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Making Waves

The Asian Carp Battle Front... a Surreal Experience



Incident Commanders ready themselves for attack.

Photo by USFWS Karla Bartelt

As a middle-aged baby-boomer (1959 cohort) who has never served in the military, I had come to rely on documentary films and cinematic dramas to imagine what it must be like as a foot soldier on the front lines of a war, engaged in a high stakes battle with a determined, relentless enemy. Therefore, as a Service fishery biologist, I never imagined that I and many of my colleagues from throughout the Midwest would recently be recruited and deployed like modern-day minutemen to defend the Great Lakes from foreign invaders like Asian carps.

Yet here I was, in Romeoville, Illinois, near the banks of the Chicago Sanitary

and Ship Canal, along with a trio of colleagues from my office and hundreds of other fishery professionals from across North America. As a member of Strike Team B, I helped man the first watch at night aboard an armada of vessels that was proceeding slowly upstream into murky waters to search for our enemies. We tried to stay warm and dry in our protective gear on that cold winter's night, protecting ourselves from the foggy mix of steam that rose off the surface of the black water, as well as wind driven snow that fell from the ebony sky. Reflecting back on events preceding that night, as well as others in the days that fol-

lowed, it all seemed so surreal to me that I thought, "I hope this is a close as I ever come to participating at the front line of a real war".

Every one of my senses was on

heightened alert to absorb a host of unusual sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings that rapidly flowed through my consciousness like a rushing stream as I tried to make rational sense of it all: wait in line; register; mobilize; demobilize; credentials; security; checkpoints; briefings; respirator training; cold feet; diesel generators; floodlights; mud; suffocating fish; delays; hazards; pallets of rotenone and sodium permanganate; incident command center; flashing lights; international allies; rotamine-dyed water; sirens; cold hands; first responders; hissing steam; barrels of dead fish; cranes; hard hats; fatigue; dripping nose; underwater obstructions; refineries; trains; photographers; reporters; blood; slime; decontamination; malfunctioning equipment; Red Cross volunteers; hot coffee; port a potties; mountains of coal; windburn; conservation police; helicopters; pumps; search; recovery.



One of the deployed squads, mount up for attack with several of their assigned weapons (black barrels of rotenone).

Photo by USFWS Karla Bartelt

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Could all this be part of the script for a new movie thriller ... an environmental hybrid version of *Apocalypse Now*, *Twelve O'clock High*, *Jaws*, and *The Great Spider Invasion* ... photographed through a film-noir lens ...complete with scale models of silver and bighead carps ... titled *Invasion of the Flying Fish*? No, these scenes describe the cold, hard reality of the unfortunate war that the Service and its partners continue waging to keep Asian carp out of Lake Michigan.



By: Mark Steingraeber



Fish May Pass

Report by: Scott Yess

Lake Sturgeon Can Expand Their Range on the White Earth Reservation.



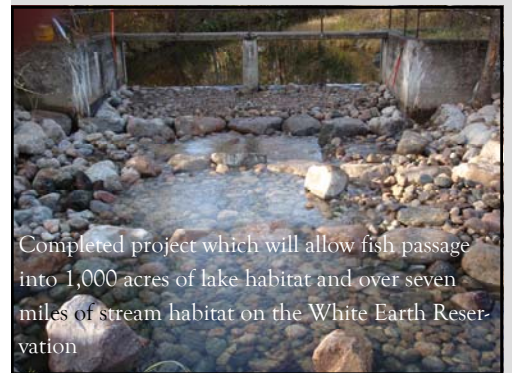
Contractor works the fish passage project on the White Earth Reservation.

A fish passage structure was installed below the dam at connecting Many Point Lake to Little Bemidji Lake on the White Earth Reservation. This project was a fantastic Partnership between the White Earth Natural Resources Department and the Fish and

Wildlife Service. Rock and boulders were placed in the river below the dam to elevate the bottom and create a 4% slope which will allow fish to pass over the dam. Three weirs were added utilizing large boulders which will create shallow pools and help dissipate energy. Boulders were also placed along the banks for stabilization. Funding for this project was provided by a Fish and Wildlife Service Grant with matching funds from the White Earth DNR.

Lake Sturgeon are stocked in Round Lake which is connected to Many Point and Little Bemidji by the Ottertail River. We expect lake sturgeon to move into Little Bemidji Lake and also into Elbow Lake which opens up over 1,000 acres of lake habitat and over seven miles of streams. This structure was recommended for fish passage in the lake

sturgeon management plan written for the White Earth Reservation. Racer Construction did a fantastic job with the heavy lifting. At the end of the second day this project was reality, it was a true partnership and will provide fish passage for many years.



Completed project which will allow fish passage into 1,000 acres of lake habitat and over seven miles of stream habitat on the White Earth Reservation

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