

Notes from the UMRCC Fisheries Technical Section (FTS) Spring Meeting:

St. Charles, Missouri

Thursday, March 26, 2025

Scott Gritters: Chairperson and scribe

Natural Resource Inventory:

Sara Schmuecker gave an update to the FTS on the UMR Natural Resource Inventory. It will be much more computer driven than the previous inventories. Sara has contacted many UMRCC staff up and down the River but has several Pools yet to cover. The inventory covers fish, wildlife, mussels and unique areas up and down the Upper Mississippi River.

Fisheries Compendium:

Scott Gritters presented the item that the UMRCC fisheries compendium is in need of an update. The last compendium is the 3rd edition and cited as Pitlo, J. M. and J. L. Rasmussen, editors. 2004. A Compendium of Fishery Information on the Upper Mississippi River. Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee, Rock Island Illinois. This compendium was to be updated every 10 years or so as new information became available. The FTS decided to form a steering committee to begin the process of an update. Members of the steering committee include Levi Solomon, Ross Dames, Kevin Irons, Nathan Grider, Scott Yess, Nick Schlessler, Scott Gritters and Jeremiah Haas. First steps will be to retrieve the old version and see what shape it is in and how much work it will be to convert into present formats. John Pitlo informed the group how the last compendium was put together with anyone who is an author also must take another section and be an editor. That seemed to work great last time it was updated.

Year of Fishing and how the FTS will participate:

The FTS received a report from the "Year of Fishing" ad hoc committee. The ad hoc committee is chaired by Mr. Pat Short and other volunteer members include: Jon Duyvejonck, Ross Dames, Brian Brecka, Chuck Theiling, Dan Dieterman, and Karen Osterkamp. The group decided to try to hold an event in each state along the river. The event might be sponsored by the agency but will try to have a UMRCC presence. To complete this task, the ad hoc committee is requesting a total of \$2500, with a maximum of \$500 to be used for funding an event(s) in each UMRCC member state (MN, WI, IA, IL and MO). To obtain funds a UMRCC member must provide a written request to the UMRCC coordinator with the information listed below:

Name of the UMRCC member requesting the funds:

Name of the Event:

Location of the Event or Events (City and State):

Brief description of how funds will be used:

Upon completion of the event, a short written report (a paragraph or two) shall be sent to the UMRCC Coordinator. The report should list how the funds were used, number of kids that attended and receipts for the purchased items and/or a check for unused funds. Pictures of the event will be sent to the UMRCC coordinator to be used in the newsletter. Members will also attempt to get publicity in local newspapers and magazines in each state!

List of acceptable expenditures includes:

Advertising, fishing equipment, bait, food, beverages, rental fee, educational material and prizes.

Quad Cities Exelon Power Station fisheries work:

Jeremiah Hass gave an excellent presentation of the fisheries studies undertaken at the Quad Cities Nuclear Power station. The station conducted numerous studies on Long Term Fisheries Monitoring, Impingement Monitoring, Freshwater Drum Life History, Channel Catfish, Flathead Catfish, Walleye and Sauger Monitoring and conducts stocking assessments for walleye and hybrid white bass. Jeremiah went through some of the permitting issues and the reasons the original fisheries plan was enacted in the 1970's. In addition to all the fish work, Jeremiah and the Exelon team are conducting culture and research into rarer species such as the Alligator Gar and Blue Catfish. They also have been conducting some nice mussel work with black sandshell, fat mucklets and Higgins eye pearly mussels. Many of the studies started long before the LTRMP data and really improve our knowledge of trends on the Mississippi River.

Asian Carp Management plan:

Much of the afternoon discussion was on the Asian Carp Management Strategy quickly being developed on the Upper Mississippi River. This discussion was led by, Kelly Baerwaldt, Kevin Irons and Ann Runstrom.

Much of the discussion centered on the role of the UMRCC FTS in the plan. These are step down plans from the National Plan and the local plans are being developed on the Ohio River System, Great Lakes and the UMR. According the UMRCC Fisheries Management plan published in 2010 the committee was to set up an Aquatic Nuisance Species ad hoc committee under the FTS that will track ANS issues and programs. This objective can be found in Goal 4 – Slow or eliminate the spread of introduction of aquatic nuisance species, including pathogens, to the UMR.

This proposed ad hoc group will work from existing infrastructure, ensure state and federal agency coordination in the process, provide for Fish Tech member participation in the process, and is consistent with the objective in the UMR Fisheries Strategic Plan to develop an ANS Ad Hoc Committee. Proposed members of the Ad Hoc Committee would include:

IL – Kevin Irons and Matt O’Hara

IA – Kim Bogenschutz and Scott Gritters

MO – Quinton Phelps and TBD (e.g., Travis Moore or Kenda Flores)

MN – Nick Frohnauer and Dan Dieterman

WI – Bob Wakeman and Ron Benjamin

USACE – Mark Cornish (Rock Island) – Do we add reps from St. Louis and St. Paul district?

USGS – Brent Knights

USFWS – Ann Runstrom (La Crosse), Sam Finney (Carterville), Greg Conover and Kelly Baerwaldt

NPS – Byron Karns

Jeff Janvrin made a motion to implement Strategy 4.3.1 of the UMRCC Fisheries Plan 2010: Establish a UMRCC Aquatic Nuisance Species Ad Hoc Committee under the Fish Technical Section that will track ANS issues and programs.

Bernie Schonhoff seconded the motion.

Kevin Irons made a motion to accept the following individuals as the members of the ANS Ad Hoc, with the disclaimer that this is an adaptive and living process and committee:

All members voted Aye.

It is recognized that this ad hoc group will be a work in progress. We will have some very short term proposals that will need to be brought to the chairperson and boards attention. Hopefully after this initial run we will have more time to assess all proposals and move in a more organized fashion.

Agency Reports: