

Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA)

Asian Carp Advisory Committee (ACAC)

Principles of Operation

May 2016

- I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of the MICRA Asian Carp Advisory Committee (ACAC) is to coordinate the planning and execution of collaborative actions to prevent, detect, and control bighead, black, grass, and silver carp (i.e., Asian carp) populations in the Mississippi River Basin. The ACAC is a collaborative team of Federal and State agencies established to provide oversight and coordination of multijurisdictional actions through the development and implementation of regional Asian Carp Control Strategy frameworks. These frameworks are developed by existing inter-agency sub-basin partnerships to stepdown the goals and objectives of the national Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force approved '*Management and Control Plan for Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps in the United States.*'

- II. **OBJECTIVES:** To aid in the achievement of its Purpose, the ACAC's objectives are to:
 - (A) Promote the collection of biological information on Asian carp, their impacts, preferred habitats, and biological and ecological requirements.
 - (B) Identify additional research, technology, and data needed to effectively inform and support Asian carp management strategies.
 - (C) Support the development of technologies and methods that will result in the control and management of Asian carp; and the transferability of these new tools for use in the control of other invasive species, where possible.
 - (D) Explore the use of the Incident Command System (ICS) for rapid response purposes.
 - (E) Encourage the exchange of information between member agencies and stakeholders, and seek opportunities to transfer and further leverage control technology developed as part of the Mississippi River Basin frameworks to other areas of the United States.
 - (F) Provide oversight and guidance to regional Asian carp planning teams for the collaborative development of sub-basin Asian Carp Control Strategy frameworks and multi-year work plans for each of the MICRA sub-basin group.
 - (G) Provide oversight and guidance on annual work plans and coordinate the development of project proposals for highest priority needs in each sub-basin. Develop recommendations on annual Mississippi River Basin project funding, with final decisions made by the individual funding agencies. Coordination and collaboration will be encouraged for all projects, as appropriate.
 - (H) Coordinate implementation and evaluate the effectiveness of collaborative Asian carp assessment, prevention, and control measures.

- III. **GUIDELINES:** Consistent with their authorities, policies, and available resources, member agencies shall:

- (A) Attend ACAC meetings, and participate on conference calls, webinars, and subcommittees. The ACAC acknowledges that participation may be restricted due to travel budgets and workload.
- (B) Work cooperatively to implement science-based recommendations to achieve the Purpose of the ACAC.
- (C) Work with funding agencies to annually identify and refine Mississippi River Basin work plan priorities.
- (D) Share data and information (including planning documents, monitoring results, response actions, control activities and research) within the course of relevant discussions, consistent with their applicable laws and regulations, to promote an environment of maximum openness, honesty, and cooperation. Members will respect that certain information and data may be provisional and used only to inform internal discussion during the course of ACAC deliberations.
- (E) The ACAC will not develop position statements or external communications without first seeking agreement among ACAC members.

IV. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE:

Sub-basin groups - Development and implementation of Asian Carp Control Strategy frameworks, including work plans, and annual project proposals will be coordinated by MICRA through the regional sub-basin groups. Sub-basin groups will form Asian Carp Planning Teams that include ACAC member Federal agencies for the collaborative development and implementation of Asian carp Control Strategy frameworks. Sub-basin groups will provide their regional frameworks, work plans, and annual project proposals to MICRA to be coalesced into a single Mississippi River Basin strategy through the ACAC. Sub-basin group member agencies will be represented on the ACAC by their respective MICRA sub-basin group representative. MICRA will organize and maintain an 'Agency Executives Team' for Executive level coordination and communication with all agencies represented by the ACAC and MICRA sub-basin groups as needed.

The ACAC structure is based on the MICRA Executive Board structure, but will be expanded to include representation from additional Federal agencies. The MICRA Coordinator will be a non-voting member of the ACAC and serve as staff. The ACAC will be composed of the following Federal and state agency members:

- MICRA Chairman
- MICRA Chairman elect
- One state representative from each of the following sub-basin state partnerships:
 - Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee (UMRCC)
 - Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee (LMRCC)
 - Ohio River Fisheries Management Team (ORFMT)
 - Tennessee-Cumberland River Workgroup (TCRW)
 - Missouri River Natural Resources Committee (MRNRC)
 - Arkansas-Red River Workgroup (ARRW)
- One federal entity member from each of the following agencies:
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
 - U.S. Geological Survey
 - U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 - National Park Service

- V. **ORGANIZATIONAL OPERATIONS:** The ACAC will meet at least once per year for the purpose of reviewing progress and developing strategy and direction for future partnership efforts to support the Purpose and Objectives. The ACAC will attempt to conduct business and meetings via e-mail, teleconference, and webinar to the extent possible. As needed, meetings of the ACAC will be convened in locations within the Mississippi River Basin. Participation in meetings and teleconferences of the ACAC may include the ACAC membership identified above; and other agency or technical resource representatives whose participation supports the Purpose and Objectives, and who are specifically invited to present or discuss specific topics.
- VI. **AUTHORITIES:** To achieve its Purpose, the ACAC relies on the coordinated work of its members based on their existing authorities.
- (A) Appropriate monitoring, assessment and control actions in the Mississippi River Basin as a result of any introduction of Asian carp as related to fisheries management will continue under the auspices of the individual states, in coordination with the Federal resource agencies.
- (B) The USFWS is directed under Section 1039 of the Water Resources Reform and Development Act of 2014 to lead a multiagency effort to slow the spread of Asian carp in the Upper Mississippi and Ohio River basins and tributaries. USFWS will identify and seek opportunities to leverage the accomplishments, best-practices, and capacity of the Great Lakes' Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee to support emerging partnership efforts in these basins, as appropriate; and will further its coordination efforts within and between Great Lakes, Upper Mississippi and Ohio River basin partnerships to advance the collective mission of Asian carp prevention in the United States.
- (C) Funding for Asian carp prevention and control efforts in the Mississippi River Basin comes from a variety of sources, including agency base budgets. Beginning in FY2015, the USFWS received base funding for Asian carp prevention and control work outside the Great Lakes.
- VII. **AGREEMENT:** The ACAC members will respect the role of each agency in terms of providing resources and assistance for Asian carp prevention and control efforts. The provision of such resources and assistance will depend upon relevant authorities and available appropriations of each member agency.
- VIII. **TERMS AND REVISIONS OF AGREEMENT:** This Principles of Operation is a living document and can therefore be updated as needed.