



March 1, 2011

GLMRIS Scoping
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
111 N. Canal, Suite 600
Chicago, IL 60606

Dear U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

On the behalf of the Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee (UMRCC) the following comments are being submitted regarding the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) as part of the NEPA scoping process. The Upper Mississippi River Conservation Committee (UMRCC) was formed in 1943 by a group of very dedicated Mississippi River resource managers. Our goal is to “Promote the preservation and wise utilization of the natural and recreational resources of the Upper Mississippi River and to formulate policies, plans and programs for conducting cooperative studies”. The five basin States (Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois and Missouri) join together to help conserve and manage our nation’s greatest river. Today we are the voice of the many river managers and biologists that work along the Upper Mississippi River on a daily basis.

The spread of invasive species has become one of the dominant and most pressing natural resources issues in the Mississippi River Basin and the nation. The numerous aquatic invasive species (AIS) that have been established in the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins and interbasin connections such as the Chicago Area Waterways have resulted in both ecosystems being threatened. The continuous invasion of AIS from one basin to another has been accelerated by these interbasin connections. The UMRCC has historically supported actions to establish permanent separation of the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins to eliminate pathways for all life stages of AIS that may be transferred between these two basins. The UMRCC continues to support permanent separation of the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins to prevent the spread of AIS, but stresses the need for solutions that address

- all pathways, not just the Chicago Area Waterways,
- all AIS and life forms at risk of moving or being transported between the basins, and
- the exchange of organisms in both directions between these two basins.

Separation of the Mississippi River and Great Lakes basins is but one important step in the fight to protect these ecosystems from the ecologic and economic effects of AIS. There are numerous other pathways that AIS may be transferred between or introduced into these basins and management programs that address all vectors are urgently needed. Basin separation must not be done at the expense of other efforts needed to control and manage AIS.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this nationally significant resource issue.

Sincerely,

Martin Konrad

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martin Konrad". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'M'.

UMRCC Chairman