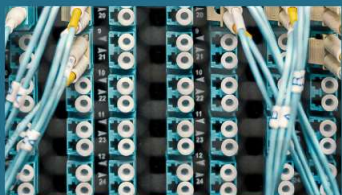


APA-ISS SPRING CONFERENCE

FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 2021 AND FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2021



The Carp Connection: Transforming a slippery problem into a savory solution

APRIL 16, 2021
(CM | 1.25)

Speakers will take a look at an Asian carp project from the standpoint of regional connections and collaboration. The presentation will cover: 1) History of carp in the US, 2) Foundations of carp connections, 3) Our region's involvement, and 4) Future of carp collaboration. Grab a sneak peek of to story [in Peoria Magazine](#).



Ms. Reema Abi-Akar holds a bachelor's degree in urban planning from the University of Illinois and a master's degree in natural resources and environment from the University of Michigan. She has worked in regional planning for nearly four years, spanning topics from hazard mitigation to the 2020 Census. Currently, her focus is water supply planning and transit planning with a focus on human services, seniors, and individuals with disabilities. In her free time, Reema roller skates and bikes on the multi-use trail near her house, listens to NPR, and researches baby animals online.



As the Tri-County Metropolitan Planning Organization's Planning Program Manager, **Mr. Ray Lees** has oversight management responsibilities for the development and the coordinated execution of regional plans with a number of diverse stakeholders addressing transportation, environmental and land use/community development issues in the Tri-County area of Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford Counties.

His relevant environmental planning initiatives include implementing conservation measures in the Upper and Lower Peoria Lakes and Illinois River to manage the impact of several species of Asian Carp...including silver, grass and bighead which have "invaded" the Illinois Waterways. Ray has played an instrumental role in connecting, coordinating and expanding the number of stakeholders engaged in the Asian Carp harvesting and business development efforts. From the Invasive Species Program Managers within the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to fisherman, fish processors, potential market outlets, research scientists and economic development officials, Ray has maintained a neutral regional posture to include and connect any person or entity interested in exploring the opportunities associated with the capitalization of this sustainable resource.

His four decades of public and private sector planning experiences include leadership and support in the development of business, neighborhood, community, regional and state efforts to frame key issues in a manner that optimizes opportunities for successful implementation and meeting plan objectives. Prior to joining the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission, Ray was a Principal for an architectural, engineering and planning firm with a national practice in several building types. He holds a B.A. in Industrial Design from the University of Illinois, Urbana/Champaign.