2024 UMRCC Fisheries Technical Section Agenda
Holiday Inn, Ballroom 1, Rock Island, Illinois
Tuesday, March 26th, 1:00 – 5:00 PM

Opening Remarks, Chair Travis Moore

UMRCC Business – Neal Jackson

Mississippi River Fisheries Commission Update – Greg Conover

Mississippi River Carp Management Update – Rebecca Neeley

UMRCC Commercial Fishing Data – Annie Hentschke

Constellation Activities Update – Jeremiah Haas

Institutional Knowledge Activity

Break

Mobile Data Proposal and Discussion – Travis Moore

Sustainable Rivers Program Opportunities – Brian Johnson

Regional Lake Sturgeon Recovery and Management Discussion – Ryan Hupfeld

Wrap Up – Travis Moore

- Kentucky Reciprocity Changes
- What does UMRCC mean to this section? What is important?
- New Missouri Representative Sarah Peper
- Ryan Hupfeld, Incoming Chair

Meeting recording link: UMRCC Fisheries Technical Section Meeting 2024-20240326 1733-1 - State of Missouri, Department of Conservation

https://mdc.webex.com/recordingservice/sites/mdc/recording/e41ff29ecdc4103cbfb792b11e63a509/playback

Meeting Minutes (Meeting begins at 00:35:00 of the recording)

UMRCC Business – Neal Jackson, UMRCC Coordinator (00:37:00)

Neal presented on a variety of topics related to the UMRCC. He included some of the history and constitution and by-laws. He also shared what the roles are for the Executive Board, Coordinator, Technical Section Chairs, and of the at-large members.

The UMRCC's role is to be the field level experts in Mississippi River management and to provide a forum for discussion on research, regulations, challenges, and opportunities through the six technical sections: Fisheries, Wildlife, Mussels, Water Quality, Law Enforcement, and Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Interpretation (OREIT).

The Executive Board and technical section chairs met prior to the annual meeting to discuss how we can all work toward remaining relevant and on-task with addressing the needs of the Upper Mississippi River.

Mississippi River Fisheries Commission Update – Greg Conover, MICRA Coordinator (00:58:00)

1991 – Comprehensive Strategic Plan designed to accomplish 10 goals

A. Establish a Mississippi River coordination framework and dedicated funding
B. Provide public information and education
C. Information sharing and development of standardized fish sampling methods
D. Identify the socio-economic value of the fishery and related recreation
E. Communicate and coordinate across the basin
F. Coordinate research
G. Address species and habitat needs
H. Provide compatible regulations
I. Address disease, invasive species, genetic diversity, and indigenous species needs
J. Restore fisheries habitats

Although MICRA (Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association) was formed, most of the strategic plan has not been enacted.

In 2021, the Joint Strategic Plan for Management of Mississippi River Basin Fisheries was signed by 26 state directors. Draft legislation followed that would have established the Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission and provided 10 years of operational funding and state research and management grants.

The Commission would include an overarching Mississippi River Council, sub-basin councils, and technical committees to guide and advise on the direction of the Commission.

Mississippi River Carp Management Update – Rebecca Neeley, USFWS, Upper Mississippi River Basin Carp Coordinator (01:36:00)

Reviewing project workplans. Baseline budget is $1.5 million but the upper basin received $2.289 million this year.

Four project approved for 2024: monitor the upstream movement of carp species (MN/WI), evaluate controls on the population in the lower pools (IA/MO/IL), contracted fishing to reduce the source population in Pools 20 – 22 (MO/IL), and study deterrants to upstream movement and impacts to native species (USGS).

Efforts include expanding the telemetry array in the uppermost pools and a variety of federal projects which include an eDNA study, among others.

UMRCC Commercial Fishing Data – Annie Hentschke, Missouri Department of Conservation (01:46:40)

Annie introduced herself and shared with the section that she had taken over the commercial fishing database management duties from Michelle Marron (retired). Annie received some advice from the membership on how to gather and manage that data.

Constellation Activities Update – Jeremiah Haas (01:54:00)

Jeremiah provided a short history of how staff at the Constellation Power Plant have contributed to the Mississippi River fisheries and mussel resources, through stocking and management activities.

A few things are changing. The plant will be getting new water intake screens which will eliminate fish entrainment, thus eliminating the need for the hatchery. So, the walleye stocking program will eventually phase out. The long-term monitoring program will also be reduced. More to come on those changes.

Institutional Knowledge Activity – Travis Moore, Chair (02:02:30)

Description of “Institutional Knowledge” isn’t held by just the veteran members. It includes the newest members too. But new members feel intimidated by the veteran members because they don’t think they have much to offer. But new members bring new methods, new technologies, and new experience to the overall collective.

In a pool of 2024 annual meeting attendees, the shortest tenured river employee had 0 years of experience. The longest tenured had 53 years. The average was 15 years.

Across the 83 attendees who answered the poll, here is the experience percentages:

>5 years: 19%, 5 – 9 years: 20%, 10 – 19 years: 25%, 20 – 29 years: 19%, 30 – 39 years: 12%, 40+ years: 4%

This led to an activity of the Fisheries Section membership: Pair tables to have an even mix of members with less than 15 years of experience, and more than 15 years of experience and share about an interesting project that you worked on. Then during the rest of the annual meeting, seek out those who are in the opposite group (over/under 15 years) and introduce yourself. The activity continued for approximately 30 minutes, leading into a break.

Post-activity feedback included multiple members who met people they wouldn't normally have met.

Mobile Data Proposal and Discussion – Travis Moore (02:54:15)

This presentation included some background on what Mobile Data/Anonymous Use Data is and how it could be used by UMRCC to determine recreational use on various polls of the Mississippi River. Travis also included a proposal which was to be brought to the UMRCC board to have Mobile Data collected on three river pools, with each state having at least one pool within their boundary. Pool 4 (MN/WI boundary) was automatically included because of an ongoing fisheries creel survey. Pools 13 and 26 were later selected by representatives from Iowa, Illinois, and Missouri. The Executive Board approved the proposal at the business meeting later in the week.

Sustainable Rivers Program (SRP) Opportunities – Brian Johnson, USACE (03:33:00)

SRP is a USACE program, heavily supported by The Nature Conservancy, and has been around since 2002. The goal is to improve environmental conditions while remaining within existing operational missions.

Funding increased from $500,00 to $5 million in in 2020 and has remained between $5-7 million since.

Projects must be related to USACE infrastructure, such as reservoirs, locks and dams, or dry dams. Examples of past SRP projects include Environmental Pool Management, lake sturgeon-friendly spawning flows at Mel Price Lock and Dam and the Mark Twain Lake Reregulation Dam, Des Moines River environmental flows and Red Rocks Reservoir Pool Management, Kaskaskia River pool management, Alabama River fish lockages, and Buford Dam (Lake Lanier) releases to improve water quality.

Proposals can be initiated by USACE or partner agency staff but must be submitted by USACE staff. Request for Proposals announced in July, proposal submission by

September. Proposals can include funds for meeting, science reports, modeling, testing, monitoring, outreach, and more, but NO construction.

Three stages:

- Advance – meet and discuss options, supporting science, operational opportunities
- Implement – test the approach and monitor the results
- Incorporate – add the new prescriptions to the operational measures

Six approved UMR basin projects in FY24, plus another one pending.

Contact your district Operations or Environmental staff to initiate a proposal.

Regional Lake Sturgeon Recovery and Management Discussion – Ryan Hupfeld, Incoming Chair (03:57:10)

Iowa DNR has been working on a state lake sturgeon recovery and management plan but recognize a need for a cooperative multi-state plan and approach. Ryan was asking for feedback related to this effort and was gaging interest from the section.

The pending USFWS decision on adding lake sturgeon to the Endangered Species Act may affect what this plan may look like.

Most comments from the group were not captured in the video, but there was general support of working cooperatively on this effort.

Wrap Up – Travis Moore (04:11:55)

- Kentucky Reciprocity Changes – Proposing to rescind reciprocal privileges on commercial fishing with Illinois, particularly regarding catfish harvest. Impacts from the pay-lake industry. Currently on-hold because agreements may not be legal.
- What does UMRCC mean to this section? What is important? – A question that is being asked by the Executive Board. We may be seeing upcoming surveys or meetings related to this topic. Please participate if asked.
- Sarah Peper will become Missouri's representative to the Fisheries Technical Section at the conclusion of this UMRCC Annual Meeting.
- Sarah Peper took a few minutes to talk about blue suckers and noticed that fish were releasing milt and eggs in October and November. She wanted to know if others were seeing this.
- Ryan Hupfeld, Incoming Chair