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NEWS RELEASE

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

CHICAGO -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) today, Nov. 27, released for public comment eight draft Aquatic Pathway Assessment Reports for the State of Wisconsin. The purpose of each report is to evaluate key evidence to estimate the likelihood of an aquatic pathway forming and the possibility of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) using it to reach the adjacent basin, as part of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS).

The reports, which were developed in coordination with federal, state and local partners, show that Portage Upstream (Columbia County), Portage and Canal Downstream (Columbia County), Rosendale-Brandon (Fond du Lac County) and Brule Headwaters (Douglas County) have a medium probability for the potential transfer of viral hemorrhagic septicemia virus (VHSV) from the Great Lakes Basin into the Mississippi River Basin.

Jerome Creek (Kenosha County), South Aniwa Wetlands (Marathon-Shawano County), Hatley-Plover River (Marathon County) and West Menomonee Falls (Waukesha County) have a low probability for the inter-basin movement of ANS.

"Further efforts will be concentrated on pathways that have an overall rating of medium or high. However, results from all of the pathway assessments, regardless of their overall rating, should be evaluated and taken into consideration by the appropriate resource agencies. These pathway reports are tools to assist prioritization of future study funding decisions and to assist states in updating of their Comprehensive Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plans," said GLMRIS Program Manager Jack Drolet.

Comments for the eight draft Wisconsin reports will be accepted beginning Nov. 27, 2012 and will close Dec. 27, 2012. 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.

USACE will host a stakeholder conference call Thursday, Dec. 13, 2012 at 10 a.m. (Central) to answer questions regarding the Wisconsin 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.

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The overall objective of the Focus Area 2 portion of GLMRIS is to produce an interim report for each of the 18 potential aquatic pathways found between the two basins (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.

Additional reports focusing on potential pathways in Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania will be released over the next few months, as they are completed.

Reports include: study methodology; aquatic pathway characterization; aquatic pathway viability for ANS of Concern; overall aquatic pathway viability and 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 early 2013.

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