



Goals, Objectives, and Priorities

2019 - 2023

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MICRA

Goals, Objectives, and Priorities

2019 - 2023

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

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

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

Goals and Objectives

GOALS

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

OBJECTIVES

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

Priorities

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

PRIORITIES:

1. Identify and prioritize basin-wide resource management issues of concern in the Mississippi River Basin.
 - a) MICRA delegates meet every 3-5 years to review priorities and discuss emerging issues of concern within the basin.
 - b) Standing committees review priorities and discuss emerging issues of concern within the basin every 3-5 years. Committees will report to the Executive Board at least once annually on progress of priorities identified in this document.
 - c) Executive Board updates MICRA's priorities document every 5 years.
2. Use standing technical committees and temporary working groups as needed to provide for the development of coordinated strategies to address priority issues and identify basin-wide research needs to support conservation, management, and utilization of native interjurisdictional fishes and aquatic resources.
 - a) Support continued efforts for coordinated basin-wide management of paddlefish and sturgeon species.
 - b) The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will develop a basin-wide management plan for paddlefish.
 - c) The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will continue to coordinate and manage (e.g. Regional tag coordinators) a basin-wide coded-wire tag database for paddlefish.
 - d) The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for standardized methods for documenting and reporting harvest data for paddlefish.
 - e) The Paddlefish and Sturgeon Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for basin-wide commercial harvest databases for paddlefish and sturgeon, including roe harvest and roe buyers.

- f) Conserve native freshwater mussels through continued support of the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society.
 - g) Native Mussel Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for standardized methods for documenting conservation strategies employed in mussel conservation.
 - h) Native Mussel Committee will develop and maintain a Basin wide list of propagation facilities and species that are being produced at each location.
3. Build consensus for compatible regulations and policies for priority interjurisdictional fishery and aquatic resources issues.
- a) Executive Board will work with the MICRA delegates to develop a Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Mississippi River Basin fisheries.
4. Determine the socio-economic value of fishery resources and related recreation in the Mississippi River Basin.
- a) Work with USFWS to provide a written economic value report for the Mississippi River Basin, including an analysis by MICRA sub-basin boundaries, using 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation data.
 - b) Work with USFWS to develop a report that includes an estimated return on dollars invested to manage fishery resources in the Mississippi River Basin based on 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation data. (Report similar to the USFWS 2011 publication 'Net Worth: The Economic Value of Fisheries Conservation' that focuses on contributions to the U.S. economy in terms of jobs created and conservation stimulated commerce.)
 - c) Work with USFWS to develop methods of extracting use and socio-economic value information for fishery resources and related recreation for the MICRA sub-basin units (reported for the basin as a whole) from the USFWS 5-year national survey of fishing, hunting, and recreational use. (Similar to how information for the Great Lakes is broken out and reported now.)

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

PRIORITIES:

1. The Executive Board will finalize the draft MICRA Aquatic Habitat Action Plan prepared by the Aquatic Habitat Committee.
2. Support Aquatic Habitat Committee efforts to establish regular information exchange, communication, and coordination between entities responsible for aquatic habitat management in the basin.
3. The Aquatic Habitat Committee will identify and make recommendations to the Executive Board for engaging with the National Fish Habitat Partnerships and coordinating priorities in the MICRA Aquatic Habitat Action Plan.
4. Create awareness of the needs and opportunities to increase and direct funding to implement priority habitat projects identified in the MICRA Aquatic Habitat Action Plan.

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

PRIORITIES:

1. Host the Mississippi River Basin Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species for coordination of basin-wide efforts to prevent introductions of AIS and manage introduced AIS populations.
2. Prevent, manage, and control AIS in the Mississippi River Basin by supporting the Aquatic Invasive Species Committee.
3. Promote strengthening of Injurious Wildlife provisions of the Lacey Act.
4. Aquatic Invasive Species committee will identify needs and provide recommendations to the Executive Board for promoting streamlining of the Lacey Act Injurious Wildlife Listing process and for establishing a federal screening process to evaluate risk of non-native species prior to importation.
5. Promote development of consistent basin-wide regulatory approaches for the management of AIS.
 - a) Executive Board will facilitate meetings and discussions with the diploid grass carp states, as needed, to establish regulatory consistency for grass carp as recommended in the February

2015 MICRA Grass Carp Report.

- b) Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will coordinate efforts to implement recommendations in the February 2015 MICRA Grass Carp Report.
6. MICRA Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will review and make recommendations for revising the MICRA AIS Action Plan so that it remains a relevant outreach tool.
 7. Support efforts to prevent the exchange of AIS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.
 8. Coordinate efforts to prevent introductions, stop the continued spread, and control established populations of Asian carp in the basin.
 - a) Promote the need to expand the scope of federal agencies' Asian carp activities to include the entire Mississippi River Basin and the need for federal funding to facilitate implementation of the Mississippi River Basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks in support of the national 'Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States'
 - b) Coordinate basinwide efforts to develop sub-basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks, including Action Plans for implementation.
 - c) In partnership with USFWS, coordinate the collaborative development of an annual Monitoring and Response Plan to identify highest priority management actions for Asian Carp in the Mississippi River Basin each year.
 - d) Coordinate the collaborative development, prioritization, and submission of annual recommendations to USFWS for federal funding assistance to implement sub-basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks.
 - e) Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for standardized methods for collecting and reporting population data for Asian carp species.
 - f) Aquatic Invasive Species Committee will provide recommendations to the Executive Board for documenting and reporting harvest data for Asian carp species.
 - g) Promote consistent outreach materials and messages

throughout the Mississippi River Basin.

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

PRIORITIES:

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

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

PRIORITIES:

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

Appendix 1:

MICRA

Goals, Objectives, and Priorities 2014-2018

Goals and Objectives

GOALS

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

OBJECTIVES

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

Priorities and Accomplishments

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

PRIORITIES:

5. Identify and prioritize basin-wide resource management issues of concern in the Mississippi River Basin.
 - a) MICRA Delegates meet every 3-5 years to review priorities and discuss emerging issues of concern within the basin.
 - An all delegate meeting was held August 2016 in conjunction with the national AFS annual meeting in Kansas City, MO.
 - b) Standing committees review priorities and discuss emerging issues of concern within the basin every 3-5 years.
 - Standing committees were asked to review the draft 2019-2023 priorities document and provide input.
 - c) Executive Board updates the MICRA priorities document every 5 years.
 - This draft 2019-2023 priorities document will be finalized before the end of 2018.
6. Use standing technical committees and temporary working groups as needed to provide for the development of coordinated strategies to address priority issues and identify basin-wide research needs.
 - a) Support continued efforts for coordinated basin-wide management of paddlefish and sturgeon species.
 - Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee meets annually.
 - Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee has formed a commercial harvest state working group that is actively working on a collaborative paddlefish management plan for the basin's commercial harvest states.
 - b) Develop (recommendations for) standardized methods for documenting and reporting harvest data for paddlefish, sturgeon and other commercially harvested species of concern.
 - Assigned to Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee specifically

for paddlefish in the 2019-2023 priorities document.

- c) Develop (recommendations for) basin-wide commercial harvest databases for paddlefish and sturgeon, including roe harvest and roe buyers.
 - Assigned to Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee in 2019-2023 priorities document.
 - d) Conserve native freshwater mussels through continued support of the Freshwater Mollusk Conservation Society.
 - Provided financial support for FMCS meetings in 2015-2018. No financial assistance was requested in 2014.
 - e) Develop standardized methods for documenting and reporting harvest data for mussel resources.
 - Assigned to Native Mussel Committee in 2019-2023 priorities document.
 - f) Develop guidelines and procedures for use in future multi-state resource management and research efforts.
 - g) Share and refine sampling techniques for species of concern.
 - h) Develop basin-wide management plans for species of concern.
 - Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee tasked with completing a basin-wide paddlefish management plan in 2019-2023 priorities document.
 - Asian carp control strategy frameworks have been completed for Ohio River (including Tennessee and Cumberland rivers) and Missouri River sub-basins. Frameworks for Upper Mississippi River and Lower Mississippi River (including Arkansas and Red rivers) are expected to be finalized in 2018.
7. Build consensus for compatible regulations and policies for priority interjurisdictional fishery and aquatic resources issues.
- a) Develop compatible harvest regulations for sport and commercial species of concern.
 - b) Develop a basin-wide policy on the control and introductions of fish diseases.
 - c) Develop a basin-wide policy for importation, introduction, and control of exotic and transgenic species.

- d) Develop a policy to define and preserve the genetic integrity of native species and selected naturalized stocks.
 - e) Develop a policy for the maintenance and enhancement of indigenous species.
8. Determine the socio-economic value of fishery resources and related recreation in the Mississippi River Basin.
- a) Work with USFWS to determine the economic value of the basin's fishery resources and related recreation.
 - Coordinated with the USFWS for the development of basinwide and individual basin state estimates of economic value of recreational fishing based on data in the 2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation. *MICRA did not receive estimates for the MICRA sub-basin units or a written report that can be cited.*
 - An updated economic analysis and written report, including estimates for the MICRA sub-basin units, using data from the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation is included in the 2019-2023 priorities document.
 - b) Work with USFWS to develop a report that includes an estimated return on dollars invested to manage fishery resources in the basin based on data in the 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation. (Report would be similar to the USFWS 2011 publication 'Net Worth: The Economic Value of Fisheries Conservation' that focuses on contributions to the U.S. economy in terms of jobs created and conservation stimulated commerce.)
 - Included in the 2019-2013 priorities document as a next step once the USFWS's 2016 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife Associated Recreation is published and the revised economic value report for the Mississippi River Basin is completed.
 - c) Work with USFWS to develop methods of extracting use and socio-economic value information for fishery resources and related recreation for the sub-basin units (reported for the basin as a whole) from the USFWS 5-year national survey of fishing,

hunting, and recreational use. (Similar to how information for the Great Lakes is broken out and reported now.)

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

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

PRIORITIES:

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

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

PRIORITIES:

9. Host the Mississippi River Basin Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species for coordination of basin-wide efforts to prevent introductions of AIS

and manage introduced AIS populations.

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

10. Promote streamlining of the Lacey Act Injurious Wildlife Listing process and establishment of a federal screening process to evaluate risk of non-native species prior to importation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

the Chicago Area Waterway System.

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

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

a) Complete the 'National Analysis of Grass Carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) Regulation, Production, Triploid Certification, Shipping, and Stocking' funded through a Grant Agreement with USFWS.

- A project completion report and recommendations were submitted to the USFWS in 2014.

b) Develop and implement standardized methods for collecting and reporting population data for Asian carp.

- Topic was discussed at July 2014 MRBP meeting, however no specific actions were identified or taken following that discussion.

c) Promote funding and implementation of the national 'Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States' (National Plan) to expand the scope of federal agencies' Asian carp funding and activities to include the entire Mississippi River Basin.

- Topic is discussed perennially with Federal agencies and Congressional offices during MICRA's annual visits in Washington, DC.
- Participated in an ACRCC Congressional briefing in 2015 to discuss Asian carp management and control activities and needs in the Mississippi River Basin.
- Organized and sponsored Congressional briefings (in partnership with the Northeast Midwest Institute) to discuss Asian carp management and control activities and needs in the Mississippi River Basin.
- Actively coordinating and assisting with the development of collaborative inter-agency sub-basin Asian Carp Control Strategy Frameworks to facilitate basinwide implementation of the National Plan.
- Annually coordinates the development of a Monitoring

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

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

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

PRIORITIES:

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

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

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

PRIORITIES:

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