

Tennessee Wildlife Federation Led Effort To Secure Millions for Asian Carp Fight

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Tennessee Wildlife Federation built a coalition that secured \$25 million in federal funding to combat Asian carp in southern states.

Asian carp are one of the largest threats facing Tennessee's waters, fisheries, recreation, and local economies.

Tennessee Wildlife Federation has been working hard to fight the invasive species for years.

We've had wins along the way but this winter, our efforts paid off big! A \$25 million appropriation to fight Asian carp was passed in Congress and signed by the president as part of the federal budget for fiscal year 2020.

Tennessee Wildlife Federation played a leadership role in securing this appropriation.

The Federation brought together influential people and organizations from across the region and worked hand-in-hand with lawmakers to increase the old appropriation and make it available to Southeast states, including Tennessee.

The funding will be allocated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the U.S. Geological Survey. Funds will go into barriers that limit the fish's movement, contract fishing and commercial fishing incentives, and research more ways to control Asian carp.

"Asian carp are wreaking havoc on our aquatic ecosystems—including threatened or endangered species—while also making rivers and lakes unusable for recreation, which is destroying local economies," said Michael Butler, CEO of Tennessee Wildlife Federation. "The Federation's conservation policy work is at the heart of what we do because it creates far-reaching results like securing this funding."

When Asian carp jumped onto our radar (literally), we knew it would be one of the biggest threats to our natural resources and native aquatic species.

Over the years, the Federation [secured funding](#) that allowed for the acquisition of important ice making machines and other equipment allowing commercial fishermen to be more effective at removing Asian carp. We asked outdoor enthusiasts to [take action](#) to limit the movement of the invasive fish and report sightings to Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency.

We built an [Asian carp coalition](#) of more than 85 Tennessee-based businesses, organizations, and chambers of commerce to advocate for more funding to block and tackle the Asian carp issue.

We organized monthly, multi-state Asian carp strategy calls that included a diverse mix of federal and state agencies, national conservation groups, and U.S. Senate and House staffers to come together and share essential information and strategies about Asian carp.

From those calls, we worked closely with Congressman David Kustoff's office on an effort to secure the federal Asian carp appropriation. The first step included garnering support for a so-called Dear Colleague letter, which was signed by 15 members of the House, including all but one Tennessee congressman.

Our focus then turned to helping develop funding language with Tennessee's congressmen and senators, as well as with influential lawmakers from neighboring states.

Our years of strategic efforts led us to this victory of Tennessee's native fish and waters.

But our work doesn't stop after securing this appropriation. The Federation will be there every step of the way, ensuring funding is used to its fullest potential and continuing to find effective solutions to combat carp.