

Terms of Reference

Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study Executive Steering Committee

Background

Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study

The Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) is a multi-year study investigating the range of options and technologies available to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins through the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and other aquatic pathways. It is authorized under Section 3061(d) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, which provides authority for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct the feasibility study in consultation with appropriate Federal, State, local and nongovernmental entities. Aquatic nuisance species are non-native species that threaten existing significant natural resources. For the purposes of this study, aquatic pathways are natural and manmade hydraulic connections between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.

GLMRIS will provide a thorough and comprehensive analysis of aquatic nuisance species controls. Additionally, GLMRIS will analyze the affects each alternative plan would have on the current uses of the Chicago Area Waterway System, including the Chicago Sanitary Ship Canal, and other identified aquatic pathways between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. Current uses include, but are not limited to, commercial and recreational navigation, flood control, effluent conveyance, industrial process and cooling and commercial cooling water supply, aquatic life and recreation. This study shall also address the need to mitigate or provide alternative facilities or measures for current uses that may be affected by study recommendations.

The organizational structure of the GLMRIS is attached (Appendix I). The study will be conducted by two Focus Area (FA) Teams: FAI, the Chicago Area Waterway System and FAII, the Other Aquatic Pathways.

The GLMRIS Study Team has identified five goals and objectives for the study:

GLMRIS Objectives

USACE has developed the following study goals to ensure the prevention or reduction of the risk of ANS transfer between the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basin; it is anticipated that the goals and objectives of the study will be refined as it continues to unfold:

- i. Identify and engage interested stakeholders
- ii. Inventory all potential aquatic pathways for ANS transfer between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins
- iii. Identify the realm of current or potential future ANS to be included in the study. "Future ANS" are defined as organisms that currently reside within one basin which may have the potential to threaten the environmental, economic, or social integrity of the other basin.

- iv. Analyze appropriate control or management alternatives in order to protect aquatic ecosystems, fisheries and associated economies, commercial economies, and recreational and social uses of aquatic pathways
- v. Recommend actions or additional studies based on the analysis of the ANS control alternatives and their respective regulations or impacts to users of the aquatic pathways

Role of the Executive Steering Committee

The Executive Steering Committee (ESC) supports the efforts of the GLMRIS study team by providing advice with regard to the development and implementation of GLMRIS; providing expertise and recommendations with regard to the range of options and technologies available to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species; sharing information related to aquatic invasive species and the relative suitability of aquatic habitat within the basins; creating a shared set of goals and expectations for GLMRIS; and consulting on topics related to the GLMRIS.

Membership to the ESC will be requested of Federal Agencies:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under the authority of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007, Pub. L. No. 110-114, § 3061
- Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) under the authority of the Organic Act of March 3, 1879, as amended, 43 U.S.C. 31 et seq., and 43 U.S.C. 36c
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)

The ESC is also anticipated to include a variety of bi-national commissions, state agencies, and regional governmental authorities. Some examples include:

- International Joint Commission (IJC)
- Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC)
- State Departments of Natural Resources (State DNRs such as IL and IN)
- The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago (MWRDGC)
- Great Lakes Commission (GLC)

Other governmental agencies may be added to the ESC as deemed appropriate.

ESC meetings will occur approximately quarterly, with meeting times scheduled to synchronize with the quarterly Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee meetings.

Meetings will be chaired by the Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Great Lakes and Ohio River Division.

Executive Steering Committee Member Responsibilities

The ESC members will contribute their time, knowledge, skills and best efforts to the extent of their ability, and consistent with their statutory authorities and subject to the availability of funds, in support of the GLMRIS study team. The role of the ESC members includes (but is not limited to):

- Attending and actively participating in ESC meeting (approximately 4 per year)
- Contributing professional and technical expertise by:
 - Reviewing and commenting on written products associated with the GLMRIS;
 - providing expertise to the extent of their abilities and consistent with their authorities and funding;
 - coordinating with other members on emerging policy issues;
 - coordinating invasive species control studies related to or relevant to GLMRIS; and
 - providing feedback on decisions made by the study management team.

USACE will provide logistical and administrative support for the ESC. Travel and labor costs for participation by the ESC members will be borne by their respective agencies and organizations.