

# MICRA

## Goals, Objectives, and Priorities

### 2014-2018

### Goals and Objectives

#### GOALS

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

#### OBJECTIVES

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

# Priorities and Accomplishments

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

## PRIORITIES:

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.
    - 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.
2. Use standing technical committees and temporary working groups as needed to provide for the development of coordinated strategies to address priority issues and identify basin-wide research needs.
  - a) Support continued efforts for coordinated basin-wide management of paddlefish and sturgeon species.
    - 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.
3. Build consensus for compatible regulations and policies for priority interjurisdictional fishery and aquatic resources issues.
- a) Develop compatible harvest regulations for sport and commercial species of concern.
  - b) Develop a basin-wide policy on the control and introductions of fish diseases.
  - c) Develop a basin-wide policy for importation, introduction, and control of exotic and transgenic species.

- d) Develop a policy to define and preserve the genetic integrity of native species and selected naturalized stocks.
  - e) Develop a policy for the maintenance and enhancement of indigenous species.
4. Determine the socio-economic value of fishery resources and related recreation in the Mississippi River Basin.
- a) Work with USFWS to determine the economic value of the basin's fishery resources and related recreation.
    - 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:

1. 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.](#)
2. 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.](#)
3. 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.](#)
4. 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:

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.

- 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.
2. Promote streamlining of the Lacey Act Injurious Wildlife Listing process and establishment of a federal screening process to evaluate risk of non-native species prior to importation.
    - Topic was discussed with USFWS and DOI leadership, and AFWA government affairs staff during MICRA annual visits in Washington, DC.
  3. 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.
  4. 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.
  5. 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.
6. Coordinate efforts to prevent introductions, stop the continued spread, and control established populations of Asian carp in the basin.
- a) Complete the 'National Analysis of Grass Carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) Regulation, Production, Triploid Certification, Shipping, and Stocking' funded through a Grant Agreement with USFWS.
    - 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Continue to develop and manage the MICRA website.
  - Annually paid for a private third part to host the MICRA website ([www.MICRArivers.org](http://www.MICRArivers.org) )
  - Contracted with a new company to redesign and host the MICRA website beginning in 2018.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. 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:

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