

**Testimony on the impact of invasive carp on the Mississippi River in the Twin Cities
Minnesota Senate Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee
August 10, 2022**

Thank you Senator Ingebrigtsen and members of the Environment and Natural Resources Finance Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association.

I am John Anfinson, a member of NPCA's Midwest Advisory Council. Chris Goepfert, NPCA's staff in the Twin Cities, and the co-chair of the Stop Carp Coalition, is traveling overseas, or she would have been with you today.

NPCA was established in 1919, just three years after the National Park Service, so that the American people would have a voice in the shaping of our National Park System. Today we have more than 1.6 million members and supporters, with more than 32,000 in the state of Minnesota.

In January 2020, I retired as Superintendent of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area, which is headquartered in St. Paul. MNRRA as it is colloquially known, is a unit of the National Park System. Its boundary encompasses 72 miles of the Mississippi River through the greater Twin Cities metropolitan area.

In 2011, I initiated the Invasive Carp task force and co-chaired that group of over 20 government entities until 2013. And from 2013 to 2021, I sat on the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center's Citizen Advisory Board. This Center addresses a wide array of aquatic invasive species, including carp.

So what can we do to address this threat?

One of the measures the Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center uses to decide what species to study is essentially an urgency-impact equation: How urgent or immediate is the threat, and what would the impact be if we did not confront it?

We now know that this threat is more immediate than we feared, and the consequences would be substantial. We have all seen the videos of carp jumping out of the water, and smacking into whatever is in their path. If Silver carp infest the Mississippi River above Lock and Dam No. 5, it will no longer be safe for anyone to be on the Mississippi River below St. Anthony Falls.

We know from studies on the Illinois River and the Mississippi River downstream that invasive carp decimate food webs needed by our native fish, reducing their populations.

The BAFF (Bioacoustical Fish Fence) system is by far the most effective available method to hold these invaders back and although we would like to see this system pursued as soon as possible, we understand that the DNR must complete a structured decision making process before it can endorse any solution. And, they will need to involve and get buy in from the State of Wisconsin, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Corps of Engineers and U.S. Geological Survey.

We can support the DNR in this planning and study phase if it is initiated and completed very quickly.

Therefore, DNR needs the staff, funding and direction necessary to complete its structured decision making process as soon as possible.

If we do nothing or delay too long, we will have only ourselves to blame years from now when our Mississippi River is full of these jumping fish, void of recreation, and people have once again turned their backs on the River.

Submitted by:

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