



# Making Waves



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The C.A.S.T. (Catch A Special Thrill) for Kids Foundation is a public charity formed in 1991 to join volunteers who love to fish with special needs populations for a day of fishing in the outdoors.

The Foundation was granted 501 (c)3 non-profit status in 1994 and currently hosts three programs: C.A.S.T. for Kids; Fishing Kids; and Take A Warrior Fishing.



The C.A.S.T. for Kids Program is de-

signed to create an environment whereby special needs children and their caretakers could benefit, leaving their problems on shore and sharing a day of fun on the water that they may not otherwise get to experience. This is all made possible through the cooperation of government agencies, national and local sponsors, and local interest groups, and creates a rare and positive experience for some of America's overlooked youth.

## C.A.S.T. for Kids a Success

By Mark Steingraeber



Several fishery and refuge program offices of the Service took part in a C.A.S.T. for Kids Program on Friday, June 21. Organized by Genoa National Fish Hatchery (NFH) staff, the event was scheduled to begin at Blackhawk Park.



This U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recreation area is located on the Upper Mississippi River near De Soto, Wisconsin

From here, a flotilla of boats was to take the children, their families, and a guide out for a morning of exploration and fishing on *Old Man River*. But *Mother Nature* had other ideas.



The final straw for planned events at the park came when lightning continued to prevent all boats from launching.



Fortunately, the Genoa NFH staff is accustomed to making sweet lemonade when dealt sour lemons like this.



Special needs families were soon touring the hatchery, then wetted a line and several feet at the special event fishing pond here

Stocked with a variety game fish, the most common species caught by many of the novice anglers were bluegill and rainbow trout.

Judging by the abundance of excitement and smiles generated the remainder of the day, this C.A.S.T. for Kids event was a complete success



More information on the C.A.S.T. for Kids Foundation and upcoming programs around the nation is available at [www.castforkids.org/](http://www.castforkids.org/).



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# Upper Mississippi River Clean-Up

By Louise Mauldin



The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was out on Saturday, June 1, with Friends of the Upper Mississippi, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Care about River People (CARP), and other volunteers picking up trash for the annual Mississippi River Pool 8 cleanup.



The sunny morning brought out approximately 20 volunteers to help pick up trash here along the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

Volunteers met at the Wildcat Park boat ramp in Brownsville (MN) around 9 a.m. Once the five boat crews received their trash pick-up assignments, each of our boats motored away from the ramp in various directions.



*My crew spent time scavenging river banks near the spill-way and one of the islands*

Common items recovered in the next four hours were: water bottles, styrofoam, 50-gallon barrels, aluminum cans, tennis balls, and softballs.

One unusual item picked up this year was a rather large, stuffed cow.



*Surprisingly, the amount of trash we collected was down from 2012, likely due to high water carrying trash further down river this year*

Thanks to all the volunteers, particularly boat-house owners along the river, who help keep Pool 8 clean and beautiful for all those who love and enjoy using the Mighty Mississippi.

# Help Wanted: Citizen Scientists

By Mark Steingraeber



Have you ever wanted to take part in a science investigation?

Medical specialists often seek members of the public to voluntarily participate in trials to determine the effectiveness of new treatments to document health outcomes.

The La Crosse FWCO and several of its partners are likewise seeking help from those who work, commute, reside, or recreate along the Upper Mississippi River to voluntarily participate in efforts to monitor the seasonal pulse of *Old Man River* by observing and reporting mayfly emergence events that occur here throughout the summer.



These observations will form the core a citizen-scientist reporting network that will document the annual geographic range and relative abundance of burrowing mayflies, sentinels of the river's environmental health.



Learn more about becoming a citizen-scientist mayfly emergence observer at: [www.fws.gov/midwest/lacrossefisheries/mayfly.html](http://www.fws.gov/midwest/lacrossefisheries/mayfly.html)



# UMR Focus on Asian Carp Portals

By Kyle Mosel



The week of June 17, I had the pleasure of working with folks from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on Upper Mississippi River (UMR) Pools 19 and 20 near Keokuk, Iowa.

Our objectives were to collect Asian carp for population dynamic analyses, as well as to surgically implant acoustic transmitters in some of the fish to determine if they can pass upstream through Lock and Dam 19. The stronghold of Asian carp in the UMR is now found downstream of this structure, where upstream fish passage can occur through only one portal: the lock chamber.

More than 300 bighead, silver, and grass carp were collected from Pool 20 in a short time with a suite of gears. Fish were measured, weighed, sexed by external features, and had otoliths (ear stones) removed to estimate age. Although this was the first

time I sexed Asian carp in this way, I was correct over 99% of the time!



*The MDC had earlier implanted transmitters in 15 silver carp (male and female combined) that ranged 450-950 mm in total length (TL)*

Our goal was to implant transmitters in 15 bighead carp. I assisted with surgeries that brought the number of bighead carp with transmitters to 10 (both sexes combined) with fish that ranged 550-1150 mm in TL.

The MDC plans to implant 5 more bighead carp, bringing the total number of Asian carp with acoustic transmitters here to 30.

Movements of these fish will be monitored using a stationary network of automated receivers as well as a manual tracking system. Complimenting this is similar work by the U.S. Geological Survey in UMR Pools 18 and 19, as well planned acoustic work by the Minnesota DNR with Asian carp surrogate species in Pools 1, 2, and 3.

In coming months, the La Crosse FWCO plans to bridge the spatial surveillance gap in many of the remaining pools by similarly implanting acoustic transmitters in at least 60 bighead and silver carp and deploying receivers here to monitor the leading edge of the population as it moves upstream.

Among partnering agencies, this system of acoustic receivers will soon cover almost 500 river miles and 20 portals (locks and dams) to determine the extent of fish passage by Asian carp and Asian carp surrogates in the UMR.

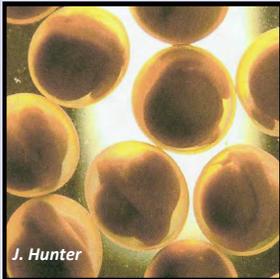


# Biologists Document History – Lake Sturgeon Reproduction at Keshena Falls

By Ann Runstrom



Biologists from the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin (Tribe), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) teamed up to try and document the hatching of lake sturgeon eggs at Keshena Falls on the Upper Wolf River in the spring of 2013. In April of 2012, the Menominee people celebrated the homecoming of a small group of sturgeon observed spawning at Keshena Falls for the first time in over a century. However, in the world of fishery science, reproduction is not successful until the offspring “recruit” to the population (i.e., grow big enough to be captured by fishing gear). An intermediate measure of reproductive success is the collection of viable eggs or larval fish.



Embryonic lake sturgeon

The team’s goal was to collect at least one live larval sturgeon. Lake sturgeon eggs settle into crevices and interstitial spaces in the substrate. Once hatched the larval fish remain there until their yolk sac is absorbed. The substrate provides some protection from predators, particularly in the daylight hours. After the yolk sac is absorbed, the larval fish will swim up into the water column at night and drift with the current into more favorable nursery habitat. During the drift, the larval fish can be captured in plankton nets anchored to the substrate. This behavior dictates that sampling be conducted at night. With the late onset of spring, water temperature profiles had us predicting the hatch and subsequent drift to begin the week of May 20. Sampling was scheduled to begin at O-dark-thirty on May 21 and was to continue through the Memorial Day holiday weekend, if necessary. We would sample each night until we documented a hatch or found absolutely nothing after an exhaustive search, thoroughly covering times and temperatures when sturgeon would hatch. The team approached their late hour and potential holiday task with enthusiasm, as reaching the goal of capturing one larval lake sturgeon would be a significant event in the history of the Tribe, the lake sturgeon, and the team of biologists.



Plankton nets deployed



Balsam Row Dam

Lake sturgeon have always been culturally and spiritually significant to the Menominee people. They chose the location of their reservation because of the huge number of sturgeon that congregated at Keshena Falls to spawn each spring. Following habitat degradation from log drives and deforestation during the logging era, as well as the construction of two hydropower dams, lake sturgeon became extirpated from this portion of their natural range.

The interagency team has been working on this project since the early 1990s, when the Tribe approached Service biologists at the Winona Fishery Assistance Office (now the La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office) with a request to assist them in restoring lake sturgeon to the Upper Wolf River. Following much correspondence and many meetings with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the DNR, an interagency management team was formed. A management plan was developed and accepted by all four entities, and on the ground restoration efforts began in 1994. Management strategies have shifted over the years, with recently implemented strategies resulting in observed spawning events in 2012 and 2013.

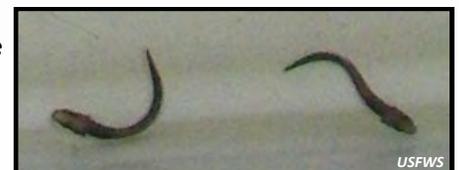


1995 - Adult lake sturgeon release



As dusk began to fall the evening of May 21, the team deployed their nets at a point in the stream where larval lake sturgeon, if present, would likely drift through. Then we waited. After one hour, we began to retrieve the samples by pouring the material collected into large pails, and reset the nets. We poured small amounts of each sample into sampling trays for sorting. By the light of our headlamps we sifted through debris and invertebrates in search of a “rapidly wiggling large larval piscid.” After about 20 minutes of sifting and searching, a shout came out “I got one!” followed by another “I’m buying!” The team agreed that it was too easy and premature to call it a

success, so we continued to let the nets fish for another full one hour sample. In the end, we ended up with several live larval sturgeon. We had obtained our goal and recorded history by documenting that the sturgeon observed spawning produced viable eggs and larval fish. Not only had we witnessed and contributed to some success in restoration of an ancient species, we have succeeded in reviving a significant cultural event and icon to Wisconsin’s oldest resident human population and culture, the Menominee Nation.



2013 - Larval lake sturgeon captured

# Youth Outdoor Fest

**HANDS-ON  
ACTIVITIES**

July 13, 2013

11 AM – 3 PM

Pettibone Lagoon

A chance for kids  
to win a rod/reel  
combo!

**Free Entry!**

**Raffle Prizes for  
the whole family!**

Activities for 2013:

- Archery
- Birdwatching
- Boat Driving
- Bowfishing
- Camping
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Casting Game
- Dog Demos
- Ducks on a Stick
- Electrofishing
- Fish Dissection/Cleaning
- Fish Printing
- Fly Fishing
- Fur Identification
- Games/Activities
- Geocaching/Scavenger Hunt
- Hiking
- Identification of Fish
- Invertebrate Investigations
- Live Trout Fishing
- Minnow Races
- Mountain Biking
- Mississippi River Pontoon
- Scoop on Soil
- Storytelling

**Free  
hotdog!**

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**Parks, Recreation, & Forestry**