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The U.S Army Corps of Engineers is accepting comments for Ohio and New York Aquatic Nuisance Species Pathway Reports, released today

CHICAGO -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) today, Feb. 22, released for public comment four draft Ohio and one draft New York aquatic pathway assessment reports that estimate the likelihood of an aquatic pathway forming at each location and the probability of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) using them to reach the adjacent basin, as part of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS).

The draft reports, which were developed in coordination with federal, state and local partners, show that the Ohio-Erie Canal at Long Lake (Summit County) has a medium probability for the movement of Asian carp (i.e., silver, bighead and black) and northern snakehead into the Great Lakes Basin; and the Little Killbuck Creek (Medina County) site has a medium probability for the inter-basin movement of the viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus (VHSv), threespine stickleback, ruffe and tubenose goby and parasitic copepod.

The medium rating indicates that while ANS transfer could occur at these locations, it is estimated that none of the ANS would likely be able to reach the aquatic pathway on their own within the next 20 years.

Grand Lake-St. Mary's (Mercer County), Mosquito Creek Lake (Trumbull County) and the East Mud Lake site in New York (Chautauqua County) all have a low probability for the inter-basin movement of ANS.

"The low ratings mean it is unlikely for ANS of Concern to reach the pathway location on their own and to establish a population in the vicinity of the pathway within the next 50 years," said GLMRIS Other Pathways Project Manager Marty Wargo.

Comments for the four draft Ohio and one draft New York reports will be accepted beginning Feb. 22 through March 22, 2013. 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. The reports will be available for download on the GLMRIS website at www.glmris.anl.gov.

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USACE will host a stakeholder conference call March 7, 2013 at 10 a.m. (Central) to answer questions regarding these reports. Call-in information is USA Toll-Free: 877-336-1839, USA Caller Paid/International Toll: 636-651-0008, Access Code: 8506361, Security Code: 0000.

"Further efforts will be concentrated on pathways that have an overall rating of medium or high. The results of these assessments may aid in the implementation of, and future updates to, the Ohio and New York ANS management plans," said GLMRIS Program Manager Jack Drolet.

The overall objective of the Focus Area 2 portion of GLMRIS is to produce interim reports for each of the 18 potential aquatic pathways found along the basin divide (outside of the Chicago Area Waterway System or Focus Area 1). These reports are the next step in a tiered approach to assess the probability associated with the spread of ANS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. The reports released today conclude the Focus Area 2 draft interim assessment pathway report releases.

Reports include (as applicable): study methodology; aquatic pathway characterization; aquatic pathway viability for ANS of Concern; overall aquatic pathway viability, as well as some potential opportunities that, if implemented, could prevent or reduce the probability of ANS transferring between the basins.

USACE will review and incorporate public input before finalizing and re-issuing the reports in spring 2013.

USACE, in consultation with other federal agencies, Native American tribes, state agencies, local governments and non-governmental organizations, is conducting GLMRIS to explore options and technologies, collectively known as ANS controls, that could be applied to prevent ANS transfer between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins through aquatic pathways. A GLMRIS Report will be submitted to Congress in December that will present analyses of these controls. Visit glmris.anl.gov to view all products released to date on the study.

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