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For Immediate Release: July 5, 2012

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Army Corps releases reports on pro-fishing and Native American fishing within Great Lakes, Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River basins for aquatic nuisance species study

CHICAGO - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers released two reports today July 5, the “Treaty Rights and Subsistence Fishing in the U.S. Waters of the Great Lakes, Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River Basins” (Subsistence Fishing Report) and “Pro-Fishing Tournaments in the Great Lakes, Upper Mississippi River and Ohio River Basins” (Pro-fishing Report). These reports are Interim Products of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) and are available on the GLMRIS website.

“These various fisheries baseline assessments are important to the analysis of alternatives in GLMRIS, as the study considers the potential future impacts of aquatic nuisance species on existing conditions and significant natural resources,” said GLMRIS Program Manager Dave Romano.

The Pro-fishing Report acts as a snapshot of pro-fishing tournaments within the study area. It provides qualitative data for various tournaments, including descriptions of the types of tournaments and information on the rules and other elements.

The Subsistence Fishing Report is an overview of the harvest activities by Native American tribes through treaty rights within the study area and assesses the economic and cultural importance of subsistence harvesting for tribal communities.

USACE will host a conference call July 17 at 10 a.m. (CST) for interested parties to ask questions on this report. Call-in information is: USA Toll-Free: United States: 866-233-3842; International: 651-291-9113; Participant Access Code: 253963

Among the findings from the Subsistence Fishing Report, there are 37 federally recognized tribes in the study area, 16 of which engage in subsistence fishing, mostly in the western Great Lakes Basin. The annual approximate value of subsistence fishing activities to an individual subsistence household is between \$15 thousand and \$16 thousand. The main target species for subsistence fishers are walleye, whitefish, yellow perch and trout.

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The Pro-fishing Report indicates that tournaments occur frequently in the study area. The Upper Mississippi and Ohio rivers showed more occurrences of pro-fishing tournaments. On the Great Lakes, it is estimated that states such as Wisconsin and Minnesota host 450 to 700 pro-fishing tournaments annually. Bass fishing events seem to be particularly popular within the study area.

“This information, as with other assessments, will be provided to give the public and decision makers a clear picture of the overall regional implications of potential aquatic nuisance species (ANS) transfer in order for them to weigh in on the Array of Alternatives Report, which will be released for public comment in December 2013,” said Romano.

An assessment of recreational angling in the GLMRIS study area is anticipated at the end of 2012.

The purpose of GLMRIS is to evaluate the range of options and technologies available to prevent ANS transfer via aquatic pathways between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. The study considers possible controls to prevent ANS transfer, analyzes potential impacts each ANS control may have on significant natural resources, as well as the existing and forecasted uses of the lakes and waterways within the study area, and presents alternatives to prevent ANS transfer between the basins. If necessary, the alternatives will include mitigation measures for impacted waterway uses and significant natural resources.

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