

GLMRIS

GREAT LAKES AND MISSISSIPPI RIVER INTERBASIN STUDY

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First Name(required): Gillian Last Name(required): Woodroffe

Organization/Tribe (Official Representatives only): McGregor Bay Association

Street Address: 4595 ONTARIO, CANADA

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code (required): 48103

Public Scoping Meeting Location: _____

Date of Comment: _____

Comment Number: _____



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

Submission from the McGregor Bay Association to the Great Lakes Mississippi Intra-basin Study

Presented by Gillian Woodrooffe, president of the McGregor Bay Association
March 8, 2010

Although I live here in south east Michigan, I am president of a cottage association from McGregor Bay, one the northern most bays in within Georgian Bay, and on the Ontario side of Lake Huron. Because of its relative isolation, McGregor Bay contains many marshes and wetlands that have been unaffected by human development. Sadly, though this area is not immune to the destruction caused by invasive species. Zebra mussels, Goby and Grass Carp have established populations in our bay. Each year in mid to late May, in the marsh near our cottage, I witness the thrashing and splashing of Grass carp during their spawning season. It causes quite a lot of damage to the area, which is hard on the native aquatic plants, fish and other biota.

Originally these species from southern China tend to prefer warmer waters, there is a real likelihood, due to climate change that the waters in our area will become warmer and therefore an ideal habitat for the Asian carp species all ready established in the Mississippi river watershed. Residents, cottagers, tourists and business owners of the McGregor Bay area are concerned that these fiercely prolific fish

fish threaten the habitat of our native species, and will dominate in competition with them for their food supplies.

Economically, this is an area with little outside industry other than tourism. Tourist fishing is an important part of that equation. Bearing this in mind, both from the notion of preserving a virtually undisturbed natural area and maintaining the valuable economic input that tourist fishing brings, it is of great concern to us to stop an Asian Carp invasion.

Almost seventy percent of the McGregor Bay Association members are US citizens, many of whom live within the Great Lakes watershed. It is important to note that we see ourselves as residents of a geographical area, central North America and – the Great Lake Basin, rather than of one particular country. The environmental well-being of the Great Lakes is a concern that goes beyond political borders. While it is fortunate that due to my residency, I can speak at this meeting, many of our Canadian Association members feel helpless and unable to in voice their concerns; as they are dismissed as being from another country – far away. Although the solution to the problem does reside within the political realm of the United States, the repercussions of not resolving the problem would be a

bi-national ecological disaster. And, I might add, one that Canadians do not share in responsibility of it's creation.

Healthy Great Lakes commercial fisheries, recreational angling and tourism, amounts to hundreds of millions of dollars per year for both Canadians and Americans, including the First Nations People of North America (who historically do not recognize political boundaries). In spite of that, there is a persistent feeling that the interests of the barging companies and local tourist cruising industries in the Chicago area are being placed above the interests of the entire Great Lakes community.

The misguided engineering of the late 19th and early 20th centuries that connected the watersheds of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River should be reversed. It is imperative that permanent measures be put in place that will physically separate these basins so that the migration of species in either direction is prevented absolutely. Merely reducing the risk is not enough.

Although the Army Corps of Engineers has been assigned the task of deciding what to do, about protecting the Great Lakes from this invasive

species of fish, I am told that their study will take some 4 years to complete. The concern, of course, is in that length of time the influx of Asian carp will be well beyond any kind of control.

On behalf of my fellow Canadians, and fellow Americans who live within the watershed of the Great Lakes, I urge you to bring our concerns to the forefront and ensure that a permanent solution is implemented quickly, before we lose our precious Great Lakes to these foreign invaders.

Questions to Ask:

1. "Even with all the new 'barriers', given the current rates of in-flow of carp into Lake Michigan coming from the Chicago area, how long will it take to establish sustaining populations of them in lower Lake Michigan
2. Once established there, how long will it take for them to spread to mcgregor bay?"
3. If the carp successfully invade lower Lake Michigan and establish breeding populations, is there anything the army corps of engineers can do then?"

4. Finally i think the most important thing to leave with the general tomorrow is the notion that the great lakes are for all the Americans and Canadians of central North America, not just for the commercial and public interests of the lucky few who live in the Chicago area>

⑤ *John Doe 3/18/02*

Hello
my name is

GILLIAN WOODROFFE
McGregor Bay Association