



June 16, 2023

Katie Smith, Director
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Ecological and Water Resources
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Ms. Smith:

As members of the Stop Carp Coalition and advocates for Minnesota's waters, we are pleased that the Minnesota Legislature has appropriated \$1.72 million in new one-time funds for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to prevent and manage invasive carp.

Our Coalition advocated for these funds so that the DNR had the resources to stop invasive carp from taking over Minnesota's waters. Although our original appropriation request was not supported by the DNR or fully funded by the Legislature, this new funding is a direct result of our advocacy.

We request that the DNR use this appropriation in the following ways:

1. Immediately begin further design of the proposed bio-acoustic fish fence (BAFF) at Lock & Dam 5 (LD5). Barr Engineering and Fish Guidance Systems have suggested that 60% design could cost approximately \$300,000.
2. Contract with the University of Minnesota for the \$325,000 study to inform spillway gate adjustments at LD5, which will also inform similar adjustments at other dams.
3. Begin a feasibility study for a native fish passage system at LD5, which could also inform similar fish passage options at other locks and dams.

4. After contracting for the above studies, consider holding some of the remaining appropriation in reserve to use to advance projects after the Invasive Carp Action Plan update is completed at the end of 2023.

We request that the DNR not utilize these funds for previously planned and ongoing activities, including the following:

1. None of this appropriation should be used for the Structured Decision-Making (SDM) process. The DNR has said for the past 11 months that the SDM is fully funded, so we see no reason why these new funds should be redirected towards this long-delayed project.
2. The DNR has indicated that its current method for monitoring invasive carp populations is the Modified-Unified Method (MUM). This new appropriation should not be used to expand MUM fishing events as it is not clear that these efforts are catching and removing a substantial portion of the state's invasive carp population.

With these strategic investments, the DNR can get answers to its questions about the proposed LD5 BAFF in tandem with the Action Plan update. If the agency moves in a timely manner, these studies and plans can all be completed in time to inform a legislative funding request next session.

The DNR's failure to pursue all possible carp prevention strategies in recent years has placed Minnesota's waters at risk. There is no time left to wait, as recent carp catches and activity below LD5 make clear. We urge the DNR not to delay any further in pursuing strategies to prevent, not merely manage, invasive carp in as many Minnesota waterways as possible.

Sincerely,

Friends of the Mississippi River
Friends of Pool 2
Izaak Walton League of America Minnesota Division
Lake Pepin Legacy Alliance
Minnesota Conservation Federation
Midwest Marina Association
Mississippi Park Connection
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation

CC:

Senator Foug Hawj
Senator John Hoffman

Representative Peter Fischer
Representative Sydney Jordan
Commissioner Sarah Strommen
Grace Loppnow
Kelly Pennington
Heidi Wolf