2013 — 09 To Improve Water Quality and Habitat in the Upper Mississippi River (UMR) and its Watershed

WHEREAS, Asian Carp and other invasive species pose a threat to native habitat and endemic fish populations, and

WHEREAS, lock closures and other barriers may not be enough to curb the establishment of exotic plant and animal species, and

WHEREAS, improvements to water quality and habitat may help minimize the adverse impacts of invasive plant and animal species and

WHEREAS, drawdowns in Pool 5 (2005-2006) have resulted in dramatic improvements in vegetation, waterfowl use, and fish abundance, and

WHEREAS, the use of gill netting by commercial fishermen results in fatal by-catches of species of greatest conservation need (e.g. Paddlefish) and large individuals of more common species, and

WHEREAS, angling can diminish endemic fish populations

It is resolved by the Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America in convention on April 28, 2013 that an aquatic systems holistic approach should be taken to minimize the adverse impacts by exotic plant and animal species. Actions that will help maintain diverse and abundant endemic fish populations are (1) improving water quality and habitat and (2) restricting the harvest of some species of commercial and sport fish. These are actions 3.3 and 3.4 of the Asian Carp Action Plan 09/13/2012 (copy attached). Also, see chart below for recommended changes which are based on a review of Angling Regulations of Minnesota/Wisconsin Border Waters 09/30/2011 (copy attached). The changes conform to inland MN regulations or, where appropriate, suggest a change more in line with the fish populations of the UMR.

Additional actions include (3) recommending that the Army Corp of Engineers normalize a process for drawdowns in ALL pools of the UMR and (4) the recommendation to ban or restrict gill netting.

RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO FISH HARVEST REGULATIONS

SPECIES	CURRENT	RECOMMEND	COMMENT
Northern Pike	5, no size limits	3, 1 > 30”	Same MN Inland
Channel & Flathead Catfish (FCF)	10 combined, no size limit	5 and only 2 FCF, 1 > 24”	Same MN Inland
Walleye (WAE) & Sauger	6 combined, 15” min. (WAE)	6 combined, 1 > 20”	Same MN Inland
Largemouth & Smallmouth Bass	5 combined, 14” min	Same	6 combined, no size limit
Shovelnose Sturgeon	10	1 > 30”	Inland closed
Lake Sturgeon	Closed	Closed	Inland closed
Bluegills (BLG)	10 in Pools 5, 5A & 8, 25 in Pools, 3, 4, 6, 7 & 9		20 MN Inland
Yellow Perch (YEP)	25		20 MN Inland
Crappie (CRP)	25		10 MN Inland
We are suggesting 15 combined for the species, Bluegill, Yellow Perch, Crappie		15 combined, BLG, YEP & CRP	
White Bass	25	15	30 MN Inland

Submitted by Wapashaw Chapter
Larry Gates, President