



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Region 3 - Great Lakes/Big Rivers

Leadership in Conserving, Enhancing, and Restoring Aquatic Ecosystems



La Crosse Fishery Resources Office

La Crosse, Wisconsin



-Robert J. Hurt

Islands constructed in Polander Lake, near Winona, Minnesota, are part of a Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project on the upper Mississippi River. La Crosse FRO and Upper Mississippi Wildlife and Fish Refuge - Winona District have a project in place to study fish usage in Polander Lake's new island complex.

La Crosse Fishery Resources Office

The La Crosse Fishery Resources Office (FRO) was established in 1981 and is responsible for fishery management assistance for four Tribal governments, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission, St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, Fort McCoy military base, numerous federal and state agencies, and other Fish and Wildlife Service offices. The office is located in Onalaska, Wisconsin and serves in geographic areas of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Office Goals

- Restore native and interjurisdictional paddlefish and sturgeon, wetlands and aquatic habitats
- Fulfill federal trust responsibilities to Native American Tribes
- Prevent the extinction of federally endangered mussels
- Address the spread of nonindigenous aquatic invasive species
- Provide environmental education



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La Crosse Fishery Resources Office Staff

Left to Right: Nancy Christopherson, Mark Steingraeber, Heidi Keuler, Dave Wedan, Ann Runstrom, Pam Thiel, Scott Yess

Higgins' eye pearl mussel - An endangered species



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Mussel Restoration:

Ecological impacts stemming from zebra mussel infestations in the upper Mississippi River threaten the survival of native mussels including federal and state listed species. La Crosse FRO, in cooperation with the Genoa National Fish Hatchery, Twin Cities Field Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the States of Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin combine efforts to recover the endangered Higgins' eye pearl mussel. Partners annually produce, "infect", and distribute thousands of host fish, bearing mussel larvae, to selected sites within the upper Mississippi River watershed. An essential part of this mussel's life cycle is for parasitic glochidia (mussel larvae) to attach to the gills of host fish for several weeks. Only a few species of fish have been determined to be a host fish for this mussel species. In the spring of 2003, the efforts from partners produced an estimated 875,000 juvenile mussels.

Round Goby/Asian Carp Roundup:

La Crosse FRO leads an annual multi-agency survey for aquatic nuisance species in a 100 mile stretch of the Illinois Waterway (Waterway). These surveys are used to determine the progress of invasive round goby and Asian carp range expansion, and the effectiveness of the Chicago Ship & Sanitary Canal Electrical Demonstration Barrier in preventing further range expansion of nuisance fish. The round goby, established in Lake Michigan, is past the electrical barrier site and may expand to the Mississippi Basin while Asian carp are a threat to move up the Waterway into the Great Lakes. During the 2003 survey, no Asian carp were observed any farther upstream than previously collected.



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Round Goby

For detailed information about the La Crosse Fishery Resources Office, contact the office at: (608) 783-8434 or visit their website at: <http://midwest.fws.gov/lacrossefisheries/>