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Army Corps releases Focus Area 2 Aquatic Pathways Summary Report, solicits public comment

CHICAGO - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) today released for public comment the Focus Area 2 Aquatic Pathways Assessment Summary Report. This report presents the methodology and key evidence used to assess the potential for transfer of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins through several aquatic pathways. A total of 18 potential aquatic pathway reports, and one report for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, will be released in phases, by state, as part of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS), Focus Area 2.

The overall objective of the Focus Area 2 portion of GLMRIS is to produce an interim report for each potential aquatic pathway that is found between the two basins. Each report evaluates key evidence from the available information to qualitatively estimate the likelihood of an aquatic pathway forming and ANS being able to utilize it to reach the adjacent basin. Included in many of these pathway assessments, and included in the summary report, are some potential actions or opportunities that were identified that might prevent or reduce the probability of ANS transfer occurring between the basins. These reports are the next step in a tiered approach to assess the risk associated with the spread of ANS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins.

The USACE identified interested parties and solicited input early in the process for Focus Area 2 and has included individual visits and discussions with the state agencies responsible for water resources, and fish and wildlife management in the eight states bordering the Great Lakes. The process used for the Focus Area 2 assessments has also been discussed in meetings with representatives of the Council on Environmental Quality, U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and Great Lakes Fishery Commission.

Comments will be accepted beginning September 14, 2012. The comment period will close 30 days later on October 14, 2012. Comments may be submitted electronically at www.glmris.anl.gov or mailed to GLMRIS Focus Area 2, Summary Report Comments, 1776 Niagara Street, Buffalo, NY 14207-3199.

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<http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/> and <http://www.glmris.anl.gov>

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Brigadier General Margaret W. Burcham of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Lakes and Rivers Division and Mr. John Goss, Asian Carp Director at the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) are pleased to announce the release of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study Aquatic Pathway Reports. "These reports were prepared in coordination and consultation with various Federal and State partner agencies," stated Brigadier General Burcham. "The reports are valuable tools as we work collaboratively to prevent aquatic nuisance species from spreading between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins."

"This draft report provides important information to help Federal agencies and States and communities address the range of potential entry points for Asian carp into the Great Lakes," said John Goss, Asian Carp Director at the White House Council on Environmental Quality. "We will continue to take comprehensive action to protect our Great Lakes and the communities that depend on them, and to ensure an effective long-term solution that works for Great Lakes communities."

The reports are available for download on the GLMRIS website at www.glmris.anl.gov.

USACE will host a conference call on September 28, 2012 at 10:00 a.m. (Central). Call-in information is: USA Toll-Free: 877-336-1839, Access Code: 8506361, Security Code: 0000.

USACE will review and incorporate public input before finalizing and re-issuing the report later in winter 2012.

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