low river stages.

A second project that the LMRCC will be involved with is at Kangaroo Point, AR (Mississippi River mile 650). This is a project involving the opening up of about 2.5 miles of secondary channel.

Key Points

- 2008 LMRCC Summer Newsletter available on line at www.lmrcc.org.
- Loosahatchie Bar project will restore 11 miles of secondary channel with improved water quality.
- Kangaroo Point project will restore 2.5 miles of secondary channel.

UMRCC

Benjamin said there have been tremendous rain events the last two springs in upper parts of the Basin. The UMRCC Board passed a climate change statement. WI and IA signed a law enforcement agreement. MN and WI are working on a similar type of agreement. Better than 95% of rules in the upper basin are aligned. A big habitat project in LaCrosse, WI is on-going and will be complete in a couple of months. The USACE is building miles and miles of islands in Pool 8. USACE and USGS have developed a wind-fetch model that helps to design projects for vegetation growth.

ORFMT

Schoenung said that Indiana, Illinois, and Kentucky have been involved with paddlefish management. Indiana and Kentucky are working to develop similar regulations. Kentucky is currently working on a rule proposal review. Indiana and Illinois will match Kentucky's regulations if they are adequately protective.

Ohio River Habitat Management Plan had its first meeting in February in Frankfort. Money was received to complete strategic planning. Ohio TNC will be running that project to complete a basin-wide threats analysis based on the conservation action planning model. Meetings will be held at each end of the basin.

VHS has been detected at upper end of basin (OH). DIDYMO has been detected in WV. FWS and WV have been working on mussel restoration.

MRNRC

Doyle said the Missouri River has been above flood stage since early May. More adult pallid sturgeon were collected this year than any year prior. Crews are learning more about sampling these fish.

Mac said that the first evidence of hatchery fish spawning in the wild was collected this year.

Hill said the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee (MRRIC) was formed this year and should have a first meeting by early October. MRRIC's purpose is to help guide the prioritization, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and adaptation of recovery actions and to ensure that public values are incorporated into the study and the recovery and mitigation plans.

Hill said that side chute construction has been shut down because Missouri considers the disposal of dredge material in the main channel as pollution. A meeting is planned for St. Louis this October. Lisbon Chute has been a blue print of successful side chute construction. Last couple years of high water have developed more recent projects. USACE planned to construct 9 chutes, but is at least temporarily shut-down.

Red/Arkansas

Reed reported on a feasibility study to install hydroelectric projects at the five locks and dams on the Red River. Dams were constructed prior to listing of pallid sturgeon. Projects will be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Louisiana is hosting the 2009 BASS Classic in Shreveport.

Boxrucker reported that Arkansas is evaluating a request to open the Red River to paddlefish harvest. Statewide paddlefish harvest was off 36%. Decrease is suspected to be the result of high water and new length limit regulations. Boxrucker reported that the Arkansas River is receiving a great amount of pressure from Dallas metroplex and cotton growers in the upper part of the Basin. Paddlefish and bighead carp are up the river as far as the Lake Texoma dam.

Oklahoma has a paddlefish project with data provided by anglers. Oklahoma is working with Dennis Scarnechia to design project. Oklahoma processes fish for fishermen and sells eggs to fund the agency research program. Eggs were sold to buyers for \$185 per pound last year.

Sturgeon Similarity of Appearance (SOA) Activities (O'Bara)

A MICRA Sturgeon Working Group has been working on the Similarity of Appearance (SOA) issue since the Paddlefish/Sturgeon subcommittee requested MICRA to petition the FWS to list shovelnose sturgeon as threatened based on SOA. The Working Group has conducted several meetings and conference calls to discuss MICRA's decision regarding the SOA. O'Bara provided a draft document, developed by the Working Group, to the Executive Board for review ([Attachment 6](#)). O'Bara met with FWS Region 3 yesterday to discuss MICRA's activity on this issue.

Commercial fishing within the sympatric range involves Kentucky, Illinois, Missouri, and Tennessee. The fundamental issue has come down to identification. Commercial fishers must have available, and effectively use, a field tool that can be used to distinguish shovelnose sturgeon from pallid sturgeon. If fishermen cannot differentiate these species then states within the sympatric range should close their commercial shovelnose sturgeon fishery. The Working Group has designed a study to evaluate commercial fishers' ability to distinguish these species in MO, IL, and KY. TN has already conducted their own evaluation and concluded that fishers cannot distinguish the two species. Dr. Ed Heist (SIU) will conduct genetics analyses of collected samples from harvested fish. A description of the study, including decision points and a timeline for making decisions, is included in the draft document. The goal of the project is to eliminate the harvest of pallid sturgeon as part of legal shovelnose sturgeon commercial fisheries. If results of the evaluation are such that the species can be distinguished, MICRA would recommend a minimum set of management recommendations for states to incorporate into state fishery management plans. If results of evaluation determine that the species cannot be distinguished, MICRA would recommend that states close their commercial shovelnose sturgeon fishery. If a state were unable to close their fishery, MICRA would recommend that the USFWS list shovelnose sturgeon as threatened within the sympatric range of pallid sturgeon where states have not closed their commercial fishery. MICRA would also request that the FWS address the following 7 concerns if a decision is made to proceed with an SOA listing:

- 1) Limited to shovelnose sturgeon;
- 2) Limited to the confirmed range of pallid sturgeon where commercial fishing for shovelnose sturgeon is permitted;
- 3) Restricts only the commercial harvest of shovelnose sturgeon;
- 4) Does not impact the states' abilities to manage any recreational fishery, including shovelnose sturgeon;
- 5) Developed in active consultation with states;
- 6) Includes a Federally funded evaluation component and the ability to rescind the SOA listing if it is determined unnecessary;
- 7) Implemented with adequate time for states to implement regulation changes to protect commercially harvested shovelnose sturgeon populations outside the range of pallid sturgeon and other roe producing species (i.e., no sooner than January 1, 2011).

O'Bara asked for questions and comments on the process. Benjamin asked about a timeframe for endorsement of process. O'Bara said that the draft document will be cleaned up in the next week or so and then sent to the Executive Board and MICRA delegates for review. The timeframe for the study is to collect samples from commercially harvested fish during the 2008-2009 fishing season beginning this October and to have the genetic analyses completed by June 30, 2009. Marion Conover said that because MICRA operates by consensus, many states would rather see something different than what is proposed in the draft document, but this document represents the efforts of all of the states working together. Hill emphasized the importance of MICRA communicating with Region 6. Benjamin said that it is important to be

clear that this effort will not necessarily prevent an SOA listing.

Mac requested that we have a roll call vote on approval to send the final draft to the FWS.

New Business

2010 Catfish Symposium

O'Bara provided copies of a sponsorship request received by MICRA for the 2nd International Catfish Symposium ([Attachment 7](#)). Scholten provided an overview of the symposium. Funds would likely be needed by January 2010. O'Bara said that this should be on the winter meeting agenda item.

Budget Items

O'Bara stated that the Board had already addressed one budget item earlier in the day when the decision was made to de-obligated \$15,000 for the sturgeon egg check mortality study.

O'Bara reviewed the request made by the Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee for \$7,500 to conduct genetic identification of commercially harvested sturgeon. The funds would cover 50% of the costs to complete the study proposed by the Sturgeon Working Group. Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri will each contribute \$2,500 to cover the remaining 50%. Benjamin made a motion to make \$7,500 available for the sturgeon genetics study. The motion was seconded by Scholten. The motion passed without objection.

No other budget requests for 2008 were made.

Meeting was adjourned for the day

MICRA Strategic Planning Meeting

O'Bara said the in his discussions with fish chiefs throughout the Basin, he has heard concerns that at times there is a lack of communication beyond the Executive Board. Many fish chiefs have commented that they do not always know what MICRA's activities have been. MICRA has relied on the Sub-Basin representatives to keep the fish chiefs and others informed, but this is also a responsibility of the Chairman. The Executive Board needs to be sure that we are communicating the value of MICRA to all members so they know what they are getting for their annual dues. O'Bara requested sub-basin representatives to be more active in communicating with the fish chiefs within their sub-basin. MICRA also needs to make sure and keep each of the delegates informed. We may need to query fish chiefs to update the state delegates. Should we consider increasing dues with the idea that we would provide more services? We have been funding a number of projects recently.

O'Bara raised questions about effective communication within the MICRA Executive Board, preparedness for meetings, and the need for an annual budget cycle? When he became Chair there were several pots of money that had been obligated in years prior but were no longer active. He recommended that obligated funds should be returned to the general kitty at the end of each year and that requests for unused funds should be re-submitted each year to know that the funds are still needed. Rasmussen stated that many years ago he and Kim Graham were able to obtain grants, and funding from those grants had to remain obligated until the project was completed.

O'Bara recommended that we institute briefing books in advance of Executive Board meetings

to be more prepared and effective at meetings. He requested that all requests and action items be provided 30 days prior to meetings so that briefing books can be prepared and distributed in advance of meetings.

O'Bara suggested that we may need to consider the number of annual meetings that the Executive Board has each year.

O'Bara said that the Executive Board needs to provide the Coordinator with some direction. He has talked with the FWS about developing a work plan for the Coordinator so that everyone understands what is expected of the Coordinator. O'Bara said the Executive Board needs to discuss what they want to see the Coordinator be responsible for.

River Crossings

O'Bara requested the Coordinator provide a summary of the River Crossing Reader Survey that was published in the Jan/Feb 2008 newsletter. Conover provided a handout summarizing the River Crossing Reader Survey results ([Attachment 8](#)). A total of 72 surveys were returned; surveys continued to be returned into June. Of the 72 surveys returned, only 2 requested to be removed from the mailing list. Of these, one provided no additional remarks, the other commented that the newsletter is excellent but the individual is retired and too far removed from the issues. A few comments were received regarding content, but for the most part, respondents were strongly in favor of the publication and requested MICRA to continue the newsletter. Many respondents were not agency personnel, which Conover said gave him an appreciation for the level of grass roots support the newsletter gains for MICRA. Seventy-five percent of respondents requested that the newsletter continue to be published in hard copy. Although some respondents were willing to receive an electronic copy to save costs, many of these individuals stated that they preferred to receive the hard copy.

O'Bara requested Rasmussen to provide an overview of the River Crossings News Letter. Rasmussen said the MICRA began publishing the new letter the first year MICRA was formed. The publication has evolved into a summary of news from across the Basin after years of input from readers. Rasmussen sent out reader surveys about every two years. Greenwire expanded Rasmussen's ability to garner news nationally and internationally. Rasmussen estimated 25-30% of his time went to gathering information, compiling articles, writing and editing articles, layout, publishing, and mailing. Rasmussen did not feel that the newsletter got in the way of him doing other things for MICRA, but he also felt like this is one of the most important things for MICRA to do. The newsletter is sent to about 2,500 people, including every Senator and Congressman in the Basin, and 3-4 countries. Additional time and software are needed to keep addresses up to date and formatted correctly for the Post Office. E-mail address lists are also time consuming to keep current. Mac asked if the mail list continued to grow or if it had stayed the same over the years. Rasmussen said that the distribution list continually changed and required a lot of time to keep accurate. O'Bara asked about the cost of publishing each issue? Rasmussen estimated printing and mailing costs at about \$2,000 per issue; MICRA published 6 issues each year for an annual cost of about \$12,000.

O'Bara summarized that it will be expensive to publish 6 newsletters a year and time consuming for the coordinator, even more time consuming for the new coordinator who will be learning to publish the newsletter. Stauffer commented that publishing a newsletter every 2 months sounds aggressive for a new coordinator; it is a challenge for the AFS chapter. Benjamin commented that there are many people in the Upper Mississippi River that only know MICRA through the newsletter. It is not a question of do we have a newsletter, but how do we publish our newsletter. Rasmussen commented that the newsletter likely helps to justify dues for some

states. Marsan asked how much writing and how much editing Rasmussen did. Rasmussen said that he wrote very few of his own articles. Most of his writing was to weave together multiple articles from different sources on a single topic, but most of his time was spent on editing.

Boxrucker stated that although he is not in favor of the idea, costs could be reduced by going to an electronic only version. However, MICRA risks losing readers by going to an electronic only format. Schoenung stated that the Coordinator's time is more of a concern than the cost and that perhaps MICRA should look into contracting the newsletter out. O'Bara commented that other ideas included having the sub-basin representatives provide reports for the newsletter; having newsletters be issue driven; and publishing on a quarterly basis. Rasmussen provided pros and cons of keeping the publication focused on current issues only and having specific topics or deadlines for sub-basins to provide updates. Benjamin commented that publishing the newsletter is a good use of the coordinator's time. The first 3 goals in MICRA's priorities document are related to communication. Scott Yess has to beg for stuff for the UMRCC newsletter. He agreed with Rasmussen that it would be a challenge for the Coordinator to rely on or be responsible for getting articles from the sub-basins for each issue.

O'Bara asked if the consensus of the group is to keep the newsletter. Mac commented 'yes' based on responses to the reader survey and MICRA's mission. If effort is the challenge, then we should be working to increase our distribution to get more return on our effort. Most libraries have sections for this type of publication. The best way to get people excited about the resource is to educate them. This is a good product and a great way to increase MICRA's client base. Benjamin commented that people who read printed material tends to be older demographics so we also need to consider electronic media. Benjamin commented that it may be worth paying a consultant to revise our website and media tools to be more attractive to people. Rasmussen commented that we need a better way of using the internet. Boxrucker commented that after an annual work plan is developed for the Coordinator it would be a better time to make a decision about hiring a consultant. Hiring a consultant would also increase MICRA's costs significantly. There is a trade-off with the Coordinators time going to MRBP and this may need to be evaluated. Thompson suggested that we survey readers to evaluate people's value of the newsletter and their willingness to pay for the newsletter. Mac said that we need to cycle back to the newsletter after the discussion about what we want MICRA to be.

O'Bara commented that we have not had a newsletter since the Jan/Feb 2008 issue. The longer we wait the more we risk distancing MICRA from our supporters. The immediate questions are when do we want to send out the next newsletter, how many newsletters do we want to publish this year, and how do we get the newsletter out during 2008. Rasmussen commented that the MICRA accountant is a reader and he commented that we should look for grants to support the newsletter. Mac stated that grant opportunities are likely very limited given that MICRA receives state and federal funding. Schoenung stated that updates from biologists are not going to be as controversial and may not be as interesting to readers. Rasmussen said the soonest a newsletter could be published is likely September. It may be possible to get out September/October and November/December issues. Stauffer suggested that the Coordinator work with Rasmussen to transition. Schoenung stated that we need to determine what we want the coordinator to spend his time on.

Boxrucker asked what the FWS policy is regarding the coordinator's ability to enter into policy issues. Schuldts responded that a FWS employee would not be allowed to contact legislators regarding policy. Hill suggested that a call requesting information about a MICRA issue should be deferred to the chair. O'Bara stated that he would defer the person to the fish chief in the

specific state where the issue is. Boxrucker said that the AFS sends people to Washington every year to initiate contact with legislators and provide them a contact when issues arise. Rasmussen stated that he went to DC and gave briefings on MICRA. Boxrucker stated that may be a valuable role for the coordinator

Benjamin made a motion that MICRA try to publish 2 more newsletters during the remainder of 2008, with 1 newsletter being acceptable. Schoenung seconded. Motion passed without objection.

Mac asked what percentage of articles is from Greenwire sources. Rasmussen said that more than 50%. Mac said that he doesn't think having members contribute articles is the answer, but members should definitely send links or sources to whoever is writing the newsletter. O'Bara asked if Rasmussen is willing to publish the two 2008 newsletters. Rasmussen said he would consider the request.

O'Bara stated that there are a number of commitments for the coordinator, in addition to the newsletter, during the remainder of 2008. O'Bara said that one of the highest priorities for the Coordinator's time should be the completion of the sturgeon document and the initiation of the sturgeon genetics project. O'Bara stated that Conover reported spending about 50% of his time on MRBP issues and asked what obligations remained for the remainder of the year. Conover stated that he will need to continue working on the MRBP's funding, prepare and submit the 2008 report and the 2009 Workplan to the ANSTF, finalize the Triploid Grass Carp Program Review RFP, he has been asked to participate in planning for the ICS rapid response exercise, he will be involved at some level with administration and project management of each of the projects in the 2008 workplan, and he is giving a presentation at the triploid grass carp workshop in August. These are the major projects, but there will also be other coordination needs such as organizing MRBP conference calls, preparing meeting minutes, and following up on other action items from calls and meetings. O'Bara said that it looks like Conover will be spending at least 50% of his time on MRBP needs for the remainder of 2008. Scholten said that the Paddlefish /Sturgeon committee should not have any commitments for the Coordinator for the remainder of 2008.

Boxrucker suggested that if we want to move forward with 2 newsletters that we allow the coordinator to see what he can do over the remainder of the year and reevaluate in January. Boxrucker made a motion to authorize the coordinator to spend up to \$5,000 to work with a consultant to complete the 2008 newsletters. Benjamin seconded. Motion passed without objection.

Administrative issues

Boxrucker asked how much money MICRA generates each year. Rasmussen said that MICRA generally receives around \$40,000 in dues each year. Boxrucker said that the Coordinator could be responsible to look for outside funds to pay for projects. Rasmussen said that this was done in the past but someone other than the Coordinator has to do the project management and there were problems finding people to take on the additional work load of managing a MICRA project. O'Bara would like to see the coordinator become more involved with trying to find cooperators to help fund projects. That may be a small amount of the coordinator's time, but should be something the coordinator works on.

Marsan asked under what financial status MICRA operates? Rasmussen responded that MICRA has an accountant and an EIN number. Marsan asked if there are regulations that MICRA should be aware of based on the combination of state and federal funding sources for

the organization. Benjamin said that the UMRCC is considered a government agency and is exempt from many tax requirements. The UMRCC hired a lawyer to provide a legal opinion. He said that he could send this to the MICRA Executive Board to review and consider. O'Bara asked how often MICRA has contracted with outside sources. Rasmussen said that MICRA generally contracted with funding sources to receive contracts rather than contracting with outside sources for goods or services. Conover said that MICRA has recently contracted with outside sources to complete projects such as the ICS rapid response exercise for the MRBP. O'Bara said that MICRA needs to consider these issues and requested Conover to talk with MICRA's accountant and report back.

Benjamin requested a more complete agenda or briefing book for the spring Executive Board meeting. Benjamin requested information on decision items be provided in advance of the winter Executive Board meeting with adequate time for him to share with the UMRCC. Boxrucker recommended the AFS Division as a model that makes meeting more efficient.

O'Bara recommended that annual budget requests be submitted along with materials for the briefing book at least 30 days in advance of next meeting. O'Bara recommended that the Executive Board should consider meeting after the Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee meeting in January 2009, rather than in conjunction with the Midwest meeting in December as in the past. This would allow the Executive Board to meet after the Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee forms their annual budget request. Southern Division is the last week of January, Thursday-Sunday. Mac suggested that it may be worth having at least a portion of the meeting open to cooperators in the region. O'Bara stated that MICRA could get a letter out to the fish chiefs to inform them about the MICRA meeting. Scholten requested that the Executive Board meeting not be held the same day as the Southern Division Committee meetings. O'Bara requested Reed to check on availability of meeting space for Wednesday, January 28, 2009.

What do we want to see MICRA focus on for the long term?

O'Bara said the idea of MICRA becoming a commission has been kicked around for some time. O'Bara suggested that MICRA should focus on a few key issues, for example interjurisdictional fish, aquatic invasive species, aquatic habitat, and fish health are all basin level issues. Rasmussen said that MICRA was pretty active in the mussel realm years ago and the national Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society formed as a result of MICRA's activities.

O'Bara said that the overall umbrella for MICRA should be communication and the newsletter is an important component of that. Benjamin reviewed the goals of MICRA's 1992 activity prioritization document. He said that the goals in the priority document are very broad and still very relative, but we may need to consider the short term (6 month) activities. Scholten said that he had a more recent 2002 copy of the document that the Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee had used when they conducted some of their planning. Rasmussen sent the priority document out to the Executive Board for review in December 2007. Benjamin said the coordinator may need to send the document out to Executive Board again for review. O'Bara requested Benjamin and Scholten email their copies of the MICRA priorities document to the Executive Board.

O'Bara asked if MICRA needs to review the strategic plan and activity prioritization. He said he has heard some criticism that MICRA is not focused enough, and that MICRA sometimes gets involved in issues where it should not. He suggested that another option is for MICRA to concentrate on focus areas. Rasmussen suggested that MICRA could poll all of the delegates to determine the most important and emerging issues. Benjamin suggested that we make a list of issues and ask fish chiefs to prioritize their most important issues. The list should include

some blanks to fill in additional issues not identified. Mac stated that MICRA needs to be a state driven organization and MICRA needs to have this type of input and feedback from the states. O'Bara asked if a face to face meeting is something that should be considered in the next couple of years. He said that a survey may not engage states enough. Thompson stated that to be effective all of the delegates need to be involved in regular meetings; regular meetings of the Sub-Basin representatives are not adequate to keep all delegates informed and involved. Mac recommended that a question could be added to the survey to evaluate fish chief value of full delegate meetings to discuss MICRA issues. Benjamin stated that a full delegate meeting is not necessary for much of the Executive Board discussions. Boxrucker suggested having an Executive Board only summer meeting and rotating an all delegate winter meeting with the Midwest and Southern Division meeting. Rasmussen said the best attendance has been in conjunction with the AFS Fisheries Administrator's meeting. The section typically holds two meeting each year, one in the spring and one in conjunction with the annual AFS meeting in the fall. O'Bara stated that an annual delegate meeting may be too frequent and lose its importance. Schoenung suggested that any questions regarding dues should follow the planning exercise. O'Bara asked if the Executive Board is interested in developing a survey. The group agreed.

O'Bara asked for the Executive Board to brainstorm a list of potential issues for the survey:

- Four focus areas (fish health, IJ fish, AIS, and habitat)
- Rate MICRA's effectiveness and ways the organization can improve
- Information sharing
- Regulation similarity
- Data sharing
- Water quality
- Fish habitat initiatives
- Sponsor for grants
- Leveraging funding into the basin
- Lobbying – influence policy
- Economic valuations
- Climate change
- If there are large river issues that arise, do we want MICRA to be on the top of their list for decision makers to contact.
- MICRA's role for sharing information – web based clearing house
- Professional workshops
- What should be MICRA's focus areas and what would you like to see MICRA do?
- Thompson suggested that the Board may want to consider a multiple choice survey through something like survey monkey.

O'Bara said that he would work on drafting a survey.

Review of Action Items

O'Bara reviewed action items from the meeting.

- O'Bara requested Benjamin and Scholten to send the MICRA priorities documents to Executive Board for review.
- O'Bara asked all to review the draft triploid grass carp program review RFP and to send comments to Keller by August 8.
- O'Bara asked sub-basin groups to send something to Greg for the newsletter.
- O'Bara and Conover will get the pallid sturgeon document out by middle of next week

(August 4).

- O'Bara scheduled a conference call for August 13, 9:00 central to discuss the sturgeon document.
- O'Bara tentatively scheduled the winter Executive Board meeting for Wednesday, January 28, 2009
- Reed will check on room availability for winter Executive Board meeting in conjunction with Southern Division AFS meeting
- O'Bara will draft survey questions

Mac said to stay in line with MICRA's charter, the Executive Board needs to revisit federal agency representation. If there are only 2 federal agencies active in MICRA it might be appropriate for a different USGS office to be represented on the Executive Board after his stations term is complete.

- O'Bara said the Executive Board will review federal agency representation during the winter meeting.

Attachment 1: Attendance List

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>E-mail</u>
Chris O'Bara	West Virginia Division of Natural Resources	chrisobara@wvdnr.gov
Mike Mac	USGS, CERC	mmac@usgs.gov
Jerry Rasmussen	Natural Resource Management Associates	jjrivers@aol.com
Jeff Boxrucker	Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation	jboxrucker@odwc.state.ok.us
Wyatt Doyle	USFWS, Columbia NFWCO	Wyatt_Doyle@fws.gov
Sue Thompson	Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission	suethompso@state.pa.us
George Scholten	Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency	George.Scholten@state.tn.us
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Kevin Staffer	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources	Kevin.Stauffer@dnr.state.mn.us
Doug Keller	Indiana Department of Natural Resources	dkeller@dnr.in.gov
Brian Schoenung	Indiana Department of Natural Resources	bschoenung@dnr.in.gov
Tracy Hill	USFWS, Columbia NFWCO	Tracy_Hill@fws.gov
Bobby Reed	Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries	breed@wlf.louisiana.gov
Ron Benjamin	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	Ron.benjamin@wisconsin.gov
Sean Marsan	USFWS, Region 3 Fisheries Program	Sean_Marsan@fws.gov
Rick Schuldt	USFWS, Region 3 Fisheries Program	Rick_Schuldt@fws.gov
Greg Conover	USFWS, MICRA Coordinator	Greg_Conover@fws.gov

Attachment 2: Meeting Agenda

**MISSISSIPPI INTERSTATE COOPERATIVE RESOURCE
ASSOCIATION**

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING

**Eddie's Resort
Mille Lacs, MN**

JULY 30-31, 2008

Wednesday July 30 8:30 am-4:00 pm

Thursday July 31 8:30 am- NOON

AGENDA

***Call to Order/Roll Call/Opening Remarks* (Chris O'Bara)**

- Review of Meeting Agenda and Goals
- Review and Acceptance of December 2007 Meeting Minutes
- Review of Chair Activities
- MICRA Operation Procedures

***Coordinator's Report/Budget* (Greg Conover)**

- Review of Coordinator's Activities
- Review of Budget
- River Crossing Reader Survey

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

***Freshwater Mussels Committee* (Don Hubbs)**

- Written report will be presented

***Gamefish Committee* (Kyle Austin)**

- Written report will be presented
- Reassessment of priorities / Fish Chief input (old business)

***Mississippi River Basin Panel* (Doug Keller)**

- Update on finances/funding from FWS
- Update on funded projects (2008 / 2009 work plans)
- Collaborative Plan for AIS (Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Team model)
- Triploid grass carp inspection and certification program review RFP (old business)
- MICRA/MRBP activities at upcoming St. Louis Meeting

Paddlefish/Sturgeon (George Scholten)

- Update on ongoing and/or funded projects
- Paddlefish Stock Assessment update
- Paddlefish/sturgeon roe database
- Funding assistance to publish the MICRA paddlefish book

ONGOING ACTIVITY REPORTS

- Habitat symposium (Ron Benjamin / Greg Conover)
- Cormorant Regional Management Plan (Mike Armstrong)

BASIN REPORTS

UMRCC – Benjamin LMRCC –Rister MRNRC – Adams
ORFMT – Schoenung Tennessee River – Reeves Arkansas/Red River– Boxrucker

STURGEON SIMILIARITY OF APPEARANCE ACTIVITIES

- Overview of Issue (Chris O’Bara)
- Sturgeon Working Group – draft position paper
- Executive Board Discussion and Direction

NEW BUSINESS AND BUDGET ISSUES

- 2010 Catfish Symposium
- Budget Items
- Fall/Winter Meeting Planning
- Other New Business

MICRA STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING

July 31, 2008

What should MICRA strive to be?

Attachment 3: Budget Reports

Coordinator's Report

Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA) Budget Tracking

8/7/2008

Balance January 1, 2008 116,368.10

Receipts (thru April 30, 2008)

MRBP	250.00
Money Market Funds (Jan 08 - April 08)	383.37
Total Dues Collected	37,000.00

Alabama	Discontinued MICRA payments, doing all work through SARP.	
Arkansas	1500	
Colorado	1500	
Georgia		
Illinois	1500	
Indiana	1500	
Iowa	1500	
Kansas	1500	
Kentucky		
Louisiana	1500	
Minnesota	1500	
Mississippi		
Missouri	1500	
Montana	1500	
Nebraska	1500	
New York *	Received In May	
North Carolina	1500	
North Dakota	1500	
Pennsylvania *	Received In May	
Ohio		
Oklahoma	1500	
South Dakota	1500	
Tennessee	1500	
Texas		
Virginia		
West Virginia	1500	
Wisconsin	1500	
Wyoming		
TVA		
BRD	5000	
?	5000	
BOR		
USFWS	Coordinator Salary / Benefits	

Total Funds Available 154,001.47

Expenditures		60,960.95	
MICRA Coordinator		19,000.00	
Meetings and Travel Support		335.60	
Paddlefish Project		3,960.60	
Paddlefish Project - Database Manager		21,500.00	
Pallid Sturgeon Project		1,651.84	
Sturgeon Genetics		0.00	
ERDC Sturgeon Egg Check		0.00	
Freshwater Mussel Committee		0.00	
Gamefish Committee		0.00	
ANS Program (MRBP)		5,541.56	
Dues and Subscriptions		0.00	
Legal and Professional Fees		1,000.00	
Office Expenses		459.13	
River Crossings - Printing		1,478.21	
River Crossings - Postage		61.61	
Internet Fees - AOL		156.80	
Rent		0.00	
Repairs and Maintenance		0.00	
Supplies		171.82	
Unreconciled Charges		5,623.78	
Balance on hand	April 30, 2008	93,040.52	
Accountant Balance	April 30, 2008	102,642.67	
Difference December 31, 2007		9,602.15	
Difference April 30, 2008		9,602.15	
<hr/>			
Balance to be invoiced		148,336.00	
MRBP *	April 25, 2008	50,000.00	received May 5, 2008
MRBP	June 17, 2008	48,336.00	
MRBP		50,000.00	
Total Funds Remaining Obligated		141,437.14	
MICRA Obligations		43,392.70	
MRBP Obligations		98,044.44	
Projected Balance		99,939.38	

Paddlefish/Sturgeon CommitteePaddlefish Project

Budget	10,540.74
Expenditures	<u>7,460.60</u>
Remaining Balance	3,080.14

Sturgeon Genetics

Budget	7,500.00
Expenditures	<u>0.00</u>
Remaining Balance	7,500.00

Paddlefish Database Management (Columbia)

Budget	21,000.00
Expenditures	<u>21,000.00</u>
Remaining Balance	0.00

Sturgeon Egg Check Mortality Study (ERDC)

Budget	15,000.00
Expenditures	<u>0.00</u>
Remaining Balance	15,000.00

Pallid Sturgeon Project (MICRA Chair Budget)

Budget	5,500.00
Expenditures	<u>3,278.25</u>
Remaining Balance	2,221.75

Freshwater Mussel Committee

Budget	1,000.00
Expenditures	<u>0.00</u>
Remaining Balance	1,000.00

Game Fish Committee

Budget	0.00
Expenditures	<u>0.00</u>
Remaining Balance	0.00

MRBP

Projected 2008 Funding	148,586.00
USFWS	148,336.00
Receipts	250.00

2008 Proposed Budget

Panel Coordination and Support	30,000.00
MICRA Overhead	15,000.00
Panel Member Travel	8,338.00
Meeting Expenses	6,000.00
Contractual Projects	89,000.00

Expenditures	19,130.80
MICRA overhead	15,000.00
MICRA coordination, and support	30,000.00
Remaining obligations	83,545.03

Remaining Balance	910.17
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Executive Board Meetings and Travel Support

Budget	5,000.00
Expenditures	811.08
Projected (July meeting)	<u>2,250.00</u>
Remaining Balance	1,938.94

Coordinator Budget

Budget	19000
Expenditures	<u>19000</u>
Remaining Balance	0

Coordinator Budget (through July 28, 2008)

	Requested	Expended	Balance
Operating Exper	2500	963.46	1516.54
Travel	11500	4942.23	6557.77
Nebraska City - Sturgeon Working Group			
Davenport, IA - Jerry Rasmussen			
Minneapolis, MN - FWS R3 Fisheries ARD			
Windsor, OT - Great Lakes Fishery Commission			
Collinsville, IL - Sturgeon Working Group			
Shepherdstown, WV - National Conservation Training Center			
Milwaukee, WI - MRBP meeting			
St. Louis, MO - Sturgeon Working Group			
Mille Lacs, MN - MICRA Executive Board meeting			
Office Set-up	5000	5000	0
Desk / Chair			
Filing Cabinet			
Phone			
Mobile Phone			
Computer			
Printer			
Building Materials			

Accountant's Report

MICRA
BALANCE SHEET
As of April 30, 2008
(Unaudited)

ASSETS

Current Assets:		
Cash in Bank -QC Bank & Trust	\$	13,254.97
Savings - QC Bank & Trust		<u>89,387.70</u>
Total Current Assets		102,642.67
Property and Equipment:		
Other Assets:		
Total Assets	\$	<u>102,642.67</u>

LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY

Current Liabilities:		
Long-Term Liabilities:		
Stockholders' Equity:		
Net Income		(23,327.58)
Retained Earnings		<u>125,970.25</u>
Total Stockholders' Equity		<u>102,642.67</u>
Total Liabilities and Stockholders' Equity	\$	<u>102,642.67</u>

See Accountant's Compilation Report

MICRA
INCOME STATEMENTS
(Unaudited)

	1 Month Ended <u>Apr. 30, 2008</u>	<u>Pct</u>	4 Months Ended <u>Apr. 30, 2008</u>	<u>Pct</u>
Business Income				
Federal Grants	\$ 0.00	0.00	\$ 10,000.00	26.57
State Funds	4,500.00	98.52	27,250.00	72.41
Interest Income	<u>67.39</u>	<u>1.48</u>	<u>383.37</u>	<u>1.02</u>
Total Income	4,567.39	100.00	37,633.37	100.00
General and Administrative:				
Legal & Professional Fees	250.00	5.47	1,000.00	2.66
Paddlefish Project	0.00	0.00	3,980.60	10.58
Pallid Sturgeon Project	21,500.00	470.73	23,478.16	62.39
Aquatic Nuisance Species Pro	421.14	9.22	10,895.82	28.95
Office Expense (Overhead)	6.30	0.14	737.93	1.96
River Crossing Printing	0.00	0.00	1,478.21	3.93
Postage - River Crossings	0.00	0.00	61.61	0.16
Internet Fees - AOL/Store	0.00	0.00	156.80	0.42
MICRA Coordinator Support	19,000.00	415.99	19,000.00	50.49
Supplies	<u>0.00</u>	<u>0.00</u>	<u>171.82</u>	<u>0.46</u>
Total General and Administrative	41,177.44	901.55	60,960.95	161.99
Other Income and Expense:				
Total Other				
Net Income (Loss)	<u>\$ (36,610.05)</u>	<u>(801.55)</u>	<u>\$ (23,327.58)</u>	<u>(61.99)</u>

See Accountant's Compilation Report

Attachment 4: Triploid Grass Carp Certification Program Review RFP



2008 Call for Proposals

Mississippi River Basin Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species

Program Description: The Mississippi River Basin Panel (MRBP) on Aquatic Nuisance Species requests proposals for an external review of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Triploid Grass Carp Inspection and Certification Program (Program) to identify reasonable actions, where necessary, to improve the integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness of the Program (see '*Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States*'; www.anstaskforce.gov).

The external review should include an evaluation of:

- Standard Operating Procedures employed at commercial triploid grass carp production facilities for the production, inspection, and shipment of triploid grass carp;
- Program standards effectiveness in preventing the shipment and stocking of diploid grass carp in alleged triploid shipments;
- Quality assurance programs employed by states receiving shipments of certified triploid grass carp to ensure that only certified triploid grass carp are stocked in accordance with state regulation.

Proposals are due **December 31, 2008** by 5:00 pm (CST). Email all proposals to the MRBP at MRBP@fws.gov. Questions should be directed to Greg Conover, Mississippi River Basin Panel Coordinator, at Greg.Conover@fws.gov or 618-997-6869 x-18.

MRBP goal (in statute): Protect Mississippi River Basin aquatic resources by preventing the introduction and spread of exotic nuisance species through coordinated management and research activities of state, tribal, federal, commercial, environmental, research entities and other regional panels. More information about the MRBP can be found at <http://www.aux.cerc.cr.usgs.gov/MICRA/>.

Funds Available: A total of \$10,000 is available to fund this project, pending MRBP's federal allocation from the USFWS in the FY09 federal budget. Funds will be administered by the USFWS and will be awarded as a contract between the individual's institution and the USFWS. Projects that use the funds as "seed money" for larger scale projects or have matching funds available are strongly encouraged.

Overhead: The MRBP funding covers overhead costs of up to 15 percent and no more.

Project Duration and Award Period: Projects must be completed and final reports submitted within 2 years of the award date in April 2009.

Eligibility: Any individuals in federal, state, provincial or local agencies, institutions of higher education, commercial or non-profit organizations, Tribes, and international organizations not directly affiliated with the subject USFWS Program are eligible for funding as investigators or cooperators. Canadian applicants must have U.S partners.

Cost Sharing and Matching: No matching funds or cost sharing arrangements are required, although these are desirable and may be considered in the award process.

Consultation: Applicants must discuss funding proposals with and gain written support and approval from their respective MRBP state or provincial representative. MRBP representatives are listed in Appendix A.

Proposal format: Proposals must not exceed 4 pages and must include the following:

1. Page 1: **Abstract page**
 - a. Project title
 - b. Name, title of principal investigator(s), contact information and affiliated agency/organization.
 - c. Project partners, contact information and their role in the project.
 - d. One paragraph project abstract.
 - e. One paragraph statement of support from respective MRBP member. Attach letter of support.
2. Page 2-3: **Project design**
 - a. Issue and/or Problem: Describe the issue and/or problem that the project will address.
 - b. Objectives: List the objectives of the project. They should be specific, realistic, and measurable. Well-written objectives will describe the results or outcomes of the project in terms of benefits to the MRBP.
 - c. Activities: List the project activities you will conduct to achieve the objectives listed above. Include plans for distributing any products you develop.
 - d. Deliverables: List the schedule and specific deliverables of the project, such as publications, workshops or events.
3. Page 4: **Budget and cost justification**
 - a. Budget summary: Present your budget using the categories in the following table. Omit a category if you have no costs associated with it.

Budget			
Category	MRBP Request	Match (In Kind, \$)	Total
Personnel x hours @ \$__ per hour			

Office			
Travel			
Materials			
Indirect Costs			
Special			
Total			

- b. Cost Justification: Write a brief narrative that summarizes the funding needs for your project and that links the 6 categories in the table. Give a cost analysis for each deliverable you identify in the project design. Describe resource commitments of in-kind donations, funds and/or volunteers from other groups. The MRBP strongly encourages in-kind donations and matching funds.

Due date deadline: Proposals are due **December 31, 2008** by 5:00 pm (CST). Email all proposals to Greg Conover at Greg.Conover@fws.gov.

Selection Process:

- MRBP will form a multi-stakeholder review committee to participate in the ranking and selection process.
- The review committee will be composed of the MRBP Executive Committee and one representative each from university/research, aquaculture extension specialist, and a private commercial grass carp producer.
- The review committee will evaluate and rank the proposals based on how well they address the specific elements of the project design, requested funding, and cost justification.
- The review committee will provide a selection recommendation to the MRBP by February 1, 2009.
- The recommended proposal and justification for selection will be provided to MRBP members for review by February 15, 2009.
- MRBP members will select a proposal for funding during the annual meeting in March 2009.
- The Principle Investigators of the selected proposal will be notified by April 1, 2009 of selection and availability of funding.

Project Performance and Evaluation:

- The applicants that are selected to receive funding must submit a detailed statement of work as part of the contracting process.
- The MRBP executive committee will oversee the completion of the project and work with the USFWS to ensure completion of the project goals.
- Contractors must submit quarterly reports to the MRBP executive committee and the USFWS.
- The USFWS can divert funds to another project if adequate progress on a particular contract is not being made.
- A final project report is due within 2 years of the award date in April 2009 and must be approved before final payment.

Mississippi River Basin Panel On Aquatic Nuisance Species

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Vacant

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Ohio, alternate

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Committee: Prevention and Control

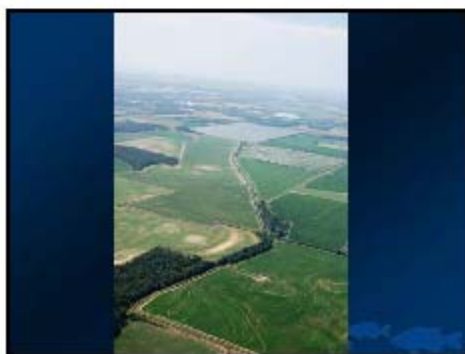
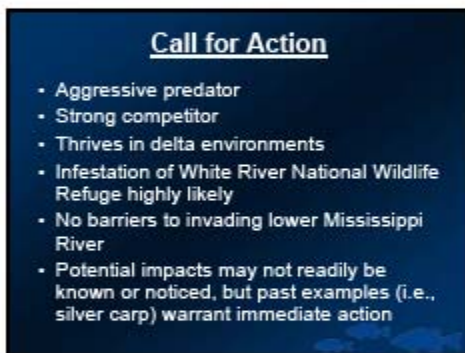
Wisconsin

Vacant

Wyoming

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Attachment 5: Northern Snakehead Status Report





- ### Plan of Action
- Develop eradication plan - July
 - Secure funding and partnership assistance - July
 - Secure landowner permission for access - August
 - Purchase fish toxicant (rotenone) - August
 - Public hearing - September
 - Chemical treatment - October
 - Assessment & Re-Treatment - October thru November



Decision Criteria

- Aerial application feasibility over 75%
- USFWS support and assistance
- Availability of rotenone
- Landowner and Public support
- Weather (flow < 50 cfs)

Project Budget

- AGFC Labor	\$31,300
- Chemical	\$326,000*
- Aerial application (USFWS)	\$135,000
- Equipment, Fuel, Safety,	
Misc. (i.e. unknown costs)	\$70,000*
Total Project Costs	\$562,300

*Costs not covered in agency budget - \$400,000 authorization requested



Attachment 6: Draft MICRA Sturgeon Document

Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA) Management of Shovelnose Sturgeon within the Sympatric Range of Pallid Sturgeon

The Pallid Sturgeon Recovery Plan identifies commercial harvest of pallid sturgeon as a primary threat to the survival and recovery of the species (USFWS 1993). Incidental and illegal harvest of pallid sturgeon has been documented in the Mississippi River, and is likely a significant impediment to survival and recovery of the species in some portions of its range (USFWS 2007). Higher age and lower mortality estimates for pallid sturgeon within the lower Mississippi River, where commercial harvest of shovelnose sturgeon is prohibited, suggests that the incidental and illegal take of pallid sturgeon during commercial harvest of shovelnose sturgeon is having a substantial and detrimental effect on the pallid sturgeon in the middle Mississippi River (USFWS 2007). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) expects incidental and illegal take of pallid sturgeon to increase in the middle Mississippi and lower Missouri Rivers, and to potentially become an issue in the lower Mississippi and Atchafalaya Rivers, as caviar sources are reduced world-wide and caviar prices increase, resulting in increased commercial pressures on shovelnose sturgeon (USFWS 2007).

Most (9 of 13) states within the range of pallid sturgeon have prohibited the commercial harvest of shovelnose sturgeon to reduce take and aid in recovery of the pallid sturgeon (Table 1). Two additional states (Missouri and Tennessee) have attempted to close their commercial shovelnose sturgeon fisheries in the past few years but were unsuccessful. Four states (Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee) currently allow commercial shovelnose sturgeon harvest in waters where pallid sturgeon occur and are utilizing a suite of available management strategies, including closure of the commercial shovelnose sturgeon fishery if other restrictions prove ineffective, to minimize the take of pallid sturgeon. These states are actively managing the shovelnose sturgeon fisheries within their jurisdictions and have recently implemented regulations designed to curtail the harvest of pallid sturgeon (Table 2). In 2007, Tennessee evaluated the effectiveness of these regulations; Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri intend to evaluate their regulations during the 2008-2009 fishing season. In addition to the suite of management options available to the states, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has the ability to close all commercial shovelnose sturgeon fisheries in the United States by listing the species as Federally Threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) based on Similarity of Appearance (SOA) with the Federally Endangered pallid sturgeon.

MICRA states with shovelnose sturgeon commercial fisheries have formed a working group that has met several times within the last year to discuss management of these fisheries in a way that prevents take and does not impede survival or recovery of pallid sturgeon. The working group is finalizing a suite of management strategies that will be recommended for incorporation into shovelnose sturgeon management plans in all states with commercial shovelnose sturgeon fisheries within the range of pallid sturgeon. MICRA members agree that prior to implementing and evaluating additional management strategies, it is first necessary to confirm that commercial fishers can distinguish shovelnose sturgeon from pallid sturgeon. MICRA has identified two fundamental issues that need addressed in order for states within the range of pallid sturgeon to continue to manage commercial shovelnose sturgeon fisheries within the sympatric range:

- 1) Validate an effective field technique for distinguishing shovelnose sturgeon from pallid sturgeon (by June 30, 2009)
 - a) If yes (technique is effective), then states proceed to validate if commercial

- fishers can use the tool effectively to eliminate harvest of pallid sturgeon;
 - b) If no (technique is not effective), then states should proceed by closing their commercial shovelnose sturgeon fishery;
 - c) If no evaluation of identification technique is completed, then MICRA recommends states close their commercial shovelnose sturgeon fishery.
- 2) Validate the effective use of the field technique by commercial fishers to eliminate the harvest of pallid sturgeon (by June 30, 2010)
- o If yes (commercial fishers use the tool effectively), then states should implement additional management strategies identified by MICRA (not yet finalized);
 - o If no (commercial fishers continue to harvest pallid sturgeon), then states should proceed by closing their commercial shovelnose sturgeon fishery;
 - o If no evaluation of commercial fishers' ability to use the tool is completed, then MICRA recommends states close their commercial shovelnose sturgeon fishery.

Following the implementation of additional regulations and educational programs designed to eliminate the harvest of pallid sturgeon by commercial fishers in Tennessee, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA) conducted an evaluation of these issues in 2007 and has since concluded that the proposed field identification technique is inaccurate. Their results conservatively estimated 1.8% of all sturgeon harvested in Tennessee were pallid sturgeon and commercial fishers misidentified 29% of the pallid sturgeon that they encountered. Since an accurate field identification technique is not available, the TWRA feels that closure of the shovelnose sturgeon fishery within the range of pallid sturgeon is the only option to prevent the take of pallid sturgeon. However, Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri have not evaluated the ability of commercial fishers in their states to distinguish between shovelnose and pallid sturgeons and have not reached the same conclusion as TWRA.

Illinois instituted a suite of regulations which became effective August 30, 2007 and requires that all commercial fishers harvesting shovelnose sturgeon from the Southern Zone of the Mississippi River complete a certification program to demonstrate their ability to differentiate between pallid and shovelnose sturgeon (Table 2). Missouri and Kentucky provide educational materials on the identification of shovelnose and pallid sturgeons to commercial fishers, and have expressed interest in adopting similar regulations and certification program requirements of commercial fishers harvesting shovelnose sturgeon within their states, if it can be demonstrated that the commercial fishers in Illinois can effectively use a field technique to distinguish between shovelnose and pallid sturgeon. MICRA will assist Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri to conduct evaluations during the 2008-2009 fishing season. The results of these evaluations will provide information on the ability of commercial fishers in Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri to distinguish between shovelnose and pallid sturgeons.

Fishery biologists from Illinois, Kentucky, and Missouri will each randomly select several days to accompany or intercept commercial fishers and obtain carcasses of sturgeon harvested from 5 general sites in the lower Missouri and Mississippi rivers:

- Lower Missouri River below Columbia, MO;
- Chain of Rocks reach in the Middle Mississippi River;
- Thebes, IL reach in the Middle Mississippi River;
- Wolf Island area in southern portion of Kentucky waters;
- Caruthersville, MO reach in the Lower Mississippi River.

Samples will be collected from sturgeon harvested by commercial fishers rather than by sampling conducted by biologists to demonstrate the commercial fishers' ability to distinguish shovelnose sturgeon using the proposed field identification technique. Biologists will select a minimum of 200 sturgeons harvested from each site with the weakest shovelnose sturgeon

characteristics, as determined by visual inspection, to collect morphometric and meristic data needed to calculate a Character Index (CI; Sheehan et al. 1999; Wills et al. 2002). Two tissue samples (i.e., fin clips) will be collected and archived from each of the 200 selected sturgeon. Sturgeon carcasses will be preserved for at least one year following the collection of data and tissue samples. One tissue sample from each of the 20 sturgeon with the lowest calculated CI at each site will be provided to Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIU) for genotypic identification. Biologist will also confirm that all sturgeon that commercial fishers release as pallid sturgeon have at least one of the three identifying characteristics of a pallid sturgeon. If released fish meet the legal definition of a shovelnose sturgeon, then all morphometric and meristic data and two tissue samples will be collected from these fish before they are released. These fish should be noted as "released by commercial fisher."

Researchers at SIU will isolate genomic DNA from provided fin clips and genotype each sturgeon at 16 disomic microsatellite loci as described in (Schrey et al., 2007). Each genotype will be compared to a baseline of 125 shovelnose and 100 adult pallid sturgeons from the lower Missouri and middle Mississippi rivers. The baseline was constructed by plotting morphological species ID based on the Wills et al. (2002) index against model-based genetic assignment in STRUCTURE (Pritchard et al., 2000) as described in Schrey et al. (2007). The baseline includes only sturgeon from the lower Missouri (east of Kansas City and mostly east of Jefferson city) and middle Mississippi (Alton to Cairo) and does not include any known hatchery fish (all fish were checked for PIT tags). The genetic criteria for identifying a specimen as a pallid sturgeon was a composite Q-value for the genetic group dominated by field-identified pallid sturgeon of greater than 0.80 and a 95% posterior confidence region that did not include $Q = 0.5$. The criteria for identifying a shovelnose sturgeon was a composite Q-value less than 0.2 and a 95% posterior confidence region that did not contain $Q = 0.5$. To identify individual unknown sturgeon we employ the WhichRun software package of Banks and Eichert (2000) which computes the likelihood of generating an individual's genotype in user-supplied baselines and compares the ratio of assignment to each baseline to determine how confidently a fish is assigned. The benefit of this approach is that it provides not only identification but also indicates the robustness of the identification. Fish will be identified as a pallid sturgeon if the log of the odds ratio (LOD) is greater than 2.0, indicating that an individual's genotype is 100X more likely to have originated in the pallid gene pool than the shovelnose sturgeon gene pool. Generally "good" pallid have LOD values greater than 3. This approach is conservative in that some true pallid sturgeons may have an $LOD < 2$ but it is extremely unlikely that a shovelnose or hybrid would have an $LOD > 2$. This is the same criterion used by the USFWS to screen pallid sturgeon broodstock for genetic purity, and the same methodology used to quantify the bycatch of pallid sturgeon in Tennessee's commercial shovelnose sturgeon fishery.

MICRA agrees that an accurate field identification technique must be identified and that commercial fishers must demonstrate an ability and willingness to use this technique to prevent the harvest of genotypic pallid sturgeon (i.e., $LOD > 2.0$). If it is determined that these two criteria have been accomplished, then management of a commercial shovelnose sturgeon fishery within the range of pallid sturgeon may be possible with the implementation and evaluation of additional management strategies to further reduce the possibility of commercial fishers harvesting pallid sturgeon. To demonstrate that these two criteria can be accomplished with Illinois' newly implemented management approach (i.e., suite of management regulations, mandatory certification program, and field identification technique), the results of this evaluation must indicate that Illinois certified commercial fishers correctly identify all genotypic pallid sturgeon and that no genotypic pallid sturgeon are harvested by Illinois certified commercial fishers. The evaluations in Kentucky and Missouri will also provide information on the ability of commercial fishers in these states to distinguish between shovelnose sturgeon and pallid

sturgeon. It is agreed that if the field identification technique and its application by commercial fishers is determined to be effective at discriminating shovelnose sturgeon from pallid sturgeon, MICRA will recommend a suite of management strategies for states to incorporate into state fishery management plans to further reduce the likelihood of harvest of pallid sturgeon in commercial shovelnose sturgeon fisheries. MICRA will also recommend continued monitoring and evaluation of the commercial sturgeon harvest for pallid sturgeon. However, if the field identification technique or its application is determined unsuccessful due to the inability of Illinois certified commercial fishers to effectively discriminate shovelnose sturgeon from pallid sturgeon, then the continued management of commercial shovelnose sturgeon fisheries within the range of pallid sturgeon may not be possible and MICRA will recommend that all states close their commercial shovelnose sturgeon fisheries within the known range of the pallid sturgeon.

MICRA recognizes the USFWS's authority to list shovelnose sturgeon as threatened for the protection of pallid sturgeon. Many member states are concerned that an SOA listing could unnecessarily affect recreational and other commercial fisheries throughout the Mississippi River basin. To address these concerns MICRA requests that if the USFWS determines an SOA listing necessary, the listing be developed in a manner that addresses each of the following seven points:

- 1) Limited to shovelnose sturgeon;
- 2) Limited to the confirmed range of pallid sturgeon where commercial fishing for shovelnose sturgeon is permitted;
- 3) Restricts only the commercial harvest of shovelnose sturgeon;
- 4) Does not impact the states' abilities to manage any recreational fishery, including shovelnose sturgeon;
- 5) Developed in active consultation with states;
- 6) Includes a federally funded evaluation component and the ability to rescind the SOA listing if determined unnecessary;
- 7) Implemented with adequate time for states to implement regulation changes to protect commercially harvested shovelnose sturgeon populations outside the range of pallid sturgeon and other roe producing species (i.e., no sooner than January 1, 2011).

Table 1. Status of the shovelnose sturgeon commercial fishery by state within the range of pallid sturgeon.

State	Status
Arkansas	Closed
Illinois	Open
Iowa	Closed
Kansas	Closed
Kentucky	Open
Louisiana	Closed
Mississippi	Closed
Missouri	Open
Montana	Closed
Nebraska	Closed
North Dakota	Closed
South Dakota	Closed
Tennessee	Open

Table 2. Management regulations implemented within the last 3-5 years for shovelnose sturgeon commercial fishery by state within the ranged of pallid sturgeon.

State	Regulation
Illinois	Implemented 24 -32 inch harvest slot on the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers
	Implemented October 1 – May 31 harvest season statewide
	Required Commercial Roe Harvest Permit for both residents (\$500) and non-residents (\$3500)
	Required all eggs remain whole intact and inside the body cavity of the fish while on the water.
	Established two zones for commercial harvest of shovelnose sturgeon on the Mississippi. The southern zone (downstream of Lock and Dam 26) is the reach that pallid sturgeon are known to occur. Require that all commercial fishermen harvesting shovelnose from the Southern Zone of the Mississippi River complete a certification program and demonstrate the ability to differentiate between a pallid and shovelnose sturgeon.
	Established 3 morphological characteristics that separate shovelnose from pallid sturgeon and their hybrids: 1) scales on the belly, 2) alignment of the barbels, 3) length of the inner barbels in relation to the length of the head.
	Implemented that any commercial fishermen found guilty of taking any state or federally listed sturgeon species is ineligible for a roe harvest permit for a period of three years (above and beyond other penalties state or federal and associated revocation or suspension)
Kentucky	Require that all commercial roe harvesters be in attendance of all entanglement gear from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm
	Implemented 24-32 inch harvestable slot length limit on Mississippi and Ohio rivers.
	Implemented October 15 through May 15 season on Mississippi and Ohio rivers.
	Required Shovelnose Sturgeon Commercial Harvest Permit (\$500) for both resident and nonresident anglers in addition to standard Commercial Fishing Permit and allows residents to fish on either Mississippi or Ohio rivers for shovelnose sturgeon.

	No eggs of any species of fish shall be removed or possessed outside of the fish's body cavity while on the water or adjacent bank.
Missouri	Closed commercial harvest of shovelnose sturgeon on Missouri River above HWY 169 in Kansas City to have common regulations with states of Nebraska and Kansas
	Closed commercial harvest of shovelnose sturgeon on Missouri River between HWY 54 at Jefferson City and Chamois Access (~30 miles downstream) to protect high concentration of all sturgeon species near mouth of Osage River
	Implemented 24-30 inch harvestable slot length limit on Missouri River
	Implemented 24-32 inch harvestable slot length limit on Mississippi River
	Implemented Nov 1 through May 15 season on Missouri River
	Implemented Oct 15 through May 15 season on Mississippi River
	Required Resident Shovelnose Sturgeon Commercial Harvest Permit (\$500) in addition to standard Commercial Fishing Permit and allows residents to fish on either Missouri or Mississippi rivers for shovelnose sturgeon.
	Required Non-resident Shovelnose Sturgeon Commercial Harvest Permit (\$500) in addition to standard Non-resident Commercial Fishing Permit and allows non-residents to fish only on Mississippi River for shovelnose sturgeon.
	Keep shovelnose sturgeon whole and intact while on waters of the State (no egg extraction on the boat)
	Required reporting of weight for sturgeon eggs harvested, number of fish harvested, and weight of fish harvested
Tennessee	Implemented 24-32 inch harvestable slot length limit on Mississippi River.
	Implemented October 15 through May 15 season on Mississippi River.
	Required Commercial Roe Fish Permit for resident (\$1,000) and nonresident (\$2,000) fishers in addition to standard Commercial Fishing License (\$200 for residents, \$1,500 for nonresidents) to harvest paddlefish, shovelnose sturgeon, or bowfin.
	Shovelnose sturgeon must remain whole, uncut with eggs remaining in the fish's body cavity while on the water or adjacent banks.

Literature Cited:

USFWS (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service). 1993. Recovery plan for the pallid sturgeon (*Scaphirhynchus albus*). U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Region 6, Denver, Colorado.

USFWS (U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service). 2007. Pallid sturgeon. 5-year review summary and evaluation. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Billings, Montana.

Attachment 7: Sponsorship Request for the 2nd International Catfish Symposium

July 14, 2008

MICRA
Greg Conover
9053 Rt 148
Marion, IL 62959



Greg:

It is with great enthusiasm that the organizers of “Conservation, Ecology, and Management of Catfishes: The 2nd International Catfish Symposium” invite you to join us as a symposium sponsor. The 2nd International Catfish symposium will be held in St. Louis Missouri from June 19-22, 2010. This symposium is co-hosted by the Ictalurid Technical Committee of the North Central Division of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) and the Catfish Management Technical Committee of the Southern Division of AFS. This symposium will be the follow-up to the highly successful “Catfish 2000.”

Symposium attendance is expected to reach 300 and will include fishery managers, researchers, employers, educators, and administrators. The meeting will provide a forum for the exchange of information about the biology, ecology, management, and conservation of worldwide catfish populations and their habitat. Presentation of research on both game and non-game species will be encouraged. Symposium proceedings will be published through AFS in a hard-bound book. The symposium has allotted time for 80 20-minute oral presentations. Catfish 2000 continues to be a valuable reference and this symposium’s proceedings should be equally as valuable.

To attract anglers and provide opportunities for input and interaction, the symposium will be held at the conclusion of a national catfish angling tournament. The tone of the meeting will be somewhat casual, combining the scientific aspects of a professional fisheries meeting with the relaxed atmosphere of a sports show. It is hoped that in this environment, anglers and scientists will be able to interact openly and progress the management of these important fishes.

We hope that you are as excited about this great symposium as we are. If so, please consider becoming a platinum level sponsor. Attached are our sponsorship levels and associated benefits of sponsoring at each level. Thank you for any and all consideration. If I can be of any help in the decision making process, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Tom Lang
Fundraising Chairman
2nd International Catfish Symposium
(620) 672-0722
toml@wp.state.ks.us

Sponsorship Levels



Platinum Level - \$5,000 +

- Name or logo printed on registration gift
- Opportunity to insert materials into registration packet
- Two complimentary copies of symposium proceedings
- Two complimentary meeting registrations
- Sponsorship acknowledged publicly at meeting
- Sponsorship acknowledged in symposium proceedings
- Link and logo on symposium website
- Sponsorship acknowledged in symposium program
- Sponsorship acknowledged in AFS *Fisheries* Magazine
- Sponsorship acknowledged in In-Fisherman Magazine

Gold Level - \$2,500-\$4,999

- Opportunity to insert materials into registration packet
- One complimentary copy of symposium proceedings
- One complimentary meeting registration
- Sponsorship acknowledged publicly at meeting
- Sponsorship acknowledged in symposium proceedings
- Link and logo on symposium website
- Sponsorship acknowledged in symposium program
- Sponsorship acknowledged in AFS *Fisheries* Magazine
- Sponsorship acknowledged in In-Fisherman Magazine

Silver Level - \$1,500-\$2,499

- Opportunity to insert materials into registration packet
- Sponsorship acknowledged publicly at meeting
- Sponsorship acknowledged in symposium proceedings
- Link and logo on symposium website
- Sponsorship acknowledged in symposium program
- Sponsorship acknowledged in AFS *Fisheries* Magazine
- Sponsorship acknowledged in In-Fisherman Magazine

Bronze Level - \$750-\$1,499

- Sponsorship acknowledged publicly at meeting
- Sponsorship acknowledged in symposium proceedings
- Link and logo on symposium website
- Sponsorship acknowledged in symposium program

In-Kind

- Sponsorship acknowledged publicly at meeting
- Sponsorship acknowledged in symposium proceedings
- Link and logo on symposium website
- Sponsorship acknowledged in symposium program

Attachment 8: River Crossing Reader Survey Results

2008 River Crossings Reader Survey Results

I enjoy reading *River Crossings*; please keep my name on your mailing list.

- 54 responses

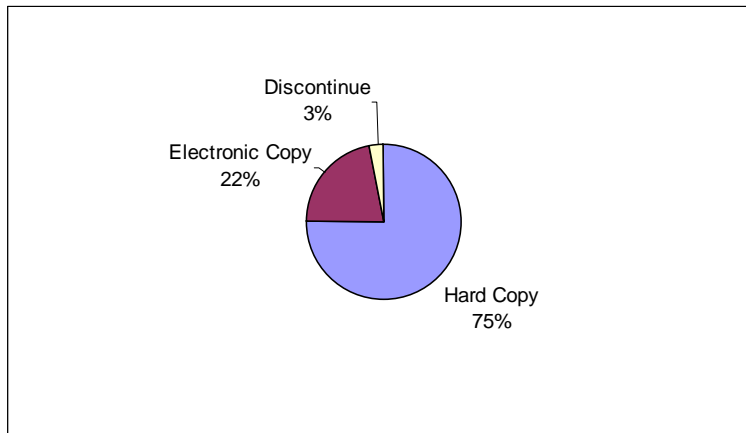
I enjoy reading *River Crossings*, but prefer to download it at your website. Please remove my name from your mailing list.

- 16 responses

I am no longer interested in receiving *River Crossings*; please remove my name from your mailing list.

- 2 responses

72 Total Surveys Returned



Comments on content (16):

1. River Crossings provides very pertinent and up to date information on the state of the MRB now, on research happening now, and on environmental legislation.
2. One suggestion...perhaps creating a sub-basin division in the publication (e.g., Missouri, Ohio, etc.) so that news/happenings specific to such basins can be found in one place.
3. I would like to see the number of articles grow with the length of some articles shrinking. Some of the lead articles go on for page after page with some redundancy evident. Also, I would suggest that the use of the term "climate change" be used rather than "global warming." Global warming is another example of a politically polarizing issue. There are scientists on both side of the fence on this issue. There is far more uncertainty relative to climate change. As good scientists we should be extremely cautious in jumping to conclusions relative to climate change!
4. The information in this publication is very useful and timely. Articles on invasive species are of particular interest to me.
5. This most recent edition (Jan/Feb 2008) did not (??) include the several page climate update section. I am very disappointed that it was not included. To me this one section is the umbrella/backdrop that puts all other articles in perspective. Please don't remove it from River Crossings.
6. Wonderful source of current information on issues, legislation, and meetings.
7. I particularly like listing of up coming meetings. Like articles about Louisiana gulf but enjoy all aspects of river.
8. Good compilation of articles on the Basin.
9. I am amazed at how much information is contained in each issue - there is nothing else like River Crossings!
10. I do wonder sometimes why there's so little news from Tennessee.
11. Most interested in ANS, global warming, H2O rights.
12. I would like to see more attention to mid-river states like So. Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri bootheel, East Arkansas, and West Tennessee. I am especially interested in issues like head cutting to tributary rivers (caused by degrading the Mississippi River channel), effects of channelization, loss of wildlife and recreation benefits. I especially would like to see some extensive treatment on the potential for river restoration.
13. I think that the articles within River Crossings which cover environmental issues and political decision making are good in that they provide an avenue for broader coverage. I'd hope that this will continue, and that your mailing or distribution list gets much larger.
14. The addition of materials on global warming/climate change has also been quite a welcome.
15. Would be nice if each basin would provide a contribution each issue.
16. I especially appreciate your watchfulness on the Climate Change issue. As for improvements, I think you should pay more attention to typesetting and layout - bigger headlines! It would get you a long way. (Easier to read.)

General Comments (59):

1. Great job getting out the latest information and events relating to our nations rivers and other waters. Thanks.
2. I don't know what more you could do than you are - very informative and covers a wide range of topics.
3. I have been receiving River Crossings for a few years now - since my resources are limited I rely heavily on it to keep me up to date. I still get it where I am but since my location has changed it takes a day longer.
4. I value River Crossings much more than any slick paper pretty picture magazine out there. Please do not stop with your very important reporting. Thanks for including me on your mailing list. I got here through Missouri Stream Teams and am presently teaching environmental science in High School and help out with a watershed group at the Lake of the Ozarks. Please keep River Crossings coming!
5. I appreciate receiving this. Keep up this great work!
6. I would like very much to be added to your mailing list to receive your newsletter. Learning materials are very hard to come by and I would appreciate very much getting the newsletter.
7. I appreciate receiving a hard copy of River Crossings in addition to being able to view it on the website. This allows me the flexibility to read it as time allows, as well as to forward articles of particular interest to my colleagues. Have relied on River Crossings to keep me up to date with everything affecting the waterways. Keep up the great work!
8. Yes! Please keep me on the hard copy mailing list. This is the best newsletter I've ever read. It keeps me up on all the topics that interest me, and more. I always pass it on to others and suggest they get on the mailing list. I photocopy pages for my files and to send specific articles to colleagues. Please keep this work going! It is very important! Keep up the good work. We all need the information you provide!
9. I have been retired from the NE Game and Parks Commission for 15 years. River Crossings keeps me in the information loop for many national environmental issues. Keep up the good work!
10. This newsletter is excellent. Keep up the good work.
11. Keep up the good work!
12. Keep up the good work!
13. I enjoy and appreciate River Crossings as it is. (Illegible comment.) Thanks.
14. Your information is so interesting and very knowledgeable. I pass each issue on to my son after I am done reading it. Keep up the great work.
15. I also read most of River Crossings from front to back. Enjoy hearing what's new.
16. You've done an excellent job with this newsletter over the years. I've enjoyed it. However, I am too far removed from the issues now.
17. I appreciate these conservation summaries - keep up the excellent research on these important topics.
18. Keep up the good work. Thanks.
19. Couldn't you email this instead?
20. Great rag! Look forward to getting it.
21. Thank you for providing me with a round up of river news from across the country.
22. We sure reading River Crossings so please keep us on your mailing list. Thank you so much.
23. The LMRCC considers River Crossings a valuable source of river-related information and retains the copies in a permanent file.
24. Thanks.
25. I enjoy and trust your insights. I was one of those people who thought global warming a political hot button until I got the real story from your mailing.
26. Wrote a letter regarding his experiences.

27. I really appreciate the news I find in each issue of River Crossings. It is informative and interesting. Keep up the good work!
28. Keep up the good work. I appreciate receiving River Crossings.
29. I am retired USFWS/USGS employee living in a small village adjacent to Lock and Dam 8 and Dairyland Power Plant in the Upper Miss. After finishing reading River Crossings, I leave on a coffee table at the local bar and shops - creates interesting controversial, but interesting discussions.
30. I am a retired marine biologist but my education was in the mid-west. I think River Crossings provide more news than any other fisheries-type newsletter. You give brief results of studies rather than entire papers (like AFS Fisheries) and include info far beyond the reach of your interstate association. I think your type of news is needed for marine areas on both coasts. I think your doing a great job and have always thought a more national news letter of this type was needed. Yours comes closer than any I know of. Keep it up!!
31. I'm not sure I "enjoy" reading River Crossings; I generally feel depressed after reading RC - there doesn't seem to be a whole lot of good news out there. Maybe you could add a few good "river jokes" at the end. Ha ha!
32. Great job! Keep up the good work!
33. I enjoy reading River Crossings but prefer to use your web site - please drop me from your paper mailing list.
34. Please keep Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge on the mailing list. Your publication provides some good information.
35. I enjoy reading River Crossings but it would save money to have it sent electronically or be notified it is available on a server.
36. I prefer to download River Crossings to save on mailing and paper, but would really appreciate an email letting me know when the new issue is ready.
37. I enjoy reading River Crossings, but prefer to download it at your web site, so please remove my name from your mailing list.
38. I enjoy reading River Crossings, but prefer to download it at your web site, so please remove my name from your mailing list.
39. I originally got on the River Crossings mailing list in the early 1990's, and I still enjoy receiving and reading it. I find something useful in almost every issue. Please keep me on the mailing list. I actually enjoy reading it hard copy, but also appreciate the opportunity to extract articles electronically from MICRA's website as they are easier to share with people in that format. Thanks again for putting out such a useful publication. BTW, we put out a newsletter (called NewsNotes) that is unfortunately only available in electronic form. Here's the link to it though in case you wanted to see it - <http://www.mass.gov/dfwele/river/newsletter/index.htm>
40. Please stop sending River Crossings to me at the following address...
41. I enjoy River Crossings, and wish to remain on the mailing list.
42. I enjoy reading River Crossings, but prefer to download it at your website... However, is there a way to create an e-mail listing to notify your readers when new issues are available? I ask this because I share this with a larger audience at my science center - 65 staff. Electronic notification or submission could be an alternate to reduce costs and waste. Great jog on this...excellent updates and resources. Keep up the great work.
43. I am a retired LA Wildlife and Fisheries management fisheries biologist (1997) but still remain active in pond & small lake management and consultant to Red River Waterways Commission of LA. River Crossings aids me in keeping up with happenings in all river systems in the Mississippi River drainage. I refer often to articles from River Crossings in advising clients (potential problems with introduced fish, aquatic vegetation, mollusks; pesticides; water legislature and desired lotic and lentic management tools. Keep up the good work and continuation of this method of fisheries knowledge distribution.

44. Yes, I read it and have for a long time. I sometimes use articles in newsletters we send out. Please keep sending River Crossings to me.
45. The publication is excellent in my opinion and gives me a broad perspective of water issues in the Mississippi Basin. I am a middle school science teacher and sometimes share the information with my students. I would like to continue getting the hard copy of the newsletter. I live in the country and work hard to protect the national scenic rivers in the Missouri Ozarks. Thank you so much.
46. River Crossings is the most informative newsletter that I receive. Don't stop; keep it coming!
47. Yes, I would like to continue receiving River Crossings. It is a great source of information. Thank you.
48. River Crossings has matured into a serious source of information about water issues over the years that I have been a reader. Please keep up the good work. I look forward to receiving this publication.
49. I enjoy reading, but to save mailing costs and paper, please remove my name from your mailing list but add me to your e-mail of contacts to provide notice when a new issue is available on the web site.
50. I have been receiving your publication since the 1980s after attending a conference in St. Louis. As I live just 3 miles from Lake Pepin, in the Upper Mississippi, I have a strong interest in the river issues you discuss. While I receive many publications and numerous emails related to environmental issues, I routinely find yours among the most informative. I publish my own small alternative paper, The Carp, and over its 20 issues have often quoted materials from ... Crossings. Needless to say I would like to keep my name on your list, and I prefer hard copy. Thanks for your good work.
51. Great newsletter! I can download the newsletter, instead of having it mailed. Can you forward a note to readers when a new issue is available? Thanks!
52. Please keep me on the River Crossings mailing list.
53. This is very useful to me as a way to keep with environmental news about rivers, and I at least skim every issue from cover to cover. I now receive a paper copy, but I'm happy to move to electronic copy is that's easier for you. Thank you for keeping this useful publication going.
54. River Crossings is a very informative publication and would appreciate that you keep me on the mailing list. If it is a big savings I would be willing to download it from your web site as long as I receive a reminder when it is available.
55. Keep River Crossings coming, you do a great job.
56. Yes, please keep my name on your mailing list. River Crossings and the UMRCC newsletter are the best periodicals we have at keeping up with natural resources topics. Thanks!
57. I enjoy reading River Crossings, but prefer to download it at your Web Site. However, I have been unable to access anything on that site. I do not know if the site is not currently running. If this is the case I would prefer to remain on the mailing list until the site is completed.
58. Your newsletter is great. Keep it up. I do like to get it in the mail, because it is dense and full of substance, unlike a lot of stuff that ends up on my desk. As news and photo editor at Big River Magazine, I frequently draw on River Crossings for items in the short news section, always crediting River Crossings, of course, and referencing sources within your stories.
59. I'd love to get River Crossings via email.