

**Upper Mississippi River Restoration (UMRR)
Invasive Species Policy
March 18, 2015**

Background and UMRR Program Context: Issues related to the spread and impact of invasive species are currently one of the dominant natural resource issues in the Upper Mississippi River System (UMRS). The UMRR Program strives to understand the ecology of the UMRS in order to restore habitat for native species and communities. UMRR Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects (HREPs) provide benefits to native species and communities by restoring riverine and floodplain habitat quality and quantity. The UMRR Long Term Resource Monitoring (LTRM) element collects baseline data to identify the status and trends of the critical river components; fish, water quality, and submerged aquatic vegetation, to document the conditions and changes in those conditions within the UMRS over time. The UMRR LTRM element's research provides insight into ecosystem function and the factors influencing the community structure of fishes and aquatic vegetation.

Purpose of Policy: This paper identifies and addresses the UMRR Program's role regarding invasive species within its authorization and the interagency Partnership while considering the national and Corps of Engineers' (Corps) invasive species policies (see references below). All UMRR activities will comply with national and Corps regulations and guidance, and will consider state regulations, as appropriate.

1. Communicating the UMRR roles in understanding historic and existing conditions of the UMRS ecosystem and how this can be used to evaluate the impact of invasive species on native communities or species is critical for coordinating all efforts within the UMRS on aquatic invasive species effectively.
2. Reporting of new or rare captures or sightings of invasive species by each UMRR partner agency is already required or encouraged per each agency's rules, regulations or policies. Confirmed sightings should be recorded as soon as practicable to USGS via the Sighting Report Form, at <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/SightingReport.aspx> . In addition, new captures or sightings of invasive species will also be reported to the UMRR LTRM leads for the Corps and USGS-UMESC via email and/or phone call within 24 hours and prior to release to the media so that the appropriate level of interagency coordination can take place. Information will include the species captured, the time, location and method of capture along with photographs (if any) and the names of the collectors.
3. Future UMRR research activities on invasive species will focus on understanding the impacts of invasive species on native species and communities, on changes to the ecosystem, and will be used to inform future restoration and management from both a local and system-wide perspective.
4. All HREP projects are formulated to benefit native species and communities. Invasive species of concern will be considered in UMRR HREP planning efforts and in project evaluation reports of existing projects. Management and/or maintenance of existing projects should be adapted to address invasive species impacts and impairments to maintain the ecological value of the project for native species through time.

References:

- National Invasive Species Act of 1996
- Invasive Species Executive Order 13112 (1999)
- National Invasive Species Management Plan (2008-2012)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Invasive Species Policy (2009)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Program Management Plan for the Invasive Species Leadership Team and Invasive Species Management CoP and Environmental CoP (2014)