

MICRA OVERVIEW

The Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA) originated from a 1989 agreement between 28 state conservation agencies having fisheries management jurisdiction in the Mississippi River Basin (Basin) in response to increasing awareness that more cooperation is needed between management jurisdictions in order to conserve and properly manage large river aquatic resources. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Tennessee Valley Authority, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Geological Survey - Biological Resources Division, Chickasaw Indian Nation, and Chippewa-Cree Indian Tribe also signed the agreement and are Association members.

MICRA's Mission is to "Improve the conservation, development, management, and utilization of interjurisdictional fishery resources (including freshwater mussels) in the Mississippi River Basin through improved coordination and communication among the responsible management entities." MICRA developed a comprehensive strategic plan in 1991 that identified 10 goals and priority needs to accomplish each goal. The strategic plan was last updated by the MICRA delegates in 2002 and is due to be revised in 2012.

MICRA strives to operate under consensus in undertaking projects affecting resources under the jurisdiction of any member state or entity. Resolutions, policy, and position statements can be approved by a supporting $\frac{3}{4}$ majority of MICRA Delegates. MICRA will be supportive of State positions, or at least neutral to issues that could significantly affect a member state.

An Executive Board oversees MICRA's general business, pursues Association priorities and direction set by the MICRA Delegates, and oversees technical committees and project execution. The Executive Board consists of a Chairperson (non-voting) and Chair-elect, Coordinator (non-voting), two representatives from different federal agencies, and one state agency member from each of six sub-basin groups:

- Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee (UMRCC)
- Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee (LMRCC)
- Missouri river Natural Resources Committee (MRNRC)
- Ohio River Fish Management Team (ORFMT)
- Arkansas/Red River Fish Management Group (ARFMG)
- Tennessee/Cumberland River Fish Management Group (TRFMG)

MICRA Delegates and Executive Board members meet periodically to facilitate communication and collaboration, identify priority needs and MICRA goals, establish cooperative projects, and to develop policy between the states or between state and federal agencies or other entities to improve interjurisdictional fisheries management.

Member Roles and Responsibilities

Delegates:

- Each state and federal agency who is a signed party to the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Agreement will be represented on MICRA by one voting delegate; all other signed parties will be represented by one non-voting delegate.
- State delegates appointed to represent member agencies on MICRA are typically the department fish chief, or equivalent, and should have the authority to make decisions on behalf of the member agency, within policy and financial constraints.
- Delegates attend annual MICRA meetings and conference calls to facilitate communication and collaboration on issues affecting interjurisdictional fisheries and other aquatic resources in the Mississippi River Basin and to develop policy between the states, or between states and federal agencies or other entities.
- Delegates identify priority needs, MICRA goals, and collaborative projects to provide direction to the MICRA Executive Board and Technical Committees.
- Voting delegates periodically vote on MICRA business items, policy, resolutions, and position statements. Completion of MICRA business is dependent upon MICRA delegates casting official votes when requested.
- State delegates rotate two-year terms as MICRA Chairperson; the office is rotated among the six sub-basins groups represented in MICRA.

Chairperson:

- The MICRA Chairperson speaks for and is responsible for MICRA business, makes appointments to MICRA Committees, and exercises such other functions as may be determined from time to time by member actions.
- The Chairperson shall preside at Executive Board and MICRA meetings.
- The MICRA Chairperson will serve as a non-voting Executive Board member.
- The Chairperson is authorized to appoint Ad Hoc Subcommittees to carry out specific short-term assignments.
- The Chairperson, acting on behalf of the Association, will conduct an audit of MICRA's financial accounts and records at a minimum of every five (5) years, or at the discretion of the Association.

Chairperson-Elect:

- A candidate for Chairperson-Elect will be nominated during odd number years by one of the sub-basin groups comprising the Executive Board.
- Nomination of the Chairperson-Elect will be rotated among the sub-basin groups.
- The Chairperson-Elect shall assume the duties of Chairperson in the Chairperson's absence or inability to act.
- The Chairperson-Elect will automatically accede to the office of Chairperson upon completion of his/her term or to fill an unexpired vacant term of the Chairperson.
- The Chairperson-Elect may also serve as a sub-basin representative on the Executive Board if appointed by that sub-basin.

Executive Board:

- The Executive Board consists of one state agency member from each of six sub-basin groups, the Chairperson-Elect, and two members representing different federal agencies. The Chairperson and Coordinator will be non-voting members.
- The Executive Board will advise the Chairperson and oversee MICRA's general business.
- The Executive Board shall meet at least once annually.
- The Executive Board may pass resolutions or adopt policy and position statements for MICRA only through a consensus vote of the Executive Board.
- The Executive Board may elevate any action item, position statement or policy position deemed appropriate to the full MICRA membership for a vote.
- Resolutions, policy and position statements must be distributed to the Executive Board and/or MICRA members at least 30 days prior to a vote.
- A full report of Executive Board actions will be made available to the MICRA delegates by the Chairperson.
- The Executive Board, in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, shall be responsible for supervising the activities of the MICRA Coordinator.

Technical Committees:

- Technical Committees may be established to carry out specific continuing assignments to develop information or products and to assist with coordination.
- A federal or state agency representative will chair each committee and may be represent the committee at MICRA and/or Executive Board meetings.
- Committee chairpersons shall be responsible for guiding technical committee work and activity, including the appointment of ad hoc or subcommittees assigned to address various technical committee issues.
- MICRA currently has four standing technical committees: Gamefish, Paddlefish/Sturgeon, Native Mussel, and Aquatic Invasive Species (Mississippi River Basin Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species).

Coordinator:

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provides a full-time Coordinator/Executive Secretary to assist with forwarding MICRA's goals, objectives, and projects.
- Assists the Chairperson conduct MICRA's day-to-day business and maintains MICRA's administrative and financial records. Represents the Chairperson at meetings, conferences, and other appearances to further MICRA's purposes.
- Coordinates activities among MICRA members, other agencies, and the public.
- Facilitates development and maintenance of a comprehensive strategic plan for interjurisdictional fishery resources management in the Mississippi River Basin.
- Assists Technical Committee Chairs and facilitates the development and completion of committee work plans.
- Makes arrangements for MICRA meetings, prepares briefing books, and records meeting minutes.
- Edits and distributes MICRA's *River Crossings* newsletter.
- Manages the MICRA website (www.MICRARivers.org).