



**Fisheries Committee Meeting  
February 6, 2016  
Commission Room**

**I. Discussion Item – Asian Carp Industry Partnership Proposal**

Kentucky and Barkley lakes have an economic value of over \$1.2 billion annually; primarily due to recreational fishing and boating that attract hundreds of thousands of visitors and tourists. The lakes support excellent bass and crappie populations along with many other sport and non-sport fish species. Tragically, very large numbers of bighead and silver carp have accumulated in the two reservoirs. The invasive carps forage on plankton important to all fish species at some portion of their early life cycles; therefore, they now threaten all fish species in the lakes. Aside from the ecological threats, silver carp are prolific leapers, and the adults threaten boaters and skiers with bodily harm and damage to expensive instrumentation housed on boats.

Commercial fishing and agency removal efforts using nets and electrofishing are the only methods feasible for Asian carp population control or eradication. KDFWR has taken many steps to facilitate or encourage commercial harvest in Kentucky contributing to the formation of three commercial processors engaged in making Asian carp their primary focus. Kentucky's fish processing businesses have demonstrated more resiliency and reliability than similar businesses in other states, but have also battled with several issues that threaten their ability to survive. Some of those issues include occasional inconsistent market demands resulting in a lack of guarantees that harvested fish will be purchased, poor prices for the fish, and costs for equipment and transportation. Those factors and other challenges have prevented most of Kentucky's commercial fishermen from dedicating their efforts to harvesting Asian carp.

In response to the industry's challenges, KDFWR has created a new Asian carp partnership design to increase the number of dedicated commercial fishermen and augment harvest through research efforts and experimenting with new harvest methods. A presentation will be provided to introduce the partnership concept which will include processors, commercial fishermen, a new distribution warehouse, and an augmented KDFWR research unit. The combined components will use a system of communication, coordination, education, and transportation to increase harvest of Asian carp in the two reservoirs. The ultimate goal of this partnership is to reduce numbers of Asian carp to the point of eradication, ideally, or to continually harvest enough of the invasive fish so that they no longer threaten the two reservoirs' ecologies and economy.