



## **Executive Board Meeting Minutes**

August 21-23, 2023

Amway Grand Plaza Hotel  
187 Monroe Avenue NW  
Grand Rapids, MI

*An option for remote participation was provided.*

### **MEETING AGENDA**

(All times are Eastern)

Monday, August 21, 8:30-12:00, Governor's Room

#### **Call to Order**

- 1) Call to Order (Brad Parsons)

#### **Prepare for MICRA Delegate Meeting**

- 2) Policy and Government Affairs (Ashlee Smith)
- 3) Success! Now What? Operationalizing the Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission (Parsons)
- 4) Review of MICRA's Draft 2024-2028 Priorities Document (Greg Conover)
- 5) Review of MICRA's Draft Aquatic Habitat Action Plan (Conover)
- 6) Potential Revisions to MICRA's Constitution and By-laws (Conover)
- 7) Additional Topics and Preparations for the MICRA Delegate Meeting (Parsons)

Monday, August 21, 1:00-5:00, Governor's Room

**MICRA Delegate Meeting**

- 8) MICRA Delegate Meeting Agenda

Tuesday, August 22, 8:00-5:00, DeVos Place – Grand Gallery C

**MICRA Sponsored AFS Symposium**

- 9) Mississippi River Basin Habitat Management for Interjurisdictional Fishes Symposium Program

Tuesday, August 22, 5:30-9:30, Governor's Room

**MICRA Mixer**

Wednesday, August 23, 8:30-12:00, Governor's Room

**MICRA Delegate Meeting Follow-up**

- 10) MICRA Delegate Meeting and Symposium After-Action Review (Parsons)

**Old Business**

- 11) Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission Next Steps (Parsons)
- 12) Legislative, Policy, and Outreach Next Steps (Smith)
- 13) Finalizing MICRA's Draft Aquatic Habitat Action Plan (Conover)
- 14) Finalizing MICRA's Draft 2024-2028 Priorities Document (Conover)
- 15) Finalizing MICRA's Draft 2019-2023 Priorities Accomplishment Tracking (Conover)
- 16) Approval of the Executive Board's February 2023 Meeting Notes (Parsons)
- 17) Review of Action Items (Conover)

Wednesday, August 23, 1:00-5:00, Governor's Room

**Committee Updates**

- 18) Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee Update (Sara Tripp)
- 19) MICRA AIS Committee Update (Bourgeois)
- 20) MRBP Update (Rob Bourgeois)
- 21) Invasive Carp Advisory Committee Update (Brian Schoenung and Rob Simmonds)
- 22) Sub-basin Invasive Carp Partnership Coordination Update (Neal Jackson)

**Executive Board Member Updates**

- 23) Executive Board Member Updates (All)

**Chairman and Coordinator Reports**

- 24) Chairman's Report (Parsons)
- 25) Coordinator's Report (Conover)

**New Business**

- 26) Webpage Dashboard Demonstration (Rebecca Neeley and Ross Ruehmann)
- 27) Appointment of New MICRA Chair-elect (Parsons)
- 28) Develop MICRA's 2024 Operational Budget (Conover)
- 29) Schedule Fall Conference Call and Winter Executive Board Meeting (Parsons)
- 30) Other New Business / Parking Lot (Parsons)

## DECISIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

\* A quorum of voting members was not present throughout the meeting. When necessary, decisions were approved by the Executive Board via email following the meeting.

1. MICRA will target National Invasive Species Awareness Week (NISAW) February 26 – March 1, 2024, for a DC Fly-in event.
2. The Executive Board agreed to target November 8, 2023, for Congressional briefings in Washington, DC.
3. The Executive Board agreed to provide the Aquatic Habitat Action Plan to the delegates once finalized rather than requesting another review of the document.
4. The Executive Board agreed to use 6<sup>th</sup> order and larger streams for the MICRA list of interjurisdictional rivers in the basin.
5. The Executive Board agreed to continue moving forward with a proposed increase in state member annual membership dues from \$1,500 to \$3,000 beginning in 2024.
6. The Executive Board agreed that rivers on federal lands, with federal authorities (e.g., navigable streams, National Wild and Scenic Rivers), and those within the Ceded Territories should be included MICRA's list of interjurisdictional rivers.
7. The Executive Board agreed to remove reservoirs from the list of interjurisdictional rivers for consistency across the sub-basins. A general statement about reservoirs could be added.
8. Executive Board members agreed to a 2-week review period of the draft meeting notes for the February 2023 Executive Board meeting once they are provided by Conover.
9. Conover will provide a final list of February 2023 decisions and action items to the Executive Board members along with the final draft meeting notes for the February 2023 meeting.
10. The Executive Board approved a draft letter from the Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee in support of the North American Sturgeon and Paddlefish Society's petition to establish October 27<sup>th</sup> as National Sturgeon Day.
11. The Executive Board agreed to seek nominations for the MICRA Chair-elect on a "loose" rotation among the following sub-basins: ARW&LMR, MOR, OHR&TNCR, and UMR.
12. The Executive Board tentatively scheduled a virtual meeting from 9am-11am Central on Friday, October 27<sup>th</sup>.

13. The Executive Board tentatively scheduled an in-person meeting January 29-30, 2024, in Chattanooga, Tennessee, prior to the Southern Division AFS meeting.

#### Action Items

1. JC Nelson will introduce MICRA to the Mississippi River Cities and Towns Initiative Executive Director, Colin Wellenkamp.
2. Ashlee Smith will attempt to find Congressional sponsors and confirm rooms for Congressional briefings (one Senate and one House) on November 8, 2023.
3. Ashlee Smith will provide a save-the-date email for Congressional briefing in Washington, DC, on November 8, 2023, to Conover for distribution to the MICRA member agencies and USACE.
4. Executive Board members will work to identify a representative from each sub-basin to participate in the proposed Congressional briefings in Washington, DC, on November 8, 2023.
5. Ashlee Smith will send a request for pictures to be used on social media and a Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission coalition to Conover for distribution to the MICRA Delegates and sub-basin invasive carp partnerships.
6. The Executive Board will attempt to recruit participation from more delegates for short 1- or 2-day visits during the 2024 DC Fly-in.
7. Ashlee Smith will request MICRA Delegates 1) to continue to speak with their agency director regarding the Mississippi River Fishery Commission and associated draft legislation, and 2) to notify her of opportunities to get Congressional staff out to observe field work and talk with delegates.
8. Bourgeois will work with the AIS Committee members to provide any additional AIS priorities for the draft 2024-2028 Priorities document to the Executive Board by November 1.
9. Conover will provide a revised draft 2024-2028 Priorities document to the Executive Board in early November.
10. The Executive Board will review the revised draft 2024-2028 Priorities document and provide it to the MICRA Delegates for a final review by November 30 if there are substantial changes.
11. The Executive Board will finalize the draft 2024-2028 Priorities document and post it on the MICRA website in December.
12. Conover will include a discussion of next steps for aquatic habitat on the agenda for the board's next meeting.

13. Conover will include a discussion about an interjurisdictional fisheries symposium on the agenda for the board's next meeting, including a list of upcoming meeting dates and locations (e.g., AFS, Midwest, etc.).
14. The Executive Board will develop a justification for a proposed increase in state agency annual membership dues from \$1,500 to \$3,000 to explain why the additional funding is needed, how it will be used, and the benefit it will provide back to the member agencies.
15. Conover will work with Parsons and Batten to send a follow up email to the MICRA Delegates to let them know the board's decision to propose a By-laws amendment to increase the state agency member annual dues to \$3,000 beginning in 2024.
16. Batten and Smith will work with the sub-basin representatives to schedule sub-basin or 1-on-1 calls with MICRA delegates to discuss the fishery commission and draft legislation.
17. Neal Jackson will share the TNCR Phase 1 decision analysis results with the MICRA Executive Board once the process is complete and the results have been provided to USACE.
18. Smith will organize a call with the state members of the Executive Board within the next 2-weeks to continue discussing MICRA's 2024 WRDA priorities.
19. Conover will send Smith the additional coalition prospects that were identified by the Executive Board members during their August 2022 meeting.
20. Conover will work with Angela Erves to see if additional information on federal authorities, federal lands, and Ceded Territory can be added to the sub-basin tables of interjurisdictional rivers in the Mississippi River Basin.
21. Conover will follow-up with the respective sub-basin representatives to discuss sub-basin specific questions on the draft lists of 6<sup>th</sup> order and larger rivers.
22. Conover will update the draft 2024-2028 Priorities document based on the board's review and discussion of the comments discussed during their August 2023 meeting.
23. Conover will update the 2019-2023 Priorities Accomplishment tracking at the end of the year and provide it to the Executive Board members for review.
24. The Executive Board will finalize the draft 2019-2023 Priorities accomplishment tracking after Conover provides a final draft at the end of the year.
25. Conover will provide the draft February 2023 Executive Board meeting notes for review prior to the October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

26. The Executive Board will consider approval of the February 2023 Executive Board draft meeting notes during the October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.
27. Executive Board members will review the Decisions and Action Items provided in the August 2023 meeting briefing book and provide updates to Conover as they are addressed.
28. JC Nelson will provide Conover with the soon to be released USGS research priorities for paddlefish and sturgeon for dissemination and review by the Paddlefish Sturgeon Committee members.
29. The Executive Board will consider the information provided by the ICAC regarding the potential allocation of USFWS FY23 “plus-up” funding in FY24 and determine if any recommendation will be provided by MICRA to USFWS.
30. Conover will follow-up with the sub-basin invasive carp partnership coordinators to determine if sub-basin fact sheets can be provided prior to the Congressional briefing tentatively planned for November 8, 2023.
31. Parsons and Smith will update the contractual agreement between MICRA and Ellis Smith Policy Solutions to reflect the 9-month extension that was approved by the Executive Board June 30, 2024.
32. Conover will make proposed updates to the MICRA By-laws and share with the MICRA Executive Board members for discussion during the October 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.
33. Rebecca Neeley will determine the possibility of the La Crosse FWCO developing a web-based dashboard tool for MICRA that includes MICRA sub-basin group boundaries, congressional districts, MICRA’s 6<sup>th</sup> order and larger streams, and the characterization of relative abundance of bigheaded carps similar to the figure included in the USFWS-led Report to Congress.
34. The Executive Board will consider what a few top priority communications needs or maps might look like and the data layers that would be needed to develop them.
35. Kasey Whiteman will seek a nomination for the MICRA Chair-elect 2024-2025 term from the Missouri River sub-basin delegates.
36. The Executive Board will vote electronically to approve an additional \$5,000 travel budget for Ashlee Smith for the remainder of 2023.
37. The Executive Board will vote electronically to approve the proposed 2024 operational budget with the addition of \$1,000 to support ICAC and sub-basin invasive carp partnership meeting expenses.

## MEETING ATTENDEES

### Voting Executive Board Members

Ken Cunningham, ODWC, Arkansas/Red/White Rivers Sub-Basin Representative  
Mark Thurman<sup>1</sup>, TWRA, Lower Mississippi River Sub-Basin Representative  
Kasey Whiteman<sup>1</sup>, MDC, Missouri River Sub-Basin Representative  
Rich Zweifel, OH DNR, Ohio River Sub-Basin Representative  
Dave Dreves, KDFWR, Tennessee/Cumberland Rivers Sub-Basin Representative  
Joe Larscheid<sup>1</sup>, IA DNR, Upper Mississippi River Sub-Basin Representative  
Aaron Woldt<sup>1</sup>, USFWS, Federal Agency Executive Board Member  
JC Nelson, USGS, Federal Agency Executive Board Member

\* A quorum of six voting members was not in attendance throughout the meeting.

### Non-Voting Executive Board Members

Ben Batten, AGFC, MICRA Chairperson-Elect and Acting MICRA Chair  
Brian Schoenung, IL DNR, MICRA Immediate Past Chairperson and ICAC Co-Chair  
Greg Conover, USFWS, MICRA Coordinator

### MICRA Committee Chairs

Rob Bourgeois<sup>1</sup>, LDFW AIS Committee Chair and MRBP MICRA Liaison  
Rob Simmonds, USFWS, Invasive Carp Advisory Committee Co-Chair  
Sara Tripp<sup>1</sup>, IL DNR, Paddlefish/Sturgeon Committee

### Introductions

Allan Brown, USFWS  
Angie Rodgers, USFWS  
Ashlee Smith, Sequoya Strategies  
Dave Smith, USACE-ERDC  
Jeff Janvrin, WI DNR  
Neil Rude, MN DNR  
Neal Jackson<sup>1</sup>, USFWS  
Caleb Aldridge<sup>1</sup>, USFWS  
Rebecca Neeley<sup>1</sup>, USFWS  
Ross Ruehmann<sup>1</sup>, USFWS

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<sup>1</sup> Remote attendee during a portion of the meeting