

Advocacy – February 2021

Tellico Lake Planning. On January 28, 2021 TVA sent out a press release titled: “TVA Invites Public Input on Proposed Revision to Tellico Reservoir Land Management Plan”. Included in the press release was a link to information about their planning process and registration information for a webinar on February 25 at 5pm. <https://www.tva.com/newsroom/press-releases/tva-invites-public-input-on-proposed-revision-to-tellico-reservoir-land-management-plan>

HOA plans to send a letter to TVA expressing our views on development of Tellico Lake. The thoughts we have so far are to encourage expansion of the parking lot at Halls Bend Trailhead and to improve security at this site. Also, to improve erosion control of the lakeshore in common areas managed by TVA. If you have other ideas or concerns that should be included in our letter, please send them to me or Ken Litke (HOA President).

Asian Carp. On September 23, 2020 TN Governor Bill Lee issued Executive Order #62 “Establishing the Asian Carp Advisory Commission” [exec-orders-lee62.pdf \(tnsosfiles.com\)](#). The commission was “formed for the purpose of addressing and mitigating the invasion of Asian carp into Tennessee's lakes and river systems in order to protect native fish species and aquatic life and commercial and recreational fishing and water activities in Tennessee.”

The Commission held it's first meeting on December 8, 2020. A recording of the meeting can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-mCQCEobxY>. Members of the commission include:

1. Mike Bell (Chair) – TN State Senator
2. Kurt Holbert – Chairman, TN Fish & Wildlife Commission
3. Michael Butler – CEO, TN Wildlife Federation (TWF)
4. Monte Below – Public Safety Director, UT at Martin (Henry County)
5. David Salyers – Commissioner, TN Dept. of Environmental Conservation
6. Dennis Tumlin – Chief Customer Officer, TN Dept. of Tourist Development
7. Sam Yarrow – Dept. of Economic & Community Development
8. Frank Fiss – Chief of Fisheries, TN Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA)
9. Bob Deacy – SVP Projects, TVA
10. Tba - US Army Corps of Engineers

At the Commission meeting they reviewed a presentation given by TWRA to Governor Lee in October regarding that status of work to control Asian Carp.

1. First started seeing carp on Kentucky Lake (in sufficient numbers to start collecting them) in 2012.
2. Grass carp has been stocked in TN for over 50 years (for pond weed management). Some escaped decades ago and are found throughout TN. They are not a top priority at this time.
3. Black carp are found mostly in the MS River. Only about 10 specimens have been found in Kentucky and Barkley Lakes. They eat native mussels. No good tools exist today to control black carp.
4. Bighead and Silver carp are the current priority. Silver carp are the ones that jump. Both eat phytoplankton, thereby endangering the food chain of native fish species.
5. What is different about Asia that makes it easier to control them there?
 - a. Other native species compete with the carp.
 - b. Overfishing of carp reduced the stocks to the point that they have started to raise them in fisheries and restock.
6. Where are the carp now?
 - a. Abundant numbers in MS River, Barkley and Kentucky Lakes.
 - a. Moderate amounts in Pickwick (TN River) and Cheatham (Cumberland River).

- b. A few on Old Hickory Reservoir (Cumberland River)
 - c. None on Cordell Hull (Cumberland River). Probably because the locks are seldom opened.
 - d. 1 Silver carp caught in Wheeler in March 2017
 - e. 1 Bighead carp caught on Guntersville in Spring 2020.
 - f. A few dozen fish (probably Bighead carp) have been reported over the last few years by commercial fisherman on Nickajack.
 - g. 1 Silver carp was found in October 2019 on Chickamauga, although there is some doubt about this catch because of the lack of documentation and the actual fish was not retained.
7. Despite an ongoing campaign with the public, no small carp have been reported found anywhere in the Cumberland or TN River systems over the last 5 years. They do not appear to be spawning in either system, perhaps due to environmental conditions.
 8. Migration upriver appears to be due to their current habitat becoming full and they then spill over into the next habitat upriver. They do not appear to be compelled to move upriver (like a migrating salmon returns upriver to spawn).
 9. National carp control goals.
 - a. Stop the movement of Asian carp to new locations.
 - b. Reduce the abundance of carp in populated waters.
 10. Strategies (to meet the goals).
 - a. Prohibit movement by people. Laws already exist in TN to cover this. No more laws are expected to be needed.
 - b. Strategically remove carp.
 - i. Commercial fishermen are currently being paid to remove Asian carp from Kentucky and Barkley lakes. Although they would also be paid to catch carp on Pickwick and Cheatham, they don't want to fish there because they would catch very few.
 - ii. Since September 2018 (when the program started) 18 million pounds of carp have been pulled out of Barkley and Kentucky lakes.
 - c. Install barriers to stop/reduce movement upstream.
 - i. Close the locks. A difficult choice, for many reasons.
 - ii. Acoustic sound controls. Mostly studied in the lab. Needs field testing.
 - iii. BioAcoustic Fish Fence (BAFF) - combination of acoustic, bubbles, and strobe lights. Currently being tested at Barkley lock.
 - iv. Carbon Dioxide. Expensive to operate at locks with lots of cycles.
 - v. Electric barrier. Most expensive option. Least safe for navigation. Does not work well for small fish. Currently on the Chicago waterway (\$100m to install, \$10m/yr to run).
 - d. Monitor abundance and movements.
 11. Progress on barriers for TN and Cumberland rivers.
 - a. Test barrier at Barkley was the first project to receive funding – 2019.
 - b. In 2020 TVA initiated a Programmatic Environmental Assessment with an aggressive timeline.
 - c. A Multi Agency Workgroup is preparing recommendations for deterrent types and locations.
 - i. No deterrent is 100% effective.
 - ii. Need to consider impact on native mussels and fish.
 - iii. What can we afford?
 - iv. Need to consider navigation, safety, etc.
 - d. Downstream removal efforts continue. Reduces upstream pressure and buys time.

The Commission is requesting TWRA to fund an Economic Impact Study for Asian carp in TN. The cost of the study is roughly \$130k and would take about 6 months to complete. It would be paid for out of the marine gas tax fund (spill tax), not license fees. The study would be completed by UT, providing hard data on the impact of Asian carp to the economy, tourism, etc.

The Commission has been tasked by the governor to produce a progress report to him in February 2021. Future meetings are tba.

Federal funding for Asian Carp Prevention and Control

Funding for the control of Asian carp was included in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020, which was signed into law in late December, 2020. Section 509 provided for an Asian Carp Prevention and Control Pilot Program. There are two parts of the legislation. Highlights include:

1. Corps of Engineers Asian Carp Prevention Pilot Program.
 - a. Only for the Cumberland and TN River watersheds.
 - b. Projects to be completed by September 30, 2024.
 - c. \$25m authorized to be expended. Federal share of each project is limited to 75%. Federal share of operating costs is 100%.
2. Fish and Wildlife Service Asian Carp Eradication Program.
 - a. Priority to be given to the Cumberland and TN River watersheds.
 - b. \$4m/yr authorized for fiscal years 2021 through 2025. Federal share is 80%.

The complete text of Section 509 can be found in the attached note:



SECTION 509 -
Asian Carp Preventic

While our ability to see each other at HOA Social gatherings is currently limited, please feel free to send me a note if you have any issues or concerns that I might be able to help with.

Thank you. I look forward to hearing from you.

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