

THE GREAT LAKES AND MISSISSIPPI RIVER INTERBASIN STUDY NEWSLETTER

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“I want to commend the Corps for its diligence in seeking public review and comment and continuing with all the meetings you’ve held throughout the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. I firmly believe that the quality of your study and the credibility of the Corps’ work will be enhanced by this level of public review and participation.” Director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Marc Miller.

THE GLMRIS PUBLIC SCOPING MEETINGS

The US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) received valuable public comment during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) scoping period of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS). The public scoping period ran from November 16, 2010 through March 31, 2011.

Comments were obtained during twelve USACE-hosted public scoping meetings throughout the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins in Chicago, Buffalo, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Green Bay, Traverse City, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Vicksburg, Milwaukee, New Orleans and Ann Arbor.

Public comment is meant to inform the scope of the study in accordance with NEPA laws and regulations. Comments that help the GLMRIS team identify the issues that stakeholders consider significant or not significant are important contributions to the study process.

The GLMRIS panel for each meeting consisted of Dave Wethington, Project Manager for GLMRIS and the Chicago Area Water System (CAWS); a representative from the White House

Council on Environmental Quality, including John Goss, the Asian Carp Director; a uniformed official from the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division of the Army Corps of Engineers; and Mike Saffran, the Other Pathways Project Manager.

Throughout each public meeting, the panel heard a wide -array of questions and comments from environmental, navigational, commercial, tribal and governmental stakeholders, among others. Approximately 200 oral comments were received, lasting a total of 20 hours over the twelve meetings.



Comments were also received via electronic submittal through the GLMRIS Web site, mail and hand-delivery. Eight hundred total comments were received throughout the scoping period.

Meeting transcripts and public comments are being posted on the GLMRIS Web site. For more information on public participation in the NEPA process, please visit glmrис.anl.gov.

The GLMRIS team is now compiling this information into common significant themes and will be publishing a summary of the proceedings in a NEPA Scoping Report.

NAVIGATION AND ECONOMIC WORKSHOP

In April, the GLMRIS team met to discuss proposed methodologies for the GLMRIS navigation and economic analysis with the Headquarters policy review team and USACE technical experts in Washington D.C. The Headquarters staff and experts will be reviewing GLMRIS work products related to these fields. The team feels confident that it has set forth a plan to complete modeling and generate data, which will help guide the overall study process and inform the selection of a recommended alternative. The GLMRIS team will continue to engage these, as well as other reviewers, throughout the duration of the study to ensure GLMRIS continues to be implemented in accordance with USACE policy.



Green Bay Public Meeting Jan. 25, 2011, a commenter gives his remarks on GLMRIS to the panel. From left, seated at table: Asian Carp Director John Goss, Corps Deputy District Engineer Lt. Col. David Berczek, GLMRIS Project Manager Dave Wethington and Other Pathways Project Manager Mike Saffran.

COMMON THEMES FROM THE PUBLIC MEETINGS

A wide variety of comments were received during the NEPA scoping period, but common themes were heard at many locations. The following are some of the most common subject areas raised. All comments received will be made available for viewing on the GLMRIS Web site.

*Concern regarding length of study timeline.

*Emphasis on hydrologic separation alternative for the prevention of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) transfer between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.

*Role of other studies, such as the one being conducted by the Great Lakes Commission.

* Concern regarding use of term “reduce risk” of the transfer of ANS, rather than “prevent.”

*The need to be proactive.

*Potential impacts of Asian carp on the Great Lakes ecosystem.

*The importance of USACE continuing to work with partners and other agencies on an overall strategy to prevent ANS transfer between the basins.

PROGRESS REPORT: INTERIM PRODUCTS

The GLMRIS team and various sub-teams have been very busy over the past several months working on interim study reports and products. In addition, the sub-teams have been gearing up to tackle some of the actions needed to move the study process forward. Some highlights :

Interim Products:

- Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) White Paper – The GLMRIS Natural Resources Team developed a High Risk Species list that would pose a significant threat to either the Great Lakes or Mississippi River basins if they were to disperse. The internal USACE technical review was completed April 15, 2011. The paper is now undergoing review by the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration.
- Scoping Report summarizing the scoping effort and results is underway. Draft report is anticipated in summer 2011.
- Passenger Navigation Interim Report also underway. Draft expected in fall 2011.

Other Recent Milestones:

- The CAWS detailed study schedule has been updated and is under review by team leaders.
- The Navigation and Economics team has developed a path forward on various economic elements of the study, including flood risk management, navigation and recreation.
- The Hydrology and Hydraulics Team is working with the City of Chicago to use their Basement Flooding Model.
- The Technology Team is conducting a review of potential ANS control technologies.
- Natural Resources Team has a Habitat Mapping effort underway and is developing an eco-risk assessment.
- The Environmental Quality Team is working on a water quality model for the CAWS.

ASIAN CARP REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE PUBLIC MEETING IN CHICAGO

April 28, 2011 at the John G. Shedd Aquarium from 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. The ACRCC will discuss the proactive efforts of the Obama Administration and the Great Lakes states to prevent Asian carp from establishing a self-sustaining population in the Great Lakes. Along with updates on the ACRCC Strategy Framework, the event will also provide an opportunity for public comment and feedback.

WHERE: John G. Shedd Aquarium, South Entrance Presidential Conference Room, 1200 S. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois

WATCH: The event will be webcast at <https://www.mymeetings.com/tetrtech/join/>

Conference number: PG7013611

Passcode: ASIAN CARP

LISTEN: (888) 603-8914

ALL ANS, NOT JUST ASIAN CARP!

There's no doubt that Asian carp, especially the jumping Silver carp, have brought significant attention to the subject of aquatic nuisance species transfer between the basins. The media recycles such daunting descriptors as "imminent" and "voracious" when discussing the threat and appetite of these fish.

"With the threat Asian carp pose to recreational users and ecosystems, they've raised awareness on the entire scope of the study," said Lt. Col. David Berczek, deputy commander of the US Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District.

GLMRIS differs from other studies to date in its magnitude and breadth. It not only covers a broader geographic region than has previously been addressed, including portions of 31 states and evaluating hydrologically-complex topography along the nearly 1,500 mile-long Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin Divide, it considers *all* ANS, not just targeted species, such as Asian carp.

"The purpose of GLMRIS is to look at a long-term strategy to prevent the spread of all aquatic invasive species. Asian carp are a potential threat now, but we're also looking out five to ten years from now. What will be the next Asian carp?" said Dave Wethington, GLMRIS Project Manager.

GLMRIS ONLINE

Find printable brochures and meeting materials, fact sheets, and much more at glmr.is.anl.gov. Stay tuned for additional meeting transcripts and written comments from the NEPA scoping period, as well as information regarding future USACE- hosted public forums. If you haven't done so already, subscribe to the GLMRIS e-mail list for quick, convenient access to important news and information!

In April, the GLMRIS team launched a new Stay Involved page on the GLMRIS Web site <http://glmr.is.anl.gov/>. The revised page includes ways to stay up-to-date with GLMRIS, feeds from the GLMRIS Twitter and Facebook page and information regarding past involvement opportunities. The page also provides links to other federal agency websites for additional information on aquatic nuisance species and what you can do to prevent their spread.

Please, join the conversation and discuss GLMRIS topics with the Corps and other stakeholders at:

<http://Twitter.com/GLMRIS> and <http://Facebook.com/GLMRIS>

Stay Connected:



[Twitter](http://Twitter.com/GLMRIS)



[Facebook](http://Facebook.com/GLMRIS)

On February 12, 2011, over 60 scientists and managers involved in projects identified in the 2011 Framework and funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative participated in the Asian Carp Science Meeting in Chicago, IL. The purpose of the meeting was to foster communication among scientists, increase awareness of the projects and activities being conducted, and identify additional opportunities for integration and collaboration. The presentations, project summaries, and the meeting agenda are available by clicking on the following link: http://cida.usgs.gov/glri/meetings/asian_carp/february_2011.html



Registration at the first public scoping meeting in Chicago on December 15, 2010.