

# GLMRIS

GREAT LAKES AND MISSISSIPPI RIVER INTERBASIN STUDY



AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES



ECOSYSTEMS



NAVIGATION



RECREATION



FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT



WATER USE

## FOCUS AREA 2 AQUATIC PATHWAY ASSESSMENT REPORT

### SWAN RIVER, MINNESOTA





# Executive Summary

This assessment characterizes the probability of a viable aquatic pathway being able to form at the Swan River potential aquatic pathway location along the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin watershed divide. The Swan River divide location is along Minnesota Highway 65 (MN-65), north of the intersection with US Route 2, near the Town of Swan River, Minnesota, in Itasca County. Two surface water drainages were found to run parallel with one another on either side of MN-65; one flowing to the Mississippi River Basin and the other flowing into the Great Lakes Basin. Culverts were found between these two drainages that could potentially provide a surface water connection between the two basins. However, a substantial area of raised ground east of Highway 65 separates the two watersheds and would prohibit such a connection from establishing. There was no available flood mapping for this area to help determine if a surface water connection could form at extreme events, which produces a moderate level of uncertainty to this probability assessment. However, based on the observed site conditions, existing topography, positioning of culverts, and transportation routes in the vicinity, it is likely that an event somewhere well in excess of the one percent annual recurrence interval flood would be required to establish a surface water connection between the two basins. A rating of “low” was therefore assigned to this site to characterize the probability of an aquatic pathway being able to form between the basins.

Draft, Swan River Report  
May, 2013

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# Acronyms

ANS . . . . .	Aquatic Nuisance Species
ANSTF . . . .	Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force
CAWS . . . . .	Chicago Area Waterway System
CEQ . . . . .	Council on Environmental Quality
CMP . . . . .	Corrugated Metal Pipe
DEM . . . . .	Digital Elevation Model
FEMA . . . . .	Federal Emergency Management Agency
GIS . . . . .	Geographic Information System
GLFC . . . . .	Great Lakes Fishery Commission
GLMRIS . . . .	Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study
HUC . . . . .	Hydrologic Unit Codes
INDNR . . . . .	Indiana Department of Natural Resources
MNDNR . . . .	Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
NAS . . . . .	Nonindigenous Aquatic Species
NCDC . . . . .	National Climatic Data Center
NEPA . . . . .	National Environmental Policy Act
NOAA . . . . .	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NRCS . . . . .	Natural Resources Conservation Service
RCP . . . . .	Reinforced Concrete Pipe
USACE . . . .	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USFWS . . . .	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS . . . . .	U.S. Geological Survey
WRDA . . . . .	Water Resources Development Act

# 1 Introduction

The Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) was authorized in Section 3061(d) of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007, and therein, it prescribes the following authority to the Secretary of the Army and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE):

*“(d) FEASIBILITY STUDY. - The Secretary, in consultation with appropriate Federal, State, local, and nongovernmental entities, shall conduct, at Federal expense, a feasibility study of 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.”*

This GLMRIS Focus Area 2 Aquatic Pathway Assessment report addresses the Swan River location, in Itasca County, Minnesota. This location is one of 18 locations identified in the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study Other Pathways Preliminary Risk Characterization (USACE, 2010) as a potential aquatic pathway spanning the watershed divide between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins outside of the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS). This report is downloadable from the GLMRIS web site ([glmr.is.anl.gov/](http://glmr.is.anl.gov/)).

The dashed line in Figure 1 depicts the nearly 1,500-mile (2,414 kilometer) basin divide from the New York-Pennsylvania state line to north eastern Minnesota, and it depicts each of the 18 potential aquatic pathway locations previously identified. The Swan River, Minnesota location is shown as location number 17 on Figure 1, in northeast Minnesota.

The GLMRIS is a very large and complicated task involving multiple USACE Districts and Divisions. Program Management of the study is conducted by the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division. The study considers all aquatic nuisance species (ANS) of concern. However, the proximity of Asian carp in the Mississippi River Basin to the basin divide near two locations lends a sense of urgency and national significance to completion of the

GLMRIS. These two locations are the CAWS in Chicago, Illinois and Eagle Marsh in Fort Wayne, Indiana. To help accelerate completion of the feasibility study, the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division split management of the GLMRIS into two separate focus areas. Focus Area 1 is managed by the USACE, Chicago District and addresses the CAWS. Focus Area 2 is managed by the USACE, Buffalo District and evaluates all other potential aquatic pathways that exist or are likely to form across the basin divide separating runoff that flows into the Mississippi River and its tributaries from runoff that flows into the Great Lakes and its tributaries.

## 1.1 Study Purpose

The preliminary report in 2010 and the subsequent analysis contained in this report have been produced for a broad audience ranging from the scientific community to the general public, and are specifically intended to identify any locations where an aquatic pathway exists or may form between the basins, and to evaluate the probability that specific ANS would be able to arrive at that pathway and cross into the new basin. The information in this and the other Focus Area 2 reports are intended to provide a sound scientific basis for helping to prioritize future funding of GLMRIS and/or other actions at these potential aquatic pathway locations.

This report is part of a tiered approach to assess the likelihood of ANS spreading between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins via aquatic pathways, and it was prepared in accordance with the detailed procedures and criteria specified in the GLMRIS Focus Area 2 Study Plan (USACE, 2011a). The primary purpose of this report is to present the evidence and explain the procedures used to qualitatively estimate the likelihood that a viable aquatic pathway exists at Swan River, Minnesota that will enable the interbasin spread of ANS. It is also intended to meet the four objectives identified in the USACE 2011 plan for any site ultimately rated as medium or high for probability of a viable aquatic pathway existing:

- A definitive determination of whether the Swan River, Minnesota location should be included in the inventory of locations where a viable surface water connection between headwater streams on both sides of the drainage divide exists or is

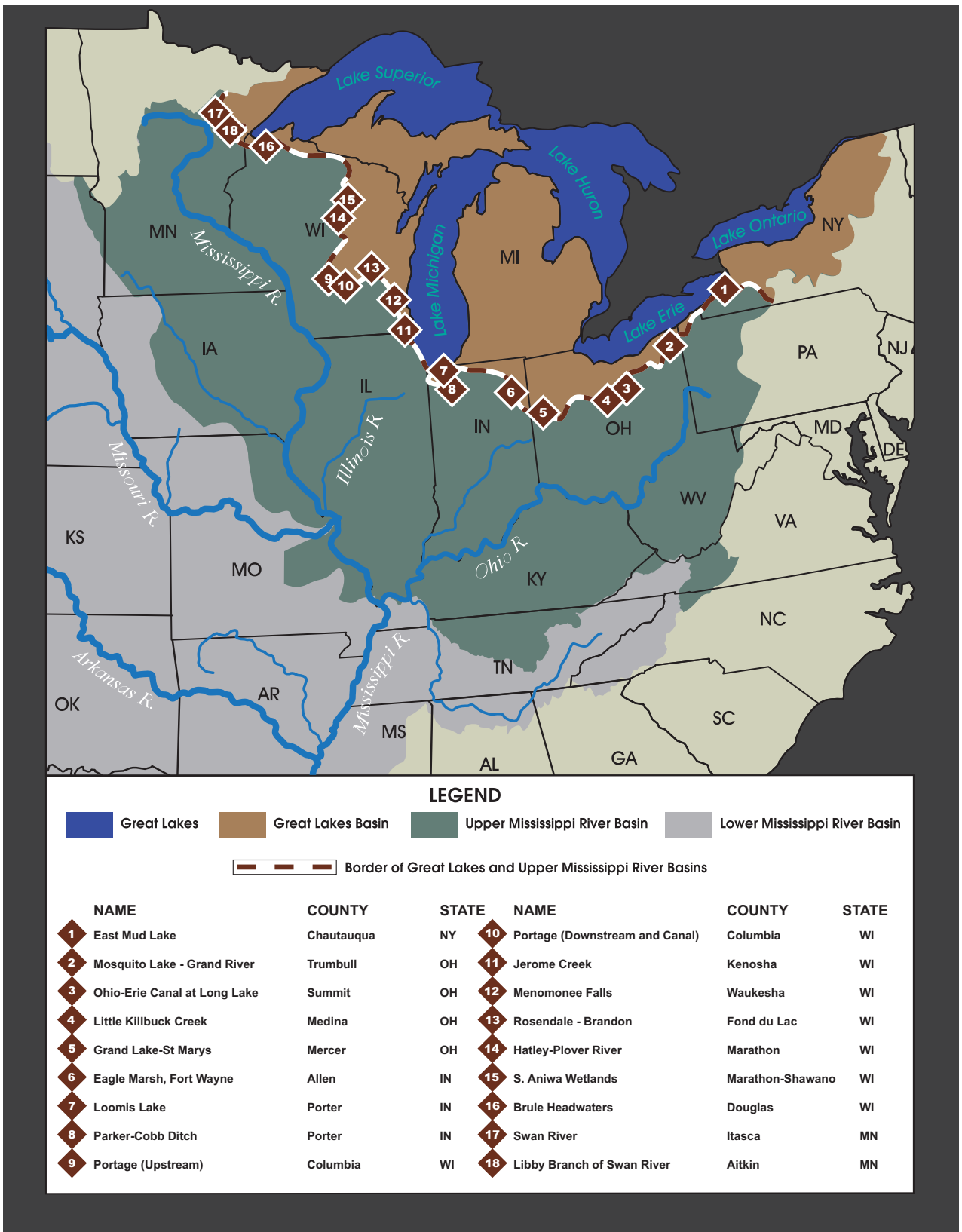


Figure 1. Potential aquatic pathway locations identified in the GLMRIS Preliminary Risk Characterization Study (USACE, 2010).



likely to form between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins;

- A standalone report that characterizes the probability that a viable aquatic pathway exists at Swan River, Minnesota and will enable the interbasin spread of ANS;
- Development of clear problem statements that frame the means, constraints, and likelihood of the interbasin spread of ANS via the potential aquatic pathway at Swan River, Minnesota; and
- Development of clear opportunity statements that illustrate how the collective authorities, resources, and capabilities of USACE and other applicable Federal, State, local, and non-governmental stakeholder organizations may best be coordinated and applied to prevent the interbasin spread of ANS through the Swan River, Minnesota location.

## 1.2 Summary of 2010 Preliminary Risk Characterization for Swan River, Minnesota

The Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study Other Pathways Preliminary Risk Characterization was designed as the first step of a tiered approach to rapidly conduct a study intended to accomplish two objectives (USACE, 2010). The first and primary objective was to determine if there were any locations within the GLMRIS, aside from the CAWS, where a near term risk for the interbasin spread of ANS exists. Near term, in this case, indicates that implementation of some measure(s) might be warranted to reduce the potential for ANS transfer at that particular location in the short term versus setting that site aside for further analysis. The second objective was to refine the scope of the other aquatic pathways portion of the GLMRIS by developing a list of potential aquatic pathways that could form anywhere along the divide separating the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins, and help provide a basis for prioritizing future feasibility study efforts based upon relative risk.

The USACE solicited the input and collaborated with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) and the natural resource agencies in the states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. A total of 36 potential locations were initially identified along the divide where it appeared that interbasin flow could occur. These were locations situated in a mixture of rural, forested, suburban, and urban areas, and included locations where surface water flow patterns have been modified through the building of navigation canals, excavation of ditches, and construction of sewers to facilitate storm water management for agricultural, flood damage reduction, or other water management purposes. Also, many of the potential aquatic pathways identified in 2010 were locations where extensive natural wetlands exist in close proximity to, and in some instances appear to span, the basin divide. The lack of prior hydrologic studies and the level of uncertainty in the hydrology information led to a conservative approach in estimating the individual aquatic pathway risk ratings.

At 18 of these locations the interagency group determined that it would likely require an epic storm and flooding event for an aquatic pathway to ever form across the basin divide. These were not recommended for further investigation because this was considered a tolerably low level of risk. However, at the remaining 18 locations the group did recommend that a more detailed assessment be conducted (Figure 1). Only one location, Eagle Marsh in Fort Wayne, Indiana, was determined to pose a near term risk for the potential spread of Asian carp into the Great Lakes Basin, and this led to the installation of a temporary barrier by Indiana Department of Natural Resources (INDNR) until a more complete assessment and remedy could be implemented.

Although the preliminary risk characterization did not identify the Swan River pathway as a location where there is a near term risk for the interbasin spread of ANS, there was some uncertainty regarding whether or not an aquatic pathway could form between the basins. The preliminary effort therefore recommended that a more detailed assessment be conducted at this location. This was subsequently done in collaboration with the USGS, NRCS, Minnesota Department of

Natural Resources (MNDNR), and other government agencies. The following actions were taken:

- Federal, State, and local stakeholders (e.g., USGS Water Science Center, MNDNR Division of Water, County Surveyor, and local NRCS representatives) were briefed on the preliminary risk characterization results. A detailed site visit to observe potential connection locations was conducted and the available topographic mapping and flood hazard information was compiled and reviewed.
- The dams on the connecting streams to the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River were evaluated relative to the potential for ANS passage through, around, or over each in-stream structure in both directions.

## 1.3 Aquatic Pathway Team

Due to the large amount of unknowns and natural variability associated with the hydrology and biology of such a large geographic area, the Study Plan specified formation of a “team of teams,” combining the best available Federal, State, local, and national hydrologists and biologists to assess conditions at each potential aquatic pathway (USACE, 2011a). The results of this assessment reflect the collective experience, expertise, and focused effort of these experts from USACE, NRCS, and MNDNR. The results also reflect the guidance, input, review comments, and concurrence of the multi-organization Agency Technical Review which was comprised of experts from USACE and NOAA.

## 2 Study Methodology

The GLMRIS risk analysis process is an adaptation of the generic model and process described in the Generic Nonindigenous Aquatic Organisms Risk Analysis Review Process (For Estimating Risk Associated with the Introduction of Nonindigenous Aquatic Organisms and How to Manage for that Risk) (ANSTF, 1996). The Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) defines the first step in this process as identification of interested

parties and solicitation of input.

## 2.1 Coordination

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 (CEQ), USGS, USFWS, NOAA, NRCS, and Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC). Development of this plan also included input from the public and interested non-governmental organizations received during formal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) public scoping meetings which were held at 12 locations across the region in both basins between December 2010 and March 2011. The USACE requested the support and participation of the best available experts from the State and Federal agencies responsible for water resources, and fish and wildlife management in the states along the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin divide to address the critically important issue of preventing interbasin transfer of ANS. The USGS, NRCS, and each state DNR assigned personnel to assist each USACE pathway assessment team. In addition, a technical review team comprised of 16 senior level experts from the USACE and external partner agencies, including NOAA and the GLFC, was assembled to review and guide the work of these teams. Overall, extensive collaboration among partner agencies, the review team, and other subject matter experts has led to detailed Focus Area 2 pathway assessments.

## 2.2 Identification of Potential Pathways

At 18 of the potential aquatic pathways identified during the 2010 Preliminary Risk Characterization, it was determined that it would likely require an epic storm and flooding event (i.e., greater than a one percent annual return frequency storm event) for an aquatic pathway to ever form across the basin divide. These locations

were not recommended for further investigation because areas that might require a flooding event in excess (greater magnitude, less frequency) of the one percent annual recurrence interval flood are less likely, and therefore present a tolerably low level of risk. This one percent threshold criteria was established through collaboration with the USGS, USFWS, NRCS, GLFC, and the departments of natural resources in the states of MI, MN, WI, IL, IN, OH, PA, and NY. This threshold is also widely used in flood risk management and is typically aligned with most readily available hydrologic information. The one percent annual recurrence interval threshold only indicates at what level event an aquatic connection can begin to form and would indicate a location that should then be subjected to a more labor intensive evaluation of the probability of ANS to utilize that pathway. At the remaining 18 locations, it was recommended that a more detailed assessment be conducted (Figure 1). This was subsequently done in 2011 and 2012 in collaboration with USGS, NRCS, USFWS, state natural resource agencies, and county surveyors (where applicable), and the results for the Swan River location are presented in this report. Although the focus of this assessment is on aquatic pathways, it should also be mentioned that there are other non-aquatic pathways (e.g., anthropogenic, movement by animals) that may enable ANS to transit across the aquatic pathway or across the basin divide but that are not included within this report.

## 2.3 Aquatic Nuisance Species of Concern

This report addresses the problem of ANS invading, via surface-water pathways, the Great Lakes Basin from the Mississippi River Basin and vice versa. ANS is defined by the ANSTF as "... nonindigenous species that threaten the diversity or abundance of native species or the ecological stability of infested waters, or commercial, agricultural, aquacultural or recreational activities dependent on such waters." The USGS Nonindigenous Aquatic Species (NAS) information resource <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/about/faq.aspx> defines ANS as "...a species that enters a body of water or aquatic ecosystem outside of its historic or native range." (USGS, 2012). Adjectives such as nonindigenous, nuisance, invasive,

alien, and exotic are commonly used interchangeably in the biological literature to describe undesirable species. Based on discussions between the USACE, USGS, and the USFWS the following definitions were established for the purposes of the GLMRIS. All Nonindigenous aquatic species (per the USGS definition above), that are present in the Great Lakes but not known to be present in the Mississippi River and its tributaries are defined as ANS of concern for GLMRIS. Likewise, all Nonindigenous aquatic species present in the Mississippi River or its tributaries but not known to be present in the Great Lakes are also considered as ANS of concern for the GLMRIS. Therefore, the term ANS is synonymous with the term Nonindigenous aquatic species in this report.

### 2.3.1 Lists of Nonindigenous Species in Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins

The list of ANS of concern for a particular location was developed by first consulting the USACE white paper titled, Non-Native Species of Concern and Dispersal Risk for the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study released in September 2011 (USACE, 2011b). This technical paper, prepared by a multi-disciplinary USACE natural resources team, took a broad look at the potential range of species that could be of concern to the GLMRIS. The paper is Appendix C of the GLMRIS Focus Area 2 Study Plan and it is an integral component of the plan. This USACE white paper included a review of 254 aquatic species that are either Nonindigenous to either basin or native species that occur in one basin or the other. The list of 254 aquatic species were iteratively screened to identify all potential ANS that could be of concern in either basin and to systematically focus the study toward those species judged to pose the highest potential risk of ecological impacts if they became established in the other basin.

In the first screening iteration, 119 of the 254 aquatic species reviewed were determined to pose a potential threat of infiltrating the other basin and were carried into the second iteration of the analysis. The other 135

**Table 1: ANS of Concern for GLMRIS.**

Taxon	Scientific Name	Common Name	Basin	Interbasin Dispersal Mechanism
fish	<i>Alosa aestivalis</i>	blueback herring	GL	swimmer
fish	<i>Alosa chrysochloris</i>	skipjack herring	MS	swimmer
fish	<i>Alosa psuedoharengus</i>	alewife	GL	swimmer
crustacean	<i>Apocorophium lacustre</i>	a scud	MS	ballast water
algae	<i>Bangia atropupurea</i>	red macro-algae	GL	ballast / recreational boating
annelid	<i>Branchuris sowerbyi</i>	tubificid worm	GL	sediment transport
crustacean	<i>Bythotrephes longimanus</i>	spiny waterflea	GL	ballast water/sediment transport
plant	<i>Carex acutiformis</i>	swamp sedge	GL	recreational boating & trailers
crustacean	<i>Cercopagis pengoi</i>	fish-hook water flea	GL	ballast / recreational boating
fish	<i>Channa argus</i>	northern snakehead	MS	swimmer
algae	<i>Cyclotella cryptica</i>	cryptic algae	GL	unknown / any water
algae	<i>Cyclotella pseudostelligera</i>	cylindrical algae	GL	unknown / any water
crustacean	<i>Daphnia galeata galeata</i>	water flea	GL	ballast water
crustacean	<i>Echinogammarus ischnus</i>	a European amphipod	GL	ballast water
algae	<i>Enteromorpha flexuosa</i>	grass kelp	GL	ballast / recreational boating
fish	<i>Gasterosteus aculeatus</i>	threespine stickleback	GL	swimmer
plant	<i>Glyceria maxima</i>	reed sweetgrass	GL	recreational boating & trailers
fish	<i>Gymnocephalus cernua</i>	ruffe	GL	swimmer
crustacean	<i>Hemimysis anomala</i>	bloody red shrimp	GL	ballast water
fish	<i>Hypophthalmichthys molitrix</i>	silver carp	MS	swimmer
fish	<i>Hypophthalmichthys nobilis</i>	bighead carp	MS	swimmer
plant	<i>Landoltia (Spirodela) punctata</i>	dotted duckweed	MS	recreational boating & trailers
bryozoan	<i>Lophopodella carteri</i>	bryozoans	GL	with aquatic plants
fish	<i>Menidia beryllina</i>	inland silverside	MS	swimmer
plant	<i>Murdannia keisak</i>	marsh dewflower	MS	recreational boating & trailers
fish	<i>Mylopharyngodon piceus</i>	black carp	MS	swimmer
crustacean	<i>Neoergasilus japonicus</i>	a parasitic copepod	GL	parasite to fish
plant	<i>Oxycaryum cubense</i>	Cuban bulrush	MS	recreational boating & trailers
fish	<i>Petromyzon marinus</i>	sea lamprey	GL	swimmer
mollusk	<i>Pisidium amnicum</i>	greater European pea clam	GL	ballast water
fish	<i>Proterorhinus semilunaris</i>	tubenose goby	GL	swimmer
protozoan	<i>Psammonobiotus communis</i>	testate amoeba	GL	ballast water
protozoan	<i>Psammonobiotus dziwnowi</i>	testate amoeba	GL	ballast water
protozoan	<i>Psammonobiotus linearis</i>	testate amoeba	GL	ballast water
crustacean	<i>Schizopera borutzkyi</i>	parasitic copepod	GL	ballast water
mollusk	<i>Sphaerium corneum</i>	European fingernail clam	GL	ballast water
algae	<i>Stephanodiscus binderanus</i>	diatom	GL	ballast water
plant	<i>Trapa natans</i>	water chestnut	GL	recreational boating & trailers
mollusk	<i>Valvata piscinalis</i>	European stream valvata	GL	ships

species were rejected for further analysis for several reasons. Initially, 104 species were dropped from further consideration because they were determined to already be established in both basins. Another 31 species were removed from further analysis because they were not yet located in either basin, could bypass any aquatic control mechanism by terrestrial movement, or had no potential to cause adverse affects to the invaded ecosystem.

### 2.3.2 List of ANS of Concern for GLMRIS

To determine species of concern that are pertinent for the GLMRIS from the list of 119 species, the USACE natural resources team compiled, reviewed, and analyzed the best available information. Literature reviews, species proximity to aquatic interbasin connections (in particular the CAWS), ecological tolerances and needs, and vagility of the species were all included in the analysis. The team ranked each species as high, medium, or low risk according to these parameters. The result was the establishment of a list of 39 species, each identified as having both a high level of potential risk for both transferring from one basin to another, and potentially a high risk in that if they do disperse, and the invaded ecosystem could be moderately to severely affected by their colonization (Table 1). A fact sheet was developed for each of these species of concern detailing morphological characteristics useful for identification, including color photographs of the species, information on their ecology, habitat, distribution, and current status in the Mississippi River or Great Lakes Basins.

No assessment of specific ANS was completed, if it was determined that there was a low likelihood of an aquatic pathway existing at up to a one percent annual return frequency storm event. A recurrence interval relates any given storm, through statistical analysis, to the historical records of rainfall and runoff for a given area. The recurrence interval is based on the statistical probability that a given intensity storm event will be equaled or exceeded in any given year. For instance, a one percent annual frequency storm is a rainfall event that has a one percent probability, one chance in 100, of being equaled or exceeded in any given year. This level of storm event was commonly referred to as a 100-year storm event, but this term has led people to incorrectly

conclude that a 100-year storm event is one that only occurs once in any given 100 year period. A ten percent annual return frequency storm (formerly referred to as a ten year event) is an event of lower flood elevation event that has a one in ten chance of being exceed during any given year, and a 0.2 percent annual return frequency storm (formerly referred to as a 500-year event) is a larger event that has a one in 500 chance of being exceeded in any given year.

### 2.4 Pathway Assessment Process

The GLMRIS risk analysis process is an adaptation of the generic model and process described in the Generic Nonindigenous Aquatic Organisms Risk Analysis Review Process (For Estimating Risk Associated with the Introduction of Nonindigenous Aquatic Organisms and How to Manage for that Risk) (ANSTF, 1996). ANSTF defines the risk associated with an ANS as:

#### Equation 1

$$R_{Establishment} = P_{Establishment} \times C_{Establishment}$$

Where:

$R_{Establishment}$  = Risk of Establishment

$P_{Establishment}$  = Probability of Establishment

$C_{Establishment}$  = Consequence of Establishment

Note the risk is defined as a multiplicative function. That means, if either of these components is zero or low, the overall risk will also be zero or low. In order to work most efficiently for this pathway assessment, the GLMRIS Other Aquatic Pathways Team (Focus Area 2) concentrated its effort on characterizing the probability of establishment, while the GLMRIS Focus Area 1 Team for the CAWS is focusing on both components. An estimate of the consequences of any ANS establishment from the Focus Area 2 aquatic pathways will be deferred until possible future study by USACE or others.

ANSTF divides the probability of establishment component shown in Equation 1 into four basic elements which describe the basic events that must occur for an ANS to establish in the new environment:

## Equation 2

$$P_{\text{Establishment}} = [P_1 \times P_2 \times P_3 \times P_4]$$

Where:

$P_1 = P$  ANS associated with pathway

$P_2 = P$  ANS survives transit

$P_3 = P$  ANS colonizes in new environment

$P_4 = P$  ANS spreads beyond colonized area

Each of the four elements of Equation 2 is qualitatively rated a High (H), Medium (M), or Low (L) based on the available evidence. They are also qualitatively assigned a level of certainty [Very Certain (VC), Reasonably Certain (RC), Moderately Certain (MC), Reasonably Uncertain (RU), Very Uncertain (VU)]. The overall probability rating is the rating of the element with the lowest probability. Thus, in a quartet of HLHH the overall probability rating is "L". The multiplicative nature of the function assures this is actually a somewhat conservative estimate. With actual numbers the overall probability would always be smaller than the smallest of the four factors. These elements have been modified for use in GLMRIS (Equation 3) to describe the basic sequence of events that must occur for an ANS to successfully cross the basin divide through an aquatic pathway and establish in the new basin:

## Equation 3 [FA1 Model]

$$P_{\text{Establishment}} = [P_0 \times P_1 \times P_2 \times P_3 \times P_4]$$

Where:

$P_0 = P$  Pathway exists

$P_1 = P$  ANS has access to pathway

$P_2 = P$  ANS transits pathway

$P_3 = P$  ANS colonizes in new waterway

$P_4 = P$  ANS spreads in new waterway

This model works well in areas where a viable pathway is already known to exist, such as the CAWS. However, for many of the 18 locations identified in GLMRIS Focus Area 2, it was uncertain at the outset whether or not an aquatic pathway does in fact ever form. The team recognized that formation of a pathway at these locations would likely be infrequent, and with a limited duration and magnitude (width, depth, and rate of surface water flow across the basin divide). Consequently, the model in Equation 3 was modified further for Focus Area 2.

Greater efficiency in analysis can be gained by modifying Equation 3 by eliminating evaluation of the last two elements because if a pathway does not exist there is no reason to collect data on colonization ( $P_4$ ) and spread ( $P_3$ ) in the new basin. In addition, the third element of Equation 3, ANS transits pathway ( $P_2$ ), is broken down into its own sequence of necessary events to characterize in greater detail those variables being evaluated to determine whether or not a viable pathway exists. In setting aside the last two elements in Equation 3 ( $P_3$  and  $P_4$ ), no attempt is therefore made in this report to assess the probability that an ANS will colonize in or spread through the receiving waterway or basin. USACE or others may assess the last two elements of Equation 3 in the future when evaluating specific measures that could be taken to eliminate the probability of transfer at certain aquatic pathways.

Once again, in order to work efficiently in assessing ANS risk for Focus Area 2, the initial assessment focuses narrowly on the question of whether or not a viable aquatic pathway exists. Equation 4 shows how the third element of Equation 3 has been broken down to provide greater resolution for evaluating the pathway itself:

## Equation 4 [Modification of Equation 3 – P2 Element]

$$P_2 = [P_{2a} \times P_{2b} \times P_{2c}]$$

Where:

$P_2 = P$  ANS transits pathway

$P_{2a} = P$  ANS surviving transit to aquatic pathway

$P_{2b} = P$  ANS establishing in proximity to the aquatic pathway

$P_{2c} = P$  ANS spreading across aquatic pathway into new basin

Delaying consideration of the last two elements of Equation 3 and substituting the more detailed consideration of the third element as expressed in Equation 4 yields the following model used in the GLMRIS Focus Area 2 assessments:

## Equation 5 [FA2 Modified]

$$P_{\text{Viable pathway}} = [P_0 \times P_{1'} \times P_{2a} \times P_{2b} \times P_{2c}]$$

Where:

$P_0$  = P *Pathway exists*

$P_{1'}$  = P *ANS occurring within either basin*

$P_{2a}$  = P *ANS surviving transit to aquatic pathway*

$P_{2b}$  = P *ANS establishing in proximity to the aquatic pathway*

$P_{2c}$  = P *ANS spreading across aquatic pathway into new basin*

Notice the overall probability is now the “probability a viable pathway exists” ( $P_{\text{Viable pathway}}$ ) and is no longer the original “probability of establishment ( $P_{\text{Establishment}}$ )” from Equation 3. The probability of establishment for certain aquatic pathways may be assessed in future studies by USACE or others, but likely only for those pathways with an unacceptable rating for the “probability of a viable pathway” existing. Note also that ( $P_1$ ), ANS has access to pathway from Equation 3 has been renamed ( $P_{1'}$ ), ANS occurring within either basin”. This did not change the element being evaluated but made it clearer to team members what “access to the pathway” actually meant.

This model remains consistent with the overall GLMRIS risk assessment approach and the ANSTF methodology, and the refinements enabled the assessors to focus more appropriately on the relevant evidence. At those locations along the basin divide where the first element in Equation 5 (i.e., likelihood that an aquatic pathway exists at up to a one percent annual recurrence interval event) was estimated to be low, no further assessment of that location was necessary. The low rating of this initial element assures that the overall probability of a viable pathway existing (Equation 5), the overall probability of establishment (Equation 3), and the ANS risk potential (Equation 1), will all be low because of the multiplicative nature of the model. This approach assured a more prudent use of public resources in data collection and assessment by minimizing the collection of unnecessary data, and the conduct of unnecessary analyses. It should also be understood that a low rating for probability of a pathway existing ( $P_0$ ) is not necessarily the same as there being no probability of a pathway existing. At those locations where the probability of a pathway existing ( $P_0$ ) was determined to be medium or high, the remaining four elements in Equation 5 were evaluated for each ANS of concern specific to that particular location for a 50 year period of analysis.

# 3 Aquatic Pathway Characterization

This section describes and illustrates the topography and features in the vicinity of the potential pathway and is intended to present the compilation of the readily available and applicable information for this area as it may influence local hydrology. Maps, photographs, and figures are included to aid understanding of the significant hydrologic and hydraulic conditions near the drainage divide. Also, this section identifies any significant data gaps and uncertainties related to the available topographic information and hydrologic modeling in the area of interest.

## 3.1 Location

The Swan River potential pathway is located near the town of Swan River, Minnesota about 20 miles (32 km) southeast of Grand Rapid. The area of greatest concern is along MN-65, between the railroad crossing at 47° 5'24.49"N, 93°11'30.78"W and 47° 5'51.34"N, 93°11'4.17"W. This area is contained completely within Itasca County and located approximately 6.8 miles (11 km) away from the Libby Branch of the Swan River potential aquatic pathway (Figure 3).

## 3.2 Climate

Climate is looked at in this section just in terms of identifying any applicable elements of climate (e.g., temperature, rainfall) and how they may influence the likelihood of an aquatic connection forming at the subject pathway that could be utilized by ANS to spread between basins. This area of northern Minnesota is classified as “continental” with large seasonal temperature variance, four distinct seasons, and relatively small or moderate precipitation. Temperatures in winter typically range from -1°F to 22°F (-18°C to -5.5°C), while summers are usually around 60° F to 70°F (15.5°C to 21°C). Normal annual precipitation is about 30 inches (36 cm) and the normal snowfall is around 56 inches (142 cm). See Table 2 for National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) data, from 1971-2000.

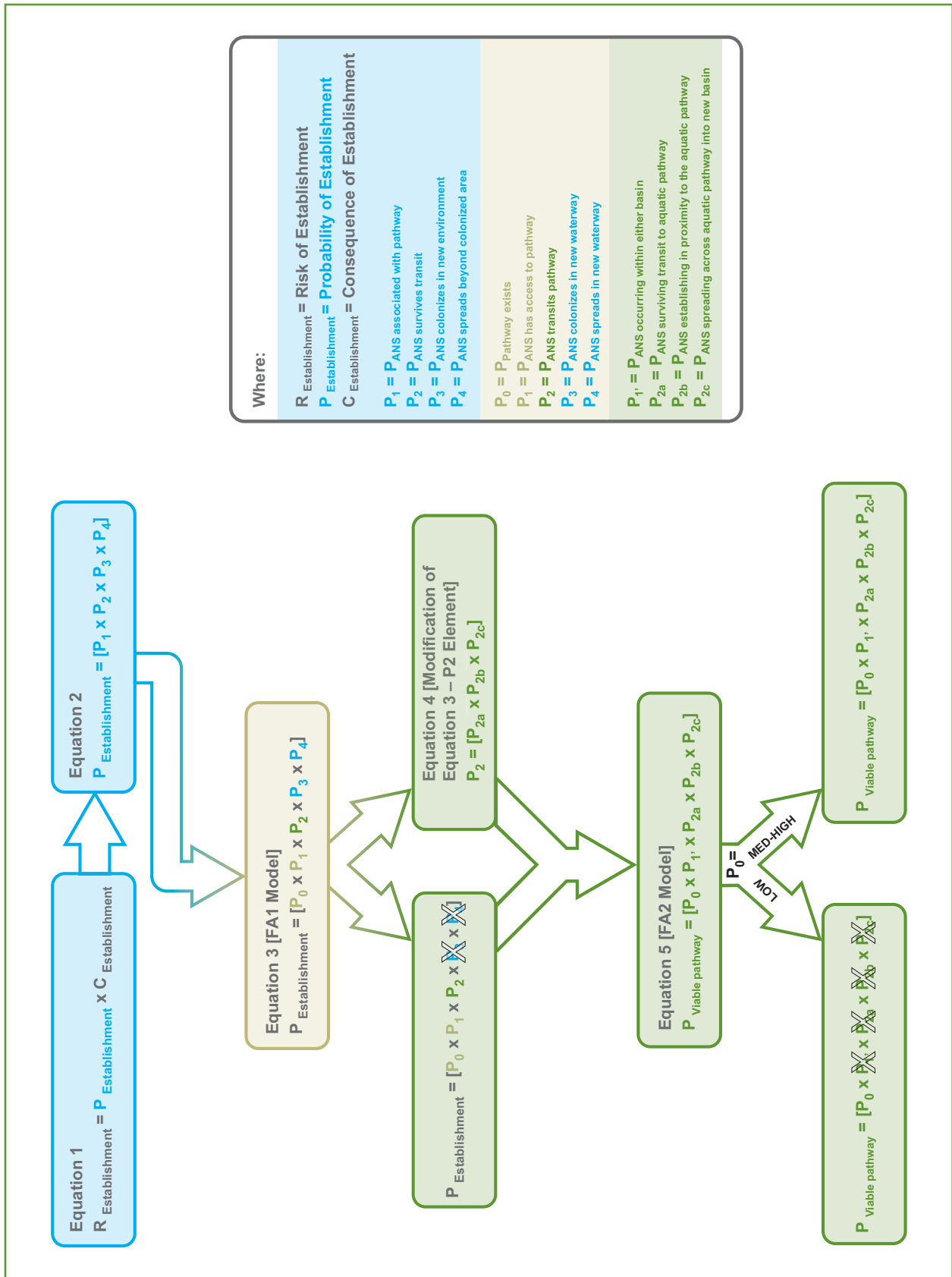


Figure 2. Diagram of the derivation of the GLMRIS Focus Area 2 aquatic pathway assessment model.



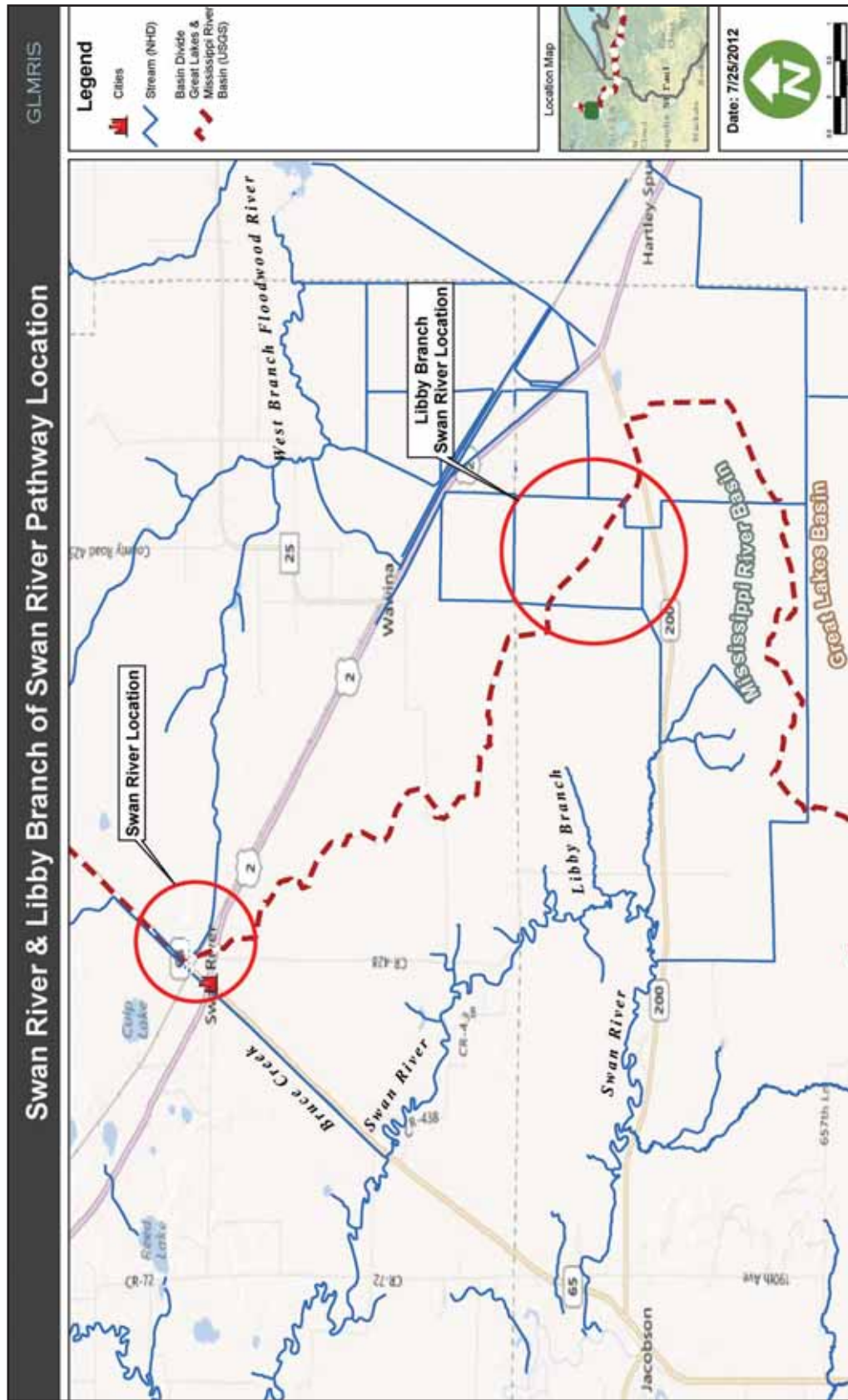


Figure 3. Location of Swan River and Libby Branch of Swan River potential aquatic pathway locations relative to one another and the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin divide. The two sites are approximately 6.8 miles (11 km) apart. Base imagery courtesy of Bing Maps.

**Table 2 - Climate Information for Swan River (Source: MRCC – Station Grand Rapids Forestry Lab)**

Element	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	ANN
Mean Temperature°F	6.4	14.0	26.4	41.1	54.3	62.9	67.4	65.0	54.9	43.7	26.9	12.1	39.6
Mean Temperature °C	-14	-10	-3	5	12	17	19.6	18.3	12.7	6.5	-2.8	-11	4.2
Normal Precip (in)	1.01	0.61	1.25	1.84	2.90	4.60	4.60	3.70	3.08	2.74	1.59	0.86	28.78
Normal Precip (cm)	2.5	1.5	3.17	4.6	7.3	11.6	11.6	9.39	7.82	6.95	4.03	2.18	73.1
Mean Snow (in)	14.5	7.5	8.9	3.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	9.5	11.0	56.0
Mean Snow (cm)	36.83	19	22.6	7.62	1.01	0	0	0	0	3	24.13	27.94	142.24

The highest precipitation accumulation occurs in the summer months, primarily during June and July. Although rainfall amounts do not always conform to averages, they are none-the-less suggestive that substantial precipitation does not occur frequently and a much greater amount of precipitation would be necessary to cause a surface water connection at this location, although this is an area of uncertainty due to a lack of specific data linking precipitation amounts to the behavior of surface hydrology at the pathway location. In addition, given that annual temperatures reach down to or below the freezing mark on an annual basis, purely climatic conditions will restrict the time during which any ANS dispersal might occur by natural vectors.

### 3.3 Location Specific Surface Water Features

The information contained in this section is meant to present and interpret the readily available information for this location as it pertains to surface water conditions and any aspects that may influence the behavior of surface water. The area of concern for this potential pathway is directly northeast of the intersection of MN-65 and a railroad line that runs parallel (north) to US Route 2. To the east of this intersection lies the Great Lakes Basin and to the north and west is the Mississippi River Basin (Figure 4). There are two surface water pathways that run parallel on either side of MN-65 and

are shown in blue on Figure 4. Bruce Creek is a ditch on the west side of MN-65 that drains into Swan River and the Mississippi River Basin. The stream on the east side of MN-65 drains to the Floodwood River in the Great Lakes Basin. The flowpath from the basin divide location to the Mississippi River Basin is via Bruce Creek to the Swan River, which flows into the Mississippi River. The flowpath from this site to the Great Lakes Basin is via an unnamed creek to the West Branch Floodwood River, then to the Floodwood River which joins the St. Louis River, and ultimately to Lake Superior.

Figure 5 shows a profile along the Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) boundary to depict the ‘saddle point’ along the basin divide and two cross-sections that cut through the HUC boundary to depict the typical ground elevation along the potential flow path. This saddle point is the location of the basin divide and the point at which a hydrologic connection is most likely to be established, if at all. The profile and cross section figures reflect the flat nature of the topography in the area, but also indicate the road bed and adjacent tributary channels.

This figure also shows representative cross-sections through the area of interest, based on the best available Geographic Information System (GIS) elevation data. For this pathway, the elevations are based on the USGS 10 m (32.8 feet) Digital Elevation Model (DEM) with a vertical accuracy of +/- 13.1232 feet (4 m). This level of accuracy may lead one to conclude that there is a high degree of uncertainty regarding the potential for watershed connections being established during flood events.



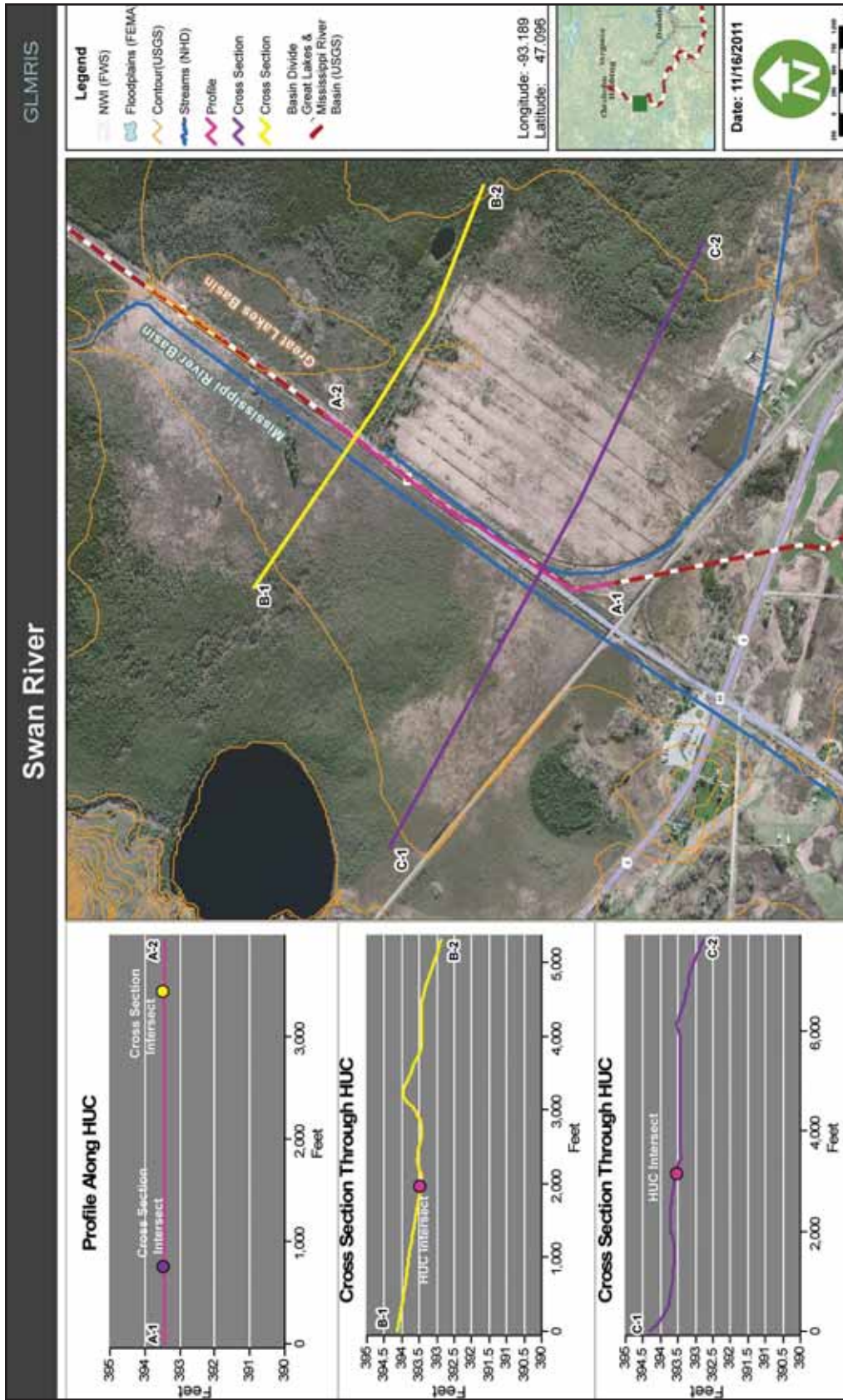


Figure 5. Typical cross-sections based on USGS 10m DEM, with a vertical accuracy of +/- 13.123 feet (4 m). The pink line and the graph on the top left is the profile along the basin divide (alternating red/white line). The yellow and purple lines that intersect the pink line and the graphs on the middle and bottom left are the cross sections through the basin divide. The blue lines in the photograph indicate streams closest to the basin divide.

However, this is not the case since the absolute vertical accuracy (specific elevation) is not nearly as important as the relative, or point-to-point, vertical accuracy (terrain) when evaluating terrain at the divide location to try and predict hydrology. Point-to-point accuracy has been shown to be much greater than this margin of error regarding absolute elevation (Gesch, 2007). As a result, although the absolute elevation values may differ from the true value (i.e., 800 feet (244 m) above sea level), they tend to vary a comparable amount at adjacent points so that the terrain of the area is actually depicted relatively well. The grid size used to create the DEM can also affect the accuracy of the DEM. The larger the grid cell size (10 m (32.8 feet) squares vs. 30 m (98.4 feet) squares), the more blocky and less detailed the terrain appears and thus the less accurately the DEM depicts the actual terrain. The largest grid size used at any of the pathway locations is 10 m (32.8 feet) squares with some areas having more detailed information. Even though the 10 m (32.8 feet) cell size does not depict every hummock or hollow in the terrain, it does provide sufficient detail regarding general terrain and relative elevations to provide useful data in evaluating the potential for a hydrologic connection forming across the basin divide.

A site visit conducted on May 31, 2011 discovered flow that was visible in the Bruce Creek ditch on the west side of MN-65. Equipment was not available for velocity or flow measurements; however, the depth of water was about 1.4 feet (0.42 m). Figure 6 shows several culverts located in the vicinity of the basin divide. There are two reinforced concrete pipe (RCP) culverts under the railroad tracks that measure 30 inches (76 cm). Northeast of the railroad tracks, under MN-65, is a fully submerged corrugated metal pipe (CMP) culvert measuring 27 inches (68 cm). There was evidence that the area near the submerged culvert had recently been dredged, most likely by a small backhoe. Although the culvert was fully submerged, there was no evidence of flooding to the southeast of this location or ponded water along the railroad grade east of MN-65. An additional RCP culvert measuring 24 inches (61 cm) is located under MN-65, southwest of the MN-65 and railroad intersection. Located west of the intersection of MN-65 and US Route 2 is a box culvert measuring six feet (1.8 m) wide and 1.4 feet (0.4 m) deep. Immediately north of the same intersection, and under State Route 2, is an 18 inch (46 cm) pipe. In addition to the culverts and pipes, a berm is located north of the railroad

track, immediately east of MN-65. The berm proceeds northward, parallel to MN-65 along the basin divide. As a result, none of these culverts or pipes connect the basins and therefore are not of concern. Figure 7 is a photo showing the extent of the water observed on the southeast side of MN-65 in May 2011.

There is an area of raised ground that runs parallel to, and on the southeast side, of MN-65 that is similar in appearance to an old road grade. This area is several feet above the surrounding area and would prohibit a hydraulic connection from forming between the two basins in this area (Figure 6 and Figure 8).

The site visit confirmed that a hydraulic connection would be unlikely to form at this potential pathway. Although there are several culverts under the railroad and MN-65 that cross the basin divide and could provide a flow path, the area of raised ground east of MN-65 would prevent such a hydraulic connection from forming since even an extreme storm event would be unlikely to provide enough flow to overtop this berm.

A two day storm event on June 19-20, 2012 resulted in approximately 4.09 and 4.68 inches (10.4 and 11.9 cm) of rainfall on the Swan and Floodwood River Watersheds, respectively. Most of this rain fell over a 24 hour period and represented a two percent annual recurrence interval storm event (HydroClim Minnesota, 2012; NOAA, 2012). A site visit was made to the Swan River pathway location by the USACE on June 22, 2012. The USACE determined by visual estimation that Bruce Creek on the northwest side of Highway 65 had about 35 cubic feet per second of flow going toward the Mississippi River Basin (southwest). At the same time, some of this flow (possibly 10-20 cubic feet per second) was being conveyed to the southeast under Highway 65 toward the Great Lakes Basin through the 27 inch culvert just north of the railroad. This was the only location where flow was observed crossing Highway 65 during this flood event. From where the water was observed crossing Highway 65, there was no observable surface water connection leading to the tributary of the Floodwood River just to the east. The observed flood conditions on June 22, 2012 support the findings of this report at least for events up to a two percent annual recurrence interval.

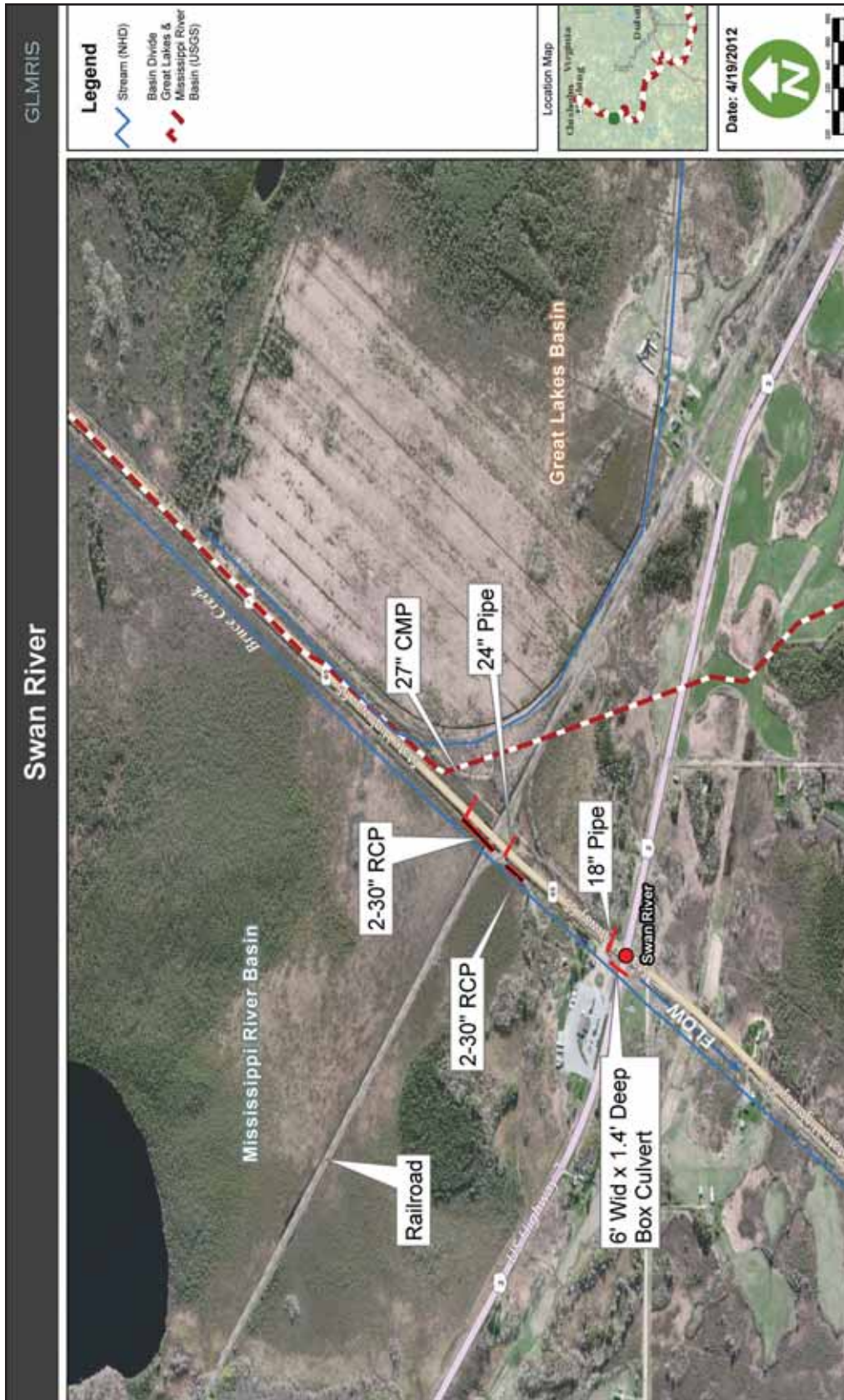


Figure 6. Location of culverts (red) located during May 31, 2011 site visit. RCP indicates Rigid Corrugated Pipe. CMP indicates Corrugated Metal Pipe. Berm in photo is just to the right of the 27 inch CMP and indicates a raised area of ground that proceeds northwards, parallel to MN-65, along the basin divide. Aerial imagery from Bing Maps.



Figure 7. Looking southeast to the corner of the railroad tracks and MN-65. Photo was taken by USACE at the approximate location of the submerged culvert under the roadway.



Figure 8. Photo taken by USACE from raised grade that parallels MN-65, looking SW at railroad tracks. MN-65 is located to the right of this photo. Grade slopes downhill toward the left.

## 3.4 Groundwater

Groundwater was investigated as part of determining the likelihood a pathway exists because groundwater can serve as a source of baseflow for streams. Water levels in the aquifers typically fluctuate in response to seasonal variations; this is known as recharge and discharge. Groundwater levels commonly rise in Spring, when areal recharge is greatest because of snowmelt, spring rain, and minimal evapotranspiration losses. This means that heavier rainfall events, when they coincide with frozen ground conditions, snowmelt, and higher groundwater conditions, may be more likely to facilitate formation of an aquatic connection between the basins. Groundwater levels generally decline in summer because evapotranspiration rates are high, continued discharge to streams, and withdrawals by wells collectively exceed recharge. Thus, groundwater likely plays very little role in any establishment of an aquatic connection. Net recharge to the aquifers also occurs in the Fall of most years, due to rainfall and low evapotranspiration rates. The nearest available groundwater data, USGS Groundwater Watch site 474921093144001, is 50 miles (80.5 km) north of the pathway site. Although no groundwater data in the immediate vicinity of the pathway is available, groundwater conditions are not believed to increase the likelihood of creating or maintaining a surface water connection between these watersheds.

## 3.5 Aquatic Pathway Temporal Characteristics

Characterizing the temporal variability of the hydrology is potentially an important aspect of understanding the likelihood of an ANS being able to traverse the basin divide as certain flood events may coincide with species movements, reproductive patterns, and abilities to survive and establish populations in various areas. The area of the Swan River potential aquatic pathway site has been identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to be Zone D, which means it is an area of undetermined, but possible, flood hazards. This is the only flood data available for this area, and since no base flood elevations have

been determined for specific storm events, it does add a degree of uncertainty regarding the level of storm event needed to cause a surface water connection at this location. However, considering the rainfall amounts, groundwater conditions, topographic features, surface water features, and information collected during the site visit, even an extreme storm event such as from greater than a one percent recurrence interval storm in this area would not cause a surface water connection at the basin divide (see Section 2.3.2 for explanation of recurrence interval). In addition, given that the area is subjected to freezing temperatures on an annual basis (Table 2) for four to five months, biological activity and water flow would be further restricted on a temporal basis since the water would be frozen and biological activity of ANS would likely be limited.

## 3.6 Probability Aquatic Pathway Exists

The rating discussed in this section is only for the likelihood of an aquatic connection existing at this potential pathway ( $P_0$ ) at up to a one percent annual return frequency storm event. The low probability rating assigned to the existence of an aquatic pathway at this site does provide a high level of confidence that ANS will not be able to use this site to traverse between the basins. A surface water connection between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins is unlikely based on these three key points:

- During a May 2011 site visit, culverts were noted between the basin divide that could provide a flow path between basins. However, a substantial area of raised ground east of the basin divide separates the two watersheds and would prohibit such a connection.
- Average rainfall levels are low to moderate, so even relatively rare storm events are not likely to produce enough rainfall to provide a surface water connection.
- Groundwater levels do not directly contribute to headwater flow in the ditches at the area of interest. Flow in these ditches is from surface runoff.



Due to the above evidence, it is very unlikely that a surface water connection exists or could form at this location on a perennial or intermittent basis, from a one percent annual recurrence interval storm. Consequently, the probability of the existence of an aquatic pathway ( $P_0$ ) at Swan River is rated low in either direction and supports the ratings assigned during the preliminary assessment in 2010. There are intermittent streams at this location leading into both basins, but a surface water connection would not form between them from less than a one percent annual return frequency storm.

This uncertainty associated with this rating is due to the following:

- The lack of available base flood mapping to determine extreme storm events.
- The lack of site specific data that could correlate precipitation amounts to surface flow conditions.

## 4 Overall Aquatic Pathway Viability

As discussed in Section 2.4, at those locations along the basin divide where the first element in Equation 5 (i.e., likelihood that an aquatic pathway exists) was estimated to be low, no further assessment of that location was necessary (Table 3). The low rating of this initial element assures that the overall probability of a viable pathway existing (Equation 5), the overall probability of

establishment (Equation 3), and the ANS risk potential (Equation 1), will all be low because of the multiplicative nature of the model. This approach assured a more prudent use of public resources in data collection and assessment by minimizing the collection of unnecessary data, and the conduct of unnecessary analyses.

## 5 Conclusions

During the site visit in May of 2011, no channels or other evidence of an aquatic connection was observed between the two basins. A review of all available data, as well as collaboration with USGS, NRCS, and MNDNR, led the interagency pathway team to conclude that there is little likelihood of a surface water connection existing on a perennial or intermittent basis from a one percent annual recurrence interval storm. Thus the probability that an aquatic pathway exists was rated low and in turn the overall aquatic pathway viability at Swan River, MN was rated “low”.

**Table 3: Summary of individual probability elements and overall pathway viability for ANS spreading between the Mississippi River and Great Lakes Basins at Swan River, MN location.**

	Form 1 $P_0$	Form 2 $P_1$	Form 3 $P_{2a}$	Form 4 $P_{2b}$	Form 5 $P_{2c}$	$P_{viable}$ pathway
Direction of Movement	Pathway Exists?	ANS Occurring Within Either Basin?	ANS Surviving Transit to Pathway?	Establish in Proximity to Aquatic Pathway? (Sect. 4.3)	ANS Spreading Across Aquatic Pathway into New Basin?	ANS/Pathway Viability Rating
<b>MRB<sup>1</sup> to GLB<sup>2</sup></b>	L (MC)	NN <sup>3</sup>	NN	NN	NN	L
<b>GLB to MRB</b>	L (MC)	NN	NN	NN	NN	L
<b>Overall Pathway Viability for Spread of ANS Between MRB and GLB:</b>						<b>L</b>
<sup>1</sup> MRB: Mississippi River Basin						
<sup>2</sup> GLB: Great Lakes Basin						
<sup>3</sup> NN – Not Necessary						

## 6 References

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- USACE. (2011b). Non-Native Species of Concern and Dispersal Risk for the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study.
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# Appendix A

## Evaluation Forms for Each Indicator Species Selected for the Swan River Pathway

Draft, Swan River Report  
May, 2013

**Swan River, Itasca County, MN**

**1. Probability of aquatic pathway existence**

Aquatic Pathway Team	Expertise Position title or team role	Rating Flow into GLB	Certainty	Rating Flow into MRB	Certainty
	USACE, Detroit - Hydraulic Engineer	Low	MC	Low	MC
	USACE, St. Paul District - Hydraulic Engineer	Low	MC	Low	MC
	<b>Team Ratings</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>MC</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>MC</b>

1. How do you rate the likelihood of the existence of a viable aquatic pathway at the subject location? Assume a viable aquatic pathway is any location where untreated surface water flow across the divide is deemed likely to occur and connect headwater streams in both basins from any storm up to the 1% annual return frequency storm.

Qualitative Rating	Qualitative Rating Category Criteria
High	Perennial streams and wetlands or intermittent stream known/documented to convey significant volumes of water across the basin divide for days to weeks multiple times per year.
Medium	Intermittent stream capable of maintaining a surface water connection to streams on both sides of the basin divide continuously for multiple days from a 10% annual return frequency storm; or, location of wetland spanning basin divide which maintains significant ponds that are likely to become inter connected and connect with streams on both sides of the basin divide from a 10% annual return frequency storm.
Low	Intermittent stream or marsh forming a surface water connection between streams on either side of the basin divide from larger than a 1.0% annual return frequency storm.
	Symbol
Very Certain	VC
Reasonably Certain	RC
Moderately Certain	MC
Reasonably Uncertain	RU
Very Uncertain	VU

Remarks: During the site visit on 31-May-2011, flow was visible in the ditch on the Northwest side of MN-65, running to the Southwest and the Mississippi drainage basin. There are two culverts under the railroad tracks and Northeast of the railroad tracks there is a fully submerged culvert running under the roadway to the Southeast. There was no evidence of flooding to the Southeast of this location or ponded water along the railroad grade. Additionally, there is an area of raised ground that runs parallel to MN-65, similar in appearance to an old road grade. This area is several feet above the surrounding area. The swampy nature of the area, in addition to its location in a headwater area, make it extremely unlikely that there would be a sufficient hydraulic connection to allow for passage of ANS.