



TO: House Legacy Finance Committee Members
FROM: Dave Osborne, MN-FISH Coalition
DATE: April 3, 2024
RE: Support Funding to Protect Minnesota's Aquatic Habitat from Invasive Carp

On behalf of the MN-FISH Coalition, I am writing to offer our strong support for the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council funding recommendations, which include a recommendation to set aside funds for protecting the Upper Mississippi from invasive carp by beginning the process of partnering with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and the U.S. Corps of Army Engineers to construct a barrier.

Minnesota's outdoor recreational community and industry are at serious risk if invasive carp continue to move upriver and spawn.

MN-FISH has been actively working and meeting with the DNR over the last year, and a representative of the organization served on the DNR's Strategic Decision-making Working Group whose work was the basis for the updated Carp Management plan issued by the DNR earlier this year. On February 23, 2024, at a DNR Invasive Carp meeting with Commissioner Strommen and her team, our MN-Fish team presented a new collaborative approach to an Invasive Carp barrier at Lock and Dam 5 and best-practices from the invasive carp barrier implemented in Kentucky at Barclay Dam in 2019.

Research has shown that carp movement upstream is slow enough that it might be reduced to near zero (two percent) using a multi-component approach, including the construction of a barrier, continued commercial fishing by the DNR, and other means. A carp deterrent would be added to the lock, ongoing carp removal would be enhanced at this location, and engineers would examine whether and how to adjust spillway gate openings to allow even fewer carp to pass—while native fish passage would be facilitated using a native fish elevator.

This plan is supported by the scientific community. Key elements have been published in four peer-reviewed scientific publications and assessed by Barr Engineering Company, which also found it reasonable and doable. Four stakeholder meetings conducted by Barr have also been supportive.

Analyses suggest that adult invasive carp will be past lock and Dam 5 in just few short years and breeding in Lake Pepin—and then the St. Croix River—if no action is taken. There is just enough time to stop them if we act now. A plan exists that is capable of arresting would be the worst environmental disaster to strike Minnesota’s waters since the zebra mussel.

We have appreciated working with Commissioner Strommen and her staff in finding solutions for Minnesota to respond to this environmental disaster. MN-FISH will be in support of the DNR’s Invasive Carp Action Plan over the next ten years for prevention and management efforts in Minnesota.

Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Dave Osborne
President, MN-FISH Sportfishing Coalition