GREAT LAKES AND MISSISSIPPI RIVER

INTERBASIN STUDY

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Proceedings had beginning at 2:00 o'clock in the afternoon on February 15, 2011 at the O'Donnell Park Complex, 910 East Michigan Street, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

A P P E A R A N C E S

MR. KEVIN, BLUHM, Moderator

PANEL MEMBERS:

MR. JOHN GOSS, Asian Carp Director, White House Council on Environmental Quality.

LIEUTENANT COLONEL DAVID BERCZEK, Deputy Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District.

MR. DAVE WETHINGTON, GLMRIS Project Manager.

MR. MIKE SAFFRAN, Other Pathways Project Manager.

S P E A K E R I N D E X

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. BLUHM: Can everybody hear me okay? Well, it's about 2:00 o'clock and it's time to get things started, and if I could have everybody have a seat. We have plenty of extra seating here and we'll begin our afternoon session.

Welcome everybody. My name is Kevin Bluhm. I'm going to be the moderator for today and this evening's session. I come from the St. Paul District Corps of Engineers, and I'm glad that you're all here with us today.

The meeting today is for the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study, known as GLMRIS. This is a NEPA public scoping meeting. And before we begin, I'd like to just ask if you have a cell phone, if you want to silence that or turn that off, that would be helpful. At times we end up with a lot of phones making noise and it can be a little disruptive. And also if you feel that you need to use the restroom during the meeting, you can excuse yourself at any time. Restrooms are located out the doorway and to your left.

I'll go over a few of the handout materials for you. If you did not receive a packet of handout materials when you arrived, you can just raise your

hand and we'll make sure you get one. In that packet the green half sheet is an agenda that we'll be following for today's session this afternoon as well as this evening. They'll be identical sessions. We've got a quarter sheet and then a booklet here that shows background information and study information that can be helpful to read up on the actual study and its purpose. There's a small business card.

And then this piece here is going to be the most important piece for what we're working on at this point in time. This half white sheet is a comment form. This comment form has room on the inside as well on the back panel for you to write down, jot any notes you have and leave us any comments tonight or during the comment period. So keep this in mind if there's anything you'd like to add for any comments that you have.

And then also for supplemental information we've got a purple sheet of paper here. This has frequently asked questions, so there's some answers here that might help understand some of the things that people ask questions about. And then we've also got a salmon-colored sheet here that has information on the other study efforts, and you'll hear more about that in our presentation following my introduction.

And then also if you want to speak today, the gold or yellowish sheet is a form that we ask that you fill out and leave with the registration table in the back of the room. That helps get you in the order for actually making an oral presentation today. And if you'd rather leave documentation with us, if you have anything you'd like to submit as part of the record, this blue sheet of paper also on the back registration table is what we'd like to have you fill out to deposit any information with us for the scoping period.

Our GLMRIS team has organized this public meeting to accomplish two goals. Our first goal is to give you information about the actual study itself, and then our second and the most important one for today's meeting is to solicit your comments on the significant issues that should be included in GLMRIS and on the insignificant issues that can be eliminated from further study.

The Corps is hosting 12 such public meetings throughout the study area in an effort to provide opportunities for those interested in the study and to learn more about as well as provide your oral comments. Please note that this is a NEPA public scoping meeting and the period for comments does close on March the 31st, 2011.

As indicated on the agenda, this public meeting is organized in two sessions. An identical presentation will given at the beginning of each session followed by an open comment period. The first comment period will begin approximately one hour from now and then the second session will begin at 5:30 with a presentation identical to this.

There is a 30-minute break in between the two meetings, and staff, panel members here from the front will be available in the room here if you have any additional questions that you would like to express or talk to the team members. Please note, though, while speaking to the panelists between sessions anything that you have for conversation or comment will not be recorded as part of the official record. So if you have things, items that you feel are important and want to make sure they're part of the record, we encourage you to use the form itself or use the white comment form to make sure that your comments and statements are heard and part of the documentation.

I'd like to now introduce our panel members. At the table here, to my left, Mr. John Goss is the Asian carp director from the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Seated next to him is Lieutenant Colonel David Berczek. He's a deputy commander from

the Chicago District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In the next position Dave Wethington. Dave is the GLMRIS project manager. And on the far side of the table, Mike Saffran, and he's the Other Pathways project manager, and you'll hear from all of those men in just a few minutes.

Okay. So that's my introductory remarks and I want to keep the thing going, so I'm going to turn the meeting right over to Mr. Goss at this point to give you an update on the Asian carp efforts.

MR. GOSS: Good afternoon. Thanks for taking the time to come and hopefully learn a little bit more about the battle to stop the aquatic invasive species from moving from our lakes to our rivers and from our rivers to our lakes.

I am here representing the Council on Environmental Quality. That's the environmental policy office in the White House, and I was recruited last fall to be a coordinator of all of the federal agencies, the state and local entities, the stakeholder groups across the Great Lakes, the business interests, and to work with all of these different parties and interested people to communicate and do our best to come up with a permanent solution to stopping these invasive species from moving.

We've all lived with the different waves of problem species moving through the Great Lakes. We have a unique opportunity with Asian carp to keep them from becoming established, and I want to tell you that I think the interim actions that have been taken and will continue are doing a good job. They are working to contain Asian carp at this time.

The third electric barrier that has recently been turned on and will be fully operational soon is an effective barrier to keep carp from moving from the Illinois River up into Lake Michigan. We also have some new fish barrier fences that are stopping Asian carp from moving at flood times in different areas, and we're going to talk about that quite a bit with the Other Pathways discussion today.

Also the Lacey Act was adopted by Congress to include a prohibition on the transportation of any live Asian carp across state lines. That certainly will stop the transfer of fish from areas in the South where they were, in fact, being transported to some fish markets and areas that we thought were a problem in Canada and in some U.S. cities. So that is now totally illegal.

Also there's a major risk assessment underway with the Canadian government working with the Great

Lakes Fisheries Commission, and they're going to look at a comprehensive analysis once again of what is the threat of Asian carp to the Great Lakes and that will progress in 2011. We hope to have their report within about a year from now.

Let me run through just a few things to catch you up on a little more of the specifics of what's happening with the Asian carp project, the Asian carp containment project. Certainly almost everyone across the country has seen YouTube videos of silver carp jumping when boats pass by. Actually this little video clip and these kinds of pictures have helped us get support for fighting invasive species in Congress. This certainly has raised the awareness throughout the country and it's helping get the focus on fighting a better battle than we did with zebra mussels, quaggas or sea lampreys that we continue to have to deal with.

This is a very voracious eater. They are bottom feeders. They suck up a lot of plankton. They are outcompeting our native fish in our rivers. I'm from southern Indiana. We have Asian carp very thick in the Wabash River, in the White River, and they are depleting the catfish populations and the other native fish populations already. So Wisconsin needs to be prepared and we need to work together on the strategies

for reducing this carp population.

About a year ago a federal coordinated effort was put together called the Control Strategy Framework, and that joined the forces of EPA, the Great Lakes Restoration Funds, Corps of Engineers, Fish and Wildlife Service, USGS and Coast Guard, and also put together almost $40 million for projects to fight Asian carp.

There's a coordinating committee that I chair now with Cam Davis. Cam is in charge of the Great Lakes Restoration Funding, and a lot of the money for the carp projects come from the Great Lakes Restoration Fund. You can see that we have federal agency people who -- we talk to each other all the time, literally daily, talking to each other, and we have a broader group called the Regional Coordinating Committee that now includes representatives from every state government. So Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has active members now on this coordinating group and we are working with advice and wisdom from the people who know fish best in Wisconsin and from each of the other Great Lakes states.

There's also a group meeting today in Chicago called the Technical and Policy Committee and that's an ongoing advisory group that will continue to look at

all of these techniques that we're examining for stopping carp.

Just a little more background on where we're doing most of this activity. You can see on the left there, the Chicago River, originally up until about a hundred years ago was a pretty short stream that came out at Navy Pier, if you're familiar with Downtown Michigan Avenue, and that was the original drainage, and then the Calumet River's coming over from the Indiana side and draining in there on the south side of Chicago, and the Des Plaines River is farther out on the western side of Chicago.

About a hundred years ago there was a problem in Chicago they had from their own waste going into the lake. They were contaminating their water system, and so their drainage was redesigned to flow their stormwater and their wastewater to the Des Plaines and the Illinois River and keep it out of the lake. So that is now what we're talking about.

When we talk about the Chicago Waterway, that is the canal system that was built connecting both the Downtown area of Chicago and the south side Calumet areas and flowing to the Mississippi. The electric barriers then are placed in that ship canal and we now have three different locations close together for those

barriers.

Colonel Berczek and the Corps staff can talk about any details, but I just wanted you to understand that they are in close proximity down there where it's all funneled down to one point, and that is the point where the barriers are keeping the carp back in the river.

Here's a bigger map. The star in the center is the electric barriers again. Just below that's the Lockport Dam and Locks, and just beyond that is where we have a pretty thick population of Asian carp. That's the -- basically the line of battle right now is keeping them contained down there, and we continue to monitor all of the other waters with DNA testing to make sure that we don't have a carp population developing up there and also commercial fishing and electric shocking.

A few things that have been accomplished recently that I just want to mention. This is in Indiana. In my home state we have carp in the Wabash River, breeding populations all the way up to Fort Wayne, and at Fort Wayne there's a floodplain area that intersects with the Maumee River that flows to Lake Erie. And with the work of the Corps Risk Assessment Project last year, we determined -- it was determined

that there is a problem. There's flood water connecting there and a potential for carp to swim across and go to Lake Erie. Mike Saffran will talk about the details.

But this is a significant accomplishment. Indiana Department of Natural Resources put up a fish barrier already just a couple of months after they figured out we had a problem. So the Corps can find things that need to be dealt with in the short term and we can act.

Also there's an identification all cross the Continental Divide of our states finding other points that might have resemblances to flood conditions in the Fort Wayne area, and again, that's what we're calling the Other Pathways part of this study. That was done fairly quickly last summer also.

The fishing -- commercial fishing operations took out over a hundred thousand pounds of Asian carp just below the barrier this last year. That's going to be increased over a million pounds as the target for reducing the carp population below the electric barriers. Also continue to do netting and electrofishing up there above the barriers.

There are a number of research and development projects that are progressing. Certainly we

need to do more work on the DNA testing process. We do not know what it's telling us except that we're finding a trace. So that's a trace of feces, mucus, fish scales, leaving some DNA. Don't know if it's multiple fish or a single fish. So we're going to continue to work on that and refine that in the next year or two.

Also working with a number of projects hoping to come up with a way to do some reproductive interference, possibly dietary interference that would slow down these hungry carp, and also possibly carp-specific chemicals that would help us eradicate carp populations.

I'm going to just keep going here. I already talked about commercial fishing. Just wanted to mention that the Coast Guard has a very important role dealing with all the shipping traffic and recreational boating traffic on the Chicago Waterway, and that is another complication. There are a significant number of boats that regularly move through these same waters that are, in fact, Chicago's combined sewer overflow system and also a shipping canal that we're dealing with and trying to put barriers in to make sure that not just big fat carp but that any invasive species cannot go through.

So that's the real nature of the challenge

for the Corps of Engineers with this comprehensive study, is to come up with a way to stop all invasive species from moving through there. It is increasingly difficult. I've already talked about the layout enough there. I think we could go to that later. If you have questions about it, we can come back to it. I just want to make a couple of final comments and then we'll move on with the Corps staff to talk to you about the actual study process.

You can see this is a complicated problem. It takes a comprehensive analysis. There are lots -- a lot of questions that we're getting about the time frame on this, and certainly we are working on ways to reduce the total time it takes to get decisions made on this permanent solution for stopping invasive species from moving.

But this is not going to be able to be a snap decision. It's not something that can be made today. It is going to take a process and that's what we're going to talk about some more today so that you'll understand that process, and I think hopefully after we have a good question-and-answer session that you will have a better understanding.

So just in conclusion, we have some strong carp barriers in place. We are proactively monitoring

the area between the carp barriers and Lake Michigan to make certain that we do not have a carp population establishing there. We're also looking at other points around the Great Lakes over the next year to make sure that we do not have a carp population developing, and we're going to continue to implement this coordinated effort to do everything that we can come up with to protect the Great Lakes ecosystem and make sure that we still have the Great Lakes that we all love. Thank you and I look forward to questions and conversations as we go on today. Thanks.

COLONEL BERCZEK: Good afternoon and welcome to this scoping meeting. We appreciate your time in coming today to inform us and also to be informed.

Invasive species inhabit all regions of the United States and every nation. Invasive species from around the globe are affecting plant and animal communities on our farms, ranches and coasts, parks, waters, forests and backyards. Those two statements are the opening statements in the 2005 report from the National Invasive Species Council and also from the National Invasive Species Management Plan, 2008 and 2012. It's a complex and accelerating problem. Species of benefit in one area may be species of harm or invasive species in others.

In 2007, Congress, under the Water Resources and Development Act, directed the Corps of Engineers and the secretary through the Corps of Engineers to conduct in consultation -- you can see there primarily I want to focus on these -- a feasibility study, focus on these blue words here -- looking at the options and technologies available to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins through the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and other aquatic pathways.

Under this study, some of the special considerations that you see that are mentioned are we'll look at the recommendations. We'll include an impact of the analysis on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal as part of this study. We'll include detailed analysis of various aquatic nuisance species controls to include hydrologic separation.

We'll look to prevent the spread of those species from one basin to the other and vice-versa, and as part of that we'll conduct a detailed risk assessment and risk analysis of all options and technologies, again to include the hydrologic separation, to see which combination of those could go ahead and achieve that 100 percent success rate.

The study is 100 percent federally funded,

which in a feasibility study is not typical. Typically in a feasibility report the Corps of Engineers would partner with a local sponsor or someone else to have a cost share portion. So this is significant in the fact that Congress, in telling us to conduct this study, has also made available the funds from the federal budget to go ahead and allow us to go forward with it.

The GLMRIS study area is very large and very encompassing, and I'll just spend a little bit here to show you these areas that are highlighted. Primarily up here in the detailed study area are the Great Lakes states and in these portions here that make up the upper Mississippi River basins.

This dashed line here represents an area of focus of primary concern because that is a -- the natural flow divide. Water that lands to the north of that region is part of the Great Lakes watershed basin; water that lands to the south of that makes up the upper Mississippi River watershed.

What does this study include? It takes a look at the aquatic connections. We talked a little bit already, you saw in the authorization language taking a look at the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and the other aquatic pathways. We're looking at all varieties of organisms, fish, plants, parasites.

And I showed you there with the map a little bit some of the locations we're looking at, primarily focusing on that interface between the two basins as being a point of separation, a point of distinction on keeping things on one side versus the other. And it's a large study area. The states that were highlighted with the detailed study area encompass roughly 16, 17 states, whereas you see there are portions of 31 other states that contribute to those watersheds.

What's not being looked at as part of the scope of this study you see on the right-hand side in the pink area. It does not look at terrestrial transfers or airborne transfers of nuisance species. It is not looking at human release.

Mr. Goss talked a little bit about some of the activities under the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, and some of those areas there looked to the human release, bait bucket transfers, those sort of things, specifically with regards to Asian carp. Those are beyond necessarily the scope of this study. Not necessarily looking at the Atlantic Slope and the St. Lawrence Seaway or into Canada. Mr. Goss mentioned as well some of the Canadian efforts and some of the other efforts that are ongoing.

The elements of this study you see there as

well, looking at options and technologies to prevent the interbasin transfer, including hydrologic separation and evaluation; and, of course, as part of our studies we look at the regional economic modeling and come up with a risk-based ecological decision-making framework. This is a feasibility study that will result in a feasibility report with recommendations to Congress for implementation, but also this will include an Environmental Impact Statement.

To go ahead and accomplish the study of this magnitude and this complexity, we had to take a look at, figure out a strategy on how best to proceed and go down this path, and you can see here just a little bit how we organized for success. Mr. Goss talked about some of the committees that existed already as part of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, and since that was in place and in effect, we kind of just borrowed from that and continued to use those committees and those agencies to go ahead and help with the spread of information and the transfer of information and also then if there's direction needed as well.

So I think that's a good place to start, and we talked as well about joining with all other stakeholders. You see in the Congressional language

where we were told to collaborate with others, and that's exactly what we're doing.

We're breaking down into two geographically oriented areas. The study authorization language said to look at the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and other aquatic pathways, so it made sense to break that out into two focus areas. Dave Wethington is the overall GLMRIS project manager but he's also the project manager for the Chicago Area Waterway System and he'll talk to that piece of the study in a little bit. And Mr. Mike Saffran, who was introduced earlier, will talk a little bit about some of the efforts on the other pathways.

Key to this entire process will be to go ahead and keep the public informed and also to keep ourselves informed of developing technologies, and Mr. Goss mentioned as well part of the regional strategy, the framework, 45 actions that are ongoing in 2011 as part of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee. If something comes out of there that can go ahead and ought to be considered and wrapped into this report, we've got to remain adaptive so that we can go ahead and adjust to that and include that evolving technology or that evolving information.

And that last bullet, of course, in the Corps

of Engineers, in all studies we do, we will abide by all legal and regulatory guidance in carrying out the study.

This here is just a little bit of the study purpose. You see we've identified the aquatic pathways. Some of that preliminary work has already been done. Mr. Saffran will talk to that, and we're looking at -- right now we're inventorying the current and the future potential aquatic nuisance species.

The Asian carp, Mr. Goss mentioned, has brought a lot of focus to this type of an effort, and you see that in the past there were other laws and other legislation that was passed that a lot of times focused on zebra mussel or focused on other specific species. In this case here Congress directed us to look at all aquatic nuisance species. So we have some pictures there. I like to say it's from fish to fleas, and of course that's what's up there. The Asian carp, the duckweed, the ruffe, the sea lamprey, and the spiny water flea.

We're looking at all organisms, analyzing possible controls that could be out there or that may surface to go ahead and help us in this fight. And again, mention so that we don't lose sight of the fact that hydrologic separation of the basins will be one of

those options to be looked at.

This is the primary focus area and it's the more urgent one because it represents the pathway that we know exists and is always open. It doesn't rely on certain flood conditions to be open. It is always open and it's a navigable waterway. I'll let Dave talk to this area a little bit for you.

MR. WETHINGTON: Thank you, sir. Good afternoon. Again, my name is Dave Wethington. I'm the project manager at the Chicago District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and I'm the project manager for the Focus Area I.

I'll spend just a couple minutes this afternoon going over the slide. I want to direct your attention first to the map that's on the right-hand side. What you'll see are five points numbered one through five, starting at the top and going along the Lake Michigan shoreline. Those five points represent the areas in which the Great Lakes basin and the Mississippi River basin have the opportunity to interact within the Chicagoland area, within this primary transfer area.

What's unique about this river system is that just as you would imagine the five prongs of a fork flowing into a handle of the fork, all five of these

waterways flow into a single Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal, which is where we have located our electric barrier system. That's number seven on this map. So that's kind of the reason for locating our fish barrier system at this point is because it serves as an effective choke point for addressing all five of these potential pathways.

In addition, I'd like you to notice that there are what we have -- what we call controlled and uncontrolled waterways on here. Points one, two and three are controlled by a physical structure, which is the Wilmette Pumping Station, point number one; the Chicago Lock, point number two; and actually point number three is controlled by the physical structure in number six, which is the O'Brien Lock and Dam. You'll also note that points four and five are what we called uncontrolled waterways, so there are basically no physical structures that can block the movement of fish or other aquatic species.

On the left-hand side is an outline of our Corps planning process. This is how we were -- this is how we are attacking essentially this problem. What we're doing is we're in steps one and two right now. We're specifying problems and opportunities. We've put together a team of professionals with the Corps of

Engineers and also reached out to our federal partners, state partners, regional agencies to identify what are the problems and what are our potential opportunities. That's also one of the reasons why we're here today is to listen to you to give us an idea of what do you think is significant or important as we move down and scope this study.

We're also beginning the process of inventorying and forecasting conditions, and what does that mean? Basically what we're doing is we're collecting information on how these waterways are used. You might have heard a lot about how the Chicago Area Waterway System is used for commercial navigation. That's true. In addition though, the Chicago Area Waterway System are used for recreational purposes, for water supply, water discharge. The entire Chicagoland area discharges their municipal wastewater into the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal. It comprises about 70 to 80 percent of the total volume of the flow of the Chicago River.

Another very important use of the Chicago Area Waterway System is flood risk management. It doesn't happen very often but every couple years, every five years we have a significant rainfall event in the Chicagoland area that causes us to backflow or open

that lock structure at number two and number three to backflow the water that normally flows toward the Mississippi River out toward Lake Michigan to relieve flood pressure. Basically this helps reduce economic damages to -- via overbank flooding in the Chicagoland area as well as significant economic damage that is potential through basement flooding as the sewer system throughout the entire Chicagoland area backs up. This flood risk management tool also protects human health and human life safety.

Once we've collected the information describing what all the potential uses are for the waterways, what we're going to do with that is analyze the potential impacts that would be had when we implement some aquatic nuisance species control technology. You know, the technologies would include anything from electric barriers, potential dead zones or physical hydrologic separation of the basins. So we need to figure out what are the economic, environmental and social impacts to the waterway users of implementing these aquatic nuisance species controls.

Our legislation and our guidance also told us that we need to look at mitigation for adverse impacts to those waterway uses. And again, as Mr. Goss and Colonel Berczek have mentioned, we have been

collaborating wholeheartedly with other federal agencies, state partners, Native American tribes, regional and local agencies as well as non-governmental organizations, the public and private industry.

Thank you for your time and attention. I'll turn it back to you, Colonel Berczek. Thank you.

COLONEL BERCZEK: Thanks, Dave. With that I'll just introduce Mr. Saffran again. He's going to talk a little bit and explain to you what this slide is about with the other pathways.

MR. SAFFRAN: Thank you, Colonel. Again, my name is Mike Saffran. I work for the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division Office out of Cincinnati.

When we started into the GLMRIS study, a lot was known about the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, but relatively little was known about that -- the three little words at the end of that authority, the other aquatic pathways.

About the 1st of June last year our commanding general made a visit to Portage, Wisconsin, at the end of a very intense springtime effort fighting Asian carp in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, and given all of the expenditure of federal resources, time, labor and efforts that had gone into the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, he basically came back with a

real dilemma and which is that he was concerned that there's a significant chance that all of that investment could be bypassed, if you will, if the Asian carp could find a way to outflank us and find another location where they could access the Great Lakes, and the trip to Portage helped him realize there are other potential aquatic pathways.

And so he tasked the division staff to within 60 days go out and produce a draft report that provided an inventory of all the potential aquatic pathways that could develop anywhere along that 1500-mile long drainage divide that extends from upper Minnesota over to western New York. So a very tall order. We weren't exactly sure how we could do it, but we knew we needed to reach out to other partner agencies for help. And so we immediately went to the USGS, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration folks as well as the state DNR's and asked them for their help.

The Fish and Wildlife Service -- I'll go through this fairly quick. I was going to cover a number of things, but the Fish and Wildlife Service helped us initially with developing a list of non-indigenous aquatic species in the Great Lakes but not yet known to exist in the river basin, and vice-versa,

a list of species in the Mississippi River basin that are not indigenous that are not yet known to be in the Great Lakes. There was about 121 species in the Great Lakes, about 20 in the Mississippi River basin in those initial two lists.

USGS helped us with point distribution maps that illustrate the spatial locations of where those aquatic nuisance species existed in either basin. A team of biologists came together and helped whittle it down to the species of most significant concern for the GLMRIS.

And while the biologists were working, hydrologists from the state DNR's and USGS and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were all working together to identify where are locations along the divide where water can pass, and what we found was a total of about the 36 locations where there seemed to be a significant potential for an aquatic pathway to develop across the drainage divide.

This was a mix of locations. Some locations were remnants of old canal systems. Some are locations of very rural areas where agricultural ditches have been excavated across the drainage divide. Some are in urban and suburban locations where drainage ways have been developed, and some are just natural wetlands that

exist along the basin, along the divide.

Out of those 36 locations, 18 of them were determined to pose a relatively significant risk for the potential for ANS transfer across the basin divide. Of those 18, there's only one that really jumped out though as a very, very significant risk, and that's what has already been mentioned today, which is the Eagle Marsh in Fort Wayne, Indiana.

And if you'll notice there where the star is for Fort Wayne, there's a part of the drainage basin for the Maumee River that extends to the southeast from that location and comes back up to Fort Wayne, and again, that's the St. Mary's River. St. Joseph's River originates in southeastern Michigan and flows southwest into Fort Wayne, and then the Maumee River is formed out of the junction of those two rivers and heads to the northeast up to Lake Erie.

Well, when you have a significant rainfall event in that basin, water backflows across the basin divide through urban ditches in the town of Fort Wayne into Eagle Marsh and over into the Wabash River basin. When you have a 10 percent annual return frequency storm or about the largest storm you'd expect to occur in any ten-year period, the depth of the water across the basin divide is up to four and a half feet deep.

The combination of that circumstance with established populations of bighead and silver carp less than 25 miles to the west in the Wabash River basin led to a quick determination that something needed to be done there relatively quick.

End of July we had an on-site meeting where the Indiana DNR, the county surveyor, National Resource Conservation Service, Little River Wetlands Project, USGS, USEPA, Corps of Engineers, we all met and talked about the circumstances, and everybody agreed there needed to be some sort of a permanent remedy but we all agreed that it would be very difficult for the federal government to actually build something, build something right away.

Indiana DNR stepped up and said, hey, we can take the lead on this, and they developed a design and constructed a temporary barrier across the Eagle Marsh in less than 60 days. By the end of September we had a temporary barrier up there that now is in place and is protecting against Asian carp making the transfer next time we have a really significant rainfall out there.

To tell you where the other pathways are going, the other 17 locations we're now completing a risk character -- well, let me back up. For Eagle Marsh there is currently a feasibility report being

developed by the Corps of Engineers looking at alternatives for a permanent fix for Fort Wayne. That report is scheduled to be completed this year.

For the other 17 locations, we're also in the process right now of having the internal draft plan being reviewed and are going to complete the risk characterization in the other locations this year, and that report should be available before the end of this calendar year as well. So that's it. Thank you.

COLONEL BERCZEK: Thank you, Mike. So while we are here today still in the public meeting, in the public scoping period and gathering information, which still is somewhat the beginning part of the process, you've heard discussed already some things have been done, some things have been accomplished, and you see down here on this left side as we're talking about the process itself and now we're into February conducting the 10th of 12 meetings to begin this public scoping period but at the same time looking at all of these other areas.

Mike talked about the Eagle Marsh separation there, talked about the preliminary risk characterization and talked about as well some of the aquatic nuisance species that are out there that ought to be of concern, but at the same time not losing sight

of the fact that the big fish out there is the Asian carp and keeping track on that and learning what others are researching, what others are finding out.

So where are we headed? The schedule you see in front of you right now is a best case scenario, an aggressive schedule to go ahead and conduct a study of this magnitude and this complexity with a draft recommended plan to be put out again for public comment period sometime in the fall of 2014.

You heard a little bit about what Mike was talking about with these other pathways. We were talking about some of the risk characterization reports coming up in the fall of 2011 and looking for those other opportunities that others might have the ability to go ahead and put something into place in the meantime.

This part here, this could be -- you'd think, well, I'm not going to hear anything, I'm not going to see what's going on with this report for the next three years, so we have here some of these interim products that we want to go ahead and cycle out as they're available to help keep informed and help keep the discussion and dialogue current, and you see here some of those types of products.

As we're doing some of the data collections,

some of the research and analysis, some of those may lend themselves to products and reports that could come out that -- to share what we've found and how that's influencing the study. And also again that Other Pathways report down at the bottom that Mike mentioned will be coming out in the fall. Those types of reports will be coming out as well.

It's critical but as we continue down this process that we continue sharing information with you and getting information in return, and so there are methods like today, like the Web site to go ahead and provide your comments and provide input. We're looking to others, you see down there some of the example inputs, to go ahead and inform the GLMRIS study. We are very heavily relying on the collaborations and the expertise and authorities of other agencies and other groups to go ahead and provide and take advantage of what they normally do on a daily basis to help inform this effort.

And again, this is just a schedule of the public meetings other ways to provide input and stay in touch, and you see we're here today. We've got another meeting in New Orleans later this week and then again the reschedule in Ann Arbor, Michigan on the 8th of March.

This just highlights a little bit some of the other means and methods to go ahead and keep in touch through social media and other electronic means. I believe we'll talk a little bit more to those. I'm sorry. Kevin is back up here and I thank you for your time and your attention today. We look forward to your comments and your questions.

MR. BLUHM: Thank you, sir. Well, I just was handed the list of people that have asked to speak. We've got 11 speakers that are on our list, so we've got a very robust group that are going to talk to us, so I appreciate that.

And also before we start the second portion, I'd like to mention to you all, geographically the Corps of Engineers is broken up by different districts. I mentioned in my opening remarks I'm from the St. Paul District. Many of the people on the panel here are from Chicago and down that way.

I want to let you know, though, that actually where we're at today is in the Detroit District. So Milwaukee's part of the Detroit District, and so hosting our district and representing the Detroit District, we've got Mr. Gary O'Keefe, the deputy for project management. Gary's over here and I just want to say thank you for hosting us at your city on the far

side of your district and appreciate your bringing the good weather for us. Our road trip has been plagued with some weather issues from time to time. So thank you, sir.

Okay. So we've got 11 people lined up and I don't want to waste any more time. Before we begin, I want to let you know, though, that the study Web site is a very good source for continued study information. Interested persons can also subscribe to the study's e-mail list through that project Web site, and the Corps will use the e-mail list to distribute any updates on such things as documents that have been added, opportunities for public involvement, and other important news and events. The GLMRIS project Web site can be found on many of the different pieces of information you've been given today as well as the little business card. So keep that in mind if you're looking for more opportunities as time goes on.

And then also as the slide shows and as the colonel was mentioning, we've even got some social media outlets for those that are so inclined, and my son's really good at all that. He's got that little thing going all the time. But anyway, we've got ourselves positioned in many different varieties of formats to find out more about this.

Okay. So now moving into the oral comment period. We -- like I said, I've got a list of 11 here. We'll go through those 11 and then once we're through the list, then we'll give opportunities for others that have changed their mind or decided they'd like to add a comment as well and take as much time as it takes.

In the comment period we want to make sure that you understand that all forms of comment are welcome here and we can all agree to disagree on comments that we hear. We want to mostly make sure it's a friendly and open environment for people to say their piece and to be able to be heard and have equal opportunity.

Please keep in mind we've asked for people to keep their comments to three minutes. If you're asking a question as part of your comment, we'd ask that you manage your time to allow for your comment, question and a response, and then the panelists here will answer any questions that, indeed, are answerable. So we'll give that our best effort here.

And also I just want to let you know too you do not have to get up in front of the crowd here to have your comments heard or weighed in. All forms of comments received during the public comment period are weighted equally.

And then the last thing before we start, kind of in the center here we have a stenographer with us this afternoon. She'll be recording your comments and questions that you have for us. In order to make sure that they are entered correctly, we'd ask that you come to one of the microphones. We've got microphones positioned kind of front and center and then one further back. You can pick either microphone, whatever is the most comfortable for you. We'd ask that you talk into the microphone so it can be picked up and everybody can hear you.

When you start we'd ask that you give your name, any organization or affiliation that you have if you're representing any, and then if you can for statistical reasons, give us your zip code. The zip code would be very helpful. And ask that you remember to speak slowly and take your time to give your questions and comments that you have.

So with that, I've got, like I said, 11 names here, and I'm going to start here with Dianne -- and I'm going to probably not do real good with the last names, and that's part of the reason why we ask you to say your name. So it's Dagelen, and then second up will be Patrick Brennan. So when you're all set, Dianne, you can address the panel.

MS. DAGELEN: Thank you. My name is Dianne Dagelen. I live in Wauwatosa. My zip code is 53226. I'm here as a conservation chair for the Great Waters Group of the Sierra Club. That's the Sierra Club group of the southeastern Wisconsin area.

I'm also here as a member of the board for the sailing club at UWM, of which I'm on the board and an instructor in sailing here on Lake Michigan. I'm also here as a member of the Milwaukee Sea Kayak Group. We see kayaks here in Lake Michigan and also in Lake Superior.

And I -- the idea of Asian carp being hurtling out of the water at me while I'm paddling my kayak because a motor boat happens to zoom on past me, which is not unusual, is quite a harrowing thought that I could be knocked from my kayak or knocked off a sailboat as I'm sailing by.

As someone who cares deeply about the environment, I'm concerned about Asian carp coming into the Great Waters Group -- in the Great Lakes group. Probably you've heard this before, but it's worth mentioning again for many reasons, including the industry here. There's a $7 billion fishing industry here on the Great Lakes annually that would be affected by the Asian carp coming in and cleaning out the

plankton and other things that our local fish feed on. In addition, it's just the water pollution problem in carrying in other hitchhikers that come in to the Great Lakes.

And I don't know if you're familiar with the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and one of its journalists, Dan Egan, who wrote a very comprehensive set of articles this past summer in the Journal regarding possible alternatives and solutions, which included closing down the sanitation canal for Chicago and redirecting their entire sanitation department waterworks so that the wastewater would be purified and returned to Lake Michigan rather than flushed down the sanitation canal into the Mississippi River. And also proposed another alternative of dealing with the barges so that their business would not be lost but rather could be actually enhanced by using the rail system that runs parallel to the canal.

So there are many, many very good alternatives out there, and that's a question that I have for the group here is are you familiar with the articles written by Dan Egan of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. You're nodding yes.

MR. GOSS: Yes.

MS. DAGELEN: And I'm wondering what you

thought of them, what your opinion is of the articles. Did you think they were viable alternatives or did they not carry much water weight?

MR. WETHINGTON: I don't want to comment on Mr. Egan's articles, but basically I just want to kind of point out, the Corps of Engineers, we are the steward of taxpayer dollars and we must be able to follow a process to look at all potential options or control technologies that could be implemented to prevent the transfer of aquatic nuisance species. We don't want to focus on any one single one and predetermine the end of our study.

So the purpose of what we're doing here today and what we're getting input on is to basically look at all the potential -- look at all the ideas we can get to look at all potential control technologies to prevent the transfer of all aquatic nuisance species between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River basins.

MS. DAGELEN: I had to say that I really admire your thoroughness and the way that you approach this, but at the same time I'm a little bit puzzled that it just seems to cry out that this is something that needs ASAP attention pronto. And yet I'm looking at the chart and we're looking at 2015 for a possible -

- just to complete the study.

And I think it's noble that you're being very thorough about this. I don't want to discredit that, but it just seems that balanced against, you know, the loss of a $7 billion annual fishing industry, the public safety in using the waters, so that anyone -- so that people just no longer feel safe to go out on the water and not to mention the pollution problems, I guess it kind of baffles me that if things are going to be taking so long.

COLONEL BERCZEK: Ma'am, I can talk a little bit to that. This study is not causing us to slow down any of our efforts at all in focusing on the Asian carp. We still remain very active as a part of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee. We're continuing to work with the barriers that are in place, working with the other federal agencies and state agencies as far as the monitoring and tracking of the Asian carp, and all those efforts.

Mr. Goss mentioned earlier about the strategic framework, and there are in here within the most recent copy of the document 45 actions being undertaken this calendar year by federal and state agencies to go ahead and look at biologic controls of Asian carp, look at other methods to go ahead and

identify, track and either control or eliminate Asian carp, to include the efforts by Illinois with the harvesting and commercial sale of those fish.

So a lot is still being done specifically related to the Asian carp. The GLMRIS study is looking beyond that, looking at those other nuisance species, and so it's -- I like to say it's to Asian carp and beyond kind of thing. It's looking at all those other things that ought to be considered when we go ahead and look at the healthy ecosystem and the environment. So we are considering all those options and technologies, but again, we're not waiting for this study to perform our actions for today's fight with the Asian carp specifically.

MS. DAGELEN: Okay. Thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you. Next we'll hear from Mr. Brennan. Following will be Lia Montgomery.

MR. BRENNAN: Good afternoon. My name's Patrick Brennan. I'm the sustainability manager for Ingram Barge Company. Ingram is a leading inland water transportation company. We operate a fleet of over 130 tow boats and 4,000 barges on the Mississippi River. We're an active member of the American Waterways Association and we support comments that they have

submitted to your attention earlier.

The Chicago Waterway System is not just an important thoroughfare for water-based transportation around Chicago. It's a critical path for transportation goods on the entire Mississippi River, between that system and the Great Lakes. We appreciate the Corps' willingness to public host meetings about this issue in Milwaukee and other cities around the country.

I will defer to the AWO and our other industry partners on submissions for comments and I just want to highlight a few points. We agree that the Corps' studies should study the range of options and technologies available to prevent spread of aquatic nuisance species between Great Lakes and the Mississippi River basin and the Chicago Sanitary and Shipping Canal and other aquatic pathways. This is an important Congressional mandate and our industry stands by ready to support the Corps in their study process.

In addition, I understand the Corps has identified certain focus areas for its study. Regarding Focus Area I, it seems clear at this point that the electronic barriers now in place in the focus area are doing a good job in dealing with the Asian carp problem. We agree with AWO's position that the Corps

should concentrate on Focus Area II, with certain other pathways that will go around the Chicagoland Area Waterway System, including the dozens of other identified pathways of invasive species.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that the closing of locks between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River system is not a valid option for the economic of the nation. Closing locks, even if not permanent, would cripple and affect the economy. We believe the Corps should look at -- for solutions that protect its mission to navigate -- to maintain navigation while protecting the environment.

Ingram transports millions of tons of cargo to customers with facilities located above and near Chicago, including the O'Brien Lock and the Lockport Lock. In 2009 Ingram transported over 600,000 tons of outbound and inbound points above the O'Brien Lock, including large volumes of ore, coal, steel, scrap metal and other cargoes. The total dollar value of these cargoes is estimated at over 800 million -- or excuse me, $80 million. Additional in 2009, Ingram transported 900,000 tons of cargo with a total value of over 100 million for outbound to inbound ports above the Lockport Lock.

The Chicago canal is an important

thoroughfare for the nation connecting places like Milwaukee to other magnets to New Orleans. Again, thank you for the opportunity to speak today and for holding a public forum meeting in Milwaukee.

MR. BLUHM: Thank you. Next Miss Montgomery and then following her Robert Wincek.

MS. MONTGOMERY: Lia Montgomery from Algoma, 54201. I don't want you to leave Wisconsin without something. So it's not an autographed picture of Aaron Rogers but -- or a team photo. But no, seriously, I wanted to say thank you. I know this is tough. But I just so appreciate President Obama's leadership and your leadership in this, and I don't want you to leave without knowing how much this means to all of us and to the Great Lakes.

Just one comment real quick. Have you seen the short video, The Fork In the River, Metropolitan Planning Council? I saw it this morning and it's great. It's the first positive thing I've seen out of Chicago yet, and in it it says a great description of what's going on and what can happen really basic, but it says at the end for separation to work, we would need to vastly improve water treatment standards -- sounds like a great idea -- manage most of our rainwater where it falls -- sounds like a great idea --

move our water and boats in a new way, deal with Asian carp now, and whatever invasives come next.

Then it says can we do it? And it says yes. That simple. Can we do it? Yes. We built it; we can redo it. Wow, you know, 1900, $31 million back then. They didn't do a study like this to do that amazing Chicago thing. They did it. So here in this video they're saying can we do it. Yes. But then they say the question is should we do it, and that's how the video ends.

And, you know, we need leadership on this issue. We really need leadership. If back in 1900 if the people or -- you know, barges or any other industries were commissioned to find out whether it was appropriate or not to change the water -- waterways back then, I'm sure most people would say, have said at the time, "$31 million? It's going to cost $31 million? No, just let our sewage go in the lake." Okay. Figure it out or whatever.

So leadership is really important right now and I am just going to hope that you continue to think big, think really big about this, and let's look at the future in a whole new way. I understand there's barges and all kinds of industry, but to work on this project in the future, talk about jobs, talk about the kind of

future we could leave our children if we just do this thing the right way.

So again, videos like this, changing the attitude of people, getting them to realize that we can do this, we can do it. So we just need leadership, and I really appreciate what you've been doing and I thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Thank you. Okay. Next Mr. Wincek and then following will be Todd Pollesch.

MR. WINCEK: Thank you. I'm Robert Wincek, board member, Great Lakes Sport Fishermen Milwaukee chapter. Great Lakes Sport Fisherman support the salmon rite fishery up and down the shores of Lake Michigan, both on this side and on the Michigan side. Our hobby is to fish for salmon and trout, and like I say, we have chapters on both sides of the lake. So we want to keep the salmon fishery going. We do everything we can to help the salmon fishery. At the same time we add quite bit of money to the economy. We have tournaments.

We have a -- I represent 200 members just in the Milwaukee chapter, and we buy a lot of sporting goods, and when we look at things, we're here addressing the carp. If the carp get into the lake, the salmon rite fishery will be gone. I've got some

friends that used to fish walleyes in the Illinois River. That's gone. If it ever gets reclaimed, I guess that would be something to see. It would be nice but it's not there anymore and the impact has been felt.

When I start looking at the Great Lakes sport fishery, we're looking at millions of dollars just on the sport fishery itself, but then in the residuals we also have the Pittman Robertson Act where a portion of all sporting goods sales gets siphoned off to go back into the environment and back into outdoor recreational activities, so that becomes an important thing.

One of the things -- you've heard a lot of comments. I just want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to make the comments. One of the things that is pressing at this time is this morning President Obama made a budget presentation and he's proposing to cut $50 million plus out of the Great Lakes restoration budget. It doesn't say if it's going to affect your efforts or not, but when I say here Great Lakes restoration effort, it becomes important to me because this is my hobby. This is something I want to leave to my kids and the people, you know, the people of Wisconsin, people of America. I do everything I can to improve it and hopefully we can keep it going that way.

The other thing I heard is that you're looking for input to help, and you mentioned the USFS; you mentioned NOAA. I fished in Milwaukee now for over 30 years. I've never seen a NOAA person. I've never seen a USFS person. I've seen the DNR. We work very, very closely with the DNR. We would just like to be part of that effort. You know, we've got, like I say, clubs up and down the shores on both sides. We'd like to be part of the solution to eradicate the carp problem permanently.

One thing that I will say I retired from the phone company after 30 years, and when I worked at the phone company we had one thing to say, and that is if you want to think about something a long time, you give the project to somebody from AT&T or the government because they'll study it to death. Well, in this case we want to study it to death. We want to have death but we want to bypass the long study period.

MR. GOSS: That's a pretty good line.

MR. WINCEK: Thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Thank you. Next Mr. Pollesch and then following will be Thomas Slawski.

MR. POLLESCH: Hi. My name is Todd Pollesch. I am the sport fishing adviser for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission. As a charter captain and adviser

for the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, I have seen what invasive species do to the ecosystem on a daily basis. We cannot afford to let even one more invader drastically affect the ecosystem like sea lampreys, Dreissenid mussels and allies have done.

While the Corps studies, mine and other businesses are at risk because Asian carp is at the doorstep and could wipe out the desirable sport commercial fisheries and native species. The establishment of the Asian carp could cause great economic impact to the Great Lakes commercial, tribal, sport fisheries, to date valued at more than $7 billion, which I'm sure you've heard quite a bit.

Reduced abundance of native fisheries will result in reduced harvest by sport and commercial fisheries. Reduced harvest will cause reduction in quality and economic impact on those whose livelihood depends on sport and commercial fisheries.

The Great Lakes food web has been significantly degraded in recent decades by aquatic invasive species. The migration of Asian carp through the Chicago Area Waterway System, Wabash River, Grand Calumet River and possibly other pathways that connect to the Great Lakes to this outside world is the most acute AIS threat facing the Great Lakes today. Asian

carp will affect the entire ecosystem, and if they become established at nuisance levels, it will feed on plankton, the base of the food web.

Six ballast water bills have been brought to Congress and they refused to act on any of them. We need Congress to pass ballast water legislation to the U.S. and Canadian Great Lakes. Federal district courts have ruled that the states have the right to protect their waters. After 30 years New York passed legislation, ballast bill in the country, tested in court three times, goes into effect January 2012, which no ship can pass without ballast water being treated.

I look -- you also need to look at lakers within the Great Lakes to not spread the AIS. We need the other states to also pass strict ballast water legislation. Lawsuits pushed by the states that have not proven concerns and the federal judge won't move on any of the lawsuits. Time is of the essence. We don't have time to wait. It is a study with all haste and anything can happen in eight years.

If you look at what's happened with the quagga mussels out here in the last two years, they've completely bloomed. Two years, no more zebra mussels, all quaggas, and now spreading basically all over.

The Great Lakes Fishery Commission is

concerned that the Corps study will be protracted and the separation will be delayed and authorizations and appropriations for the recommended project wind their way through the legislative process. The Great Lakes cannot wait. Ecological and hydrological separation through CAWS is the only way to acceptably reduce the risk of invasive species transfer between the basins. This is not rocket science. Action now is necessary. We need hydrological and ecological separation from the Great Lakes.

We urge you to clearly express to the end of the objective is ecological separation and not to reduce the risk or to try and achieve separation while maintaining the status quo. The goal must be ecological separation.

In 2015, the end of the study, when will it be implemented and how many more years will it take after that? There are a lot of people that rely on the lake not only for commercial and fishing, but the ballast water and the AIS has got to be stopped. It's time that Congress, legislators all come up and take care of this problem. It's been way too long. So thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Thank you. Oh, sir, could we get your zip code?

MR. POLLESCH: 53224.

MR. BLUHM: Thank you. Okay. Next we have Mr., is it Slawski?

MR. SLAWSKI: Yeah, that's good.

MR. BLUHM: And then following will be Marcello Covelli.

MR. SLAWSKI: My name is Tom Slawski and I -- my zip code is 53151, and I've been asked to provide some comments on behalf of the Wisconsin Chapter of American Fisheries Society. I am currently the chair of the environmental issues committee, and so I have a statement that I'd like to provide.

As I've listened to the comments today and looked over all the materials as provided by the Army Corps of Engineers, I'd just like to state that I believe the task as proposed in this Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study will not address the real issues of public health and safety, protection of jobs and the economy necessary to solve the problem.

And we understand that the Chicago and Sanitary Ship Canal is intimately linked with the lives and livelihoods of the Chicago metropolitan area in terms of economics as well as public health and safety issues such as flooding, stormwater and wastewater treatment. Therefore, we recommend that the following

specific tasks be addressed as part of the proposed Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study in order to achieve the ultimate long-term goal of the ecological separation of the Mississippi River basin and the Great Lakes Basin, which we feel is really the only solution, the only long-term viable solution, monetarily and ecologically.

The bottom line is we can never know the end of the potential invasive species nor can we ever protect for pathways that we don't know about, and so from a long term feasibility, that is truly the only long-term solution that we feel is appropriate.

But in order to succeed, we need to consider the separation of the Great Lakes and Mississippi basins farther downstream from the existing lock and sluice gates along the Chicago Area Waterway System, or the CAWS, probably somewhere near the south branch of the Chicago River. This will allow continued access of all the tourist boats in the lakefront and downtown area. Small boats or yachts could feasibly be lifted over the divide between the basins of the south branch. The commercial traffic could then be redirected to the Calumet harbor area where an intermodal transfer station or terminal could be developed to allow cargo transfer and redistribution across the physical

separation between the Great Lakes and Mississippi basins.

Second, develop plans with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District to expand the deep tunnel or reservoir capacity and other measures necessary to control flooding.

Third, develop plans with the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District to address necessary operating and construction changes to address stormwater and wastewater treatment plant improvements to meet Lake Michigan water quality standards.

And fourth, develop plans to reroute shipping commerce to the Calumet harbor area to address the economic impacts associated with the separation of the basins.

These actions should be geared toward preservation of jobs and businesses and infrastructure to protect the local economy. In addition, these plans should include elements such as expanding fleeting areas for barges, regulations, tourism, transportation safety, and security, among others as necessary. We feel that the focus on these elements will actually provide answers necessary and the real dollars it's going to take to make these changes.

The environmental impacts are important, but

the real only problem is the chronic open sore which is that connection between the basins. We sever that, we sever the need to continue to focus on and try to continue to spend all our time and efforts battling species that time and again have been shown to be impossible to remove from our systems. Thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you. Next Mr. Covelli and then following Mark Hasenberg.

MR. COVELLI: My name is Marcello Covelli. I am -- my zip code is 53140, Kenosha, Wisconsin. I'm the president of the Wisconsin Federation of the Great Lakes Sport Fishery Clubs, and just to reiterate what the environmental man, gentleman just said, I think he's got the right idea, and Bob and Todd, the other sport fishing clubs. I don't want to beat it over the head. We're all pretty much on the same page of what's going on.

I've been a fisherman and a conservationist for the last 25 years, 30 years of my life, and I heard the gentleman talking about the barges. He mentioned $80 million, a hundred million dollars. According to what we have in our -- in our numbers as the fishery impact -- fishing impacts on the sport fishermen, we've got $2.3 billion that people are spending between boats, you know, fishing poles, fishing lures,

commercial fishermen. Like I said, we're at 2.3 billion. So it isn't a hundred eighty million. There's got to be a better way of doing things.

And you're right, this problem is a lot worse than what I expected. We were just thinking about just the locks down there in Chicago Harbor there. When you start talking 36 potential sites and 18 of them are really dangerous, it really strikes a chord, and I hope you guys can at least listen to what everybody's saying, especially the environmental guy. I think he's got the right idea. If we have to put some locks up. What about a bounty on the fish? Even at 50 cents a fish. We need money, people need money. They've got to do something. With the money that we're spending, I'm sure we could figure out something. Thank you very much.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you. Next we'll hear from Mr. Hasenberg and then following Cliff Dukowitz.

MR. HASENBERG: My name is Mark Hasenberg. Zip code 53140. I'm from Kenosha, Wisconsin. I represent the Kenosha Sport Fishing and Conservation Association, and pretty much of what I had to say has been already been said and said rather well.

The two things that I don't think have been

covered well enough are the economic impact of this. Potentially the invasion of Asian carp could annihilate the entire fishery in all of the Great Lakes. Nobody really seems to be that concerned about it, and it kind of scares me when I look at a study that is going to take five years and probably another five years to implement it.

I am very familiar with some of the problems they've had with the electronic barrier, and it is my understanding that there have been cases where it's been totally shut off. If that type of thing is going to continue, it is not a temporary solution. All it would take is a matter of a short time for a number of fish to follow a barge through when the barriers are off and it's a whole new ballgame.

When you look at the effect on the Great Lakes, we are talking well over $6 billion just connected with tourism, sport fishing and commercial fishing. Regardless of what it costs to fix the problems in Chicago, I think there's no way they are ever going to reach a number that is anywhere near that. And we have solved other major transportation problems. I don't see this as a gigantic one. Thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you. Next we'll

hear from Mr. Dukowitz and then following will be John Kindra.

MR. DUKOWITZ: About everything I had in mind -- my name is Cliff Dukowitz. I'm sorry. 53168. About everything I had planned on saying here has been covered already. One of my concerns is why does it take so many years for the bilges to be blown out in the ocean instead of in the Great Lakes. They're responsible for mostly all zebra mussels and so on and so forth. Okay. I guess everything I had in mind has been covered. I won't take up much time. Thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you. Next is Mr. Kindra and then following Angelo Trentadue.

MR. KINDRA: Thank you. John Kindra. My zip code is 60617. I'm the owner of Kindra Lake Towing. We're a tugboat operation in Chicago, and also I speak for the Illinois River Carriers Association, which is an operational group of barge operators on the Illinois River.

We have about 20 employees and six tow boats that operate in Chicago. Our business operations is to move barges that come up from New Orleans, St. Louis and Pittsburgh that go across the electrical barrier in Lockport and they come into Lemont and then up into south Chicago where we take them across to all the

steel mills and docks in northern Indiana. Some of the barges come here to Milwaukee. Some of them go up to Marinette and Menominee. So Wisconsin is a beneficiary of some of this barge transportation.

One of the things that when you do this study, I know that you're going to address Asian carp. That's obvious, but there's also other issues. There's an area that's called the Focus Group II, and that's everything not including the CAWS Focus Area I. That's very important that you look at that. Chicago's not the only pathway for these fish to get in there.

I also think that it's really important in your study that as the study's taking place over the multiple years, that you engage the industry, our industry, the barge industry. There's a big component of the waterways. We use it and therefore will be affected by it.

I like the Corps of Engineers' description of risk reduction as the most logical, practical and realistic way to evaluate the appropriate actions that you're going to be considering for this study.

We've heard a lot of people say that we need physical separation and we need to do something with Asian carp. I want the study to be -- and our industry wants the study, I'm sure the public does -- to be an

independent study that's not driven to a conclusion, that you guys do your work and the answer's the answer. We don't want a foregone conclusion like someone spoke earlier and said that the conclusion has to be physical separation.

Physical separation is -- I don't believe that's the answer at all. This isn't a regional problem. It's a national problem. If we have physical separation, we're going to affect the economy of Illinois and that will affect Wisconsin. That will affect the Great Lakes states. This is not a small issue. It's difficult. I don't want to be in your shoes, that's for sure.

Finally, why does Attachment F under the navigation section include recreational and navigation benefits but it does not include commercial navigation benefits? So that's a question. I'd like you to review that and just if you know the answer.

MR. WETHINGTON: Can you please verify Attachment F on what document?

MR. KINDRA: I will. I'll have to get that to you. In closing, I would like to state that the Port of Indiana did a study and the -- that study with the barge transportation in northwest Indiana account for 17,000 jobs in northwest Indiana and over $3

billion in economic activity. Now, there's all kinds of numbers being floated around and I've heard just here today there's 3.2 billion for the fishermen, 6 billion and 7 billion. I don't know what it is.

I think it's your job that you men need to find out what that number is, both for the sports fishermen, for the barging, for the recreational. These numbers have to be known. All decisions are going to be based on economics. Thanks a lot.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you. Our last speaker is Mr. Trentadue.

MR. TRENTADUE: Hi. My name's Angelo Trentadue from Racine, Wisconsin. 53405. I'm a charter captain, member of Port of Racine Charter Captains, Fishing Charters of Racine, Fishermen Yacht Club, Salmon Unlimited. I have first a question. The barrier was put into effect in 2002, it became operational? Is that correct? That was in your paper anyhow.

COLONEL BERCZEK: Yes, sir.

MR. TRENTADUE: And then how many years did it take before -- from when you started it till when you implemented it and put it in operation?

MR. WETHINGTON: If I remember correctly, sir, it was 2002 is when the first barrier went in

operation and it was 2009 when the second one.

MR. TRENTADUE: When did they start building the first barrier?

COLONEL BERCZEK: I'd have to through my notes again, sir, but I think that barrier came about as legislation in 1996 to go ahead and look at the demonstration barrier. And then we went -- we had the -- there was an advisory panel that looked at technologies, looked at what was out there that could be brought into play, and I believe it was about a three- to four-year process of them getting that in and getting it built and operational.

MR. TRENTADUE: Right. So it took the Corps quite a few years before they were able to get it in operation. We have lake water that's leaving through the ship canal. We have the Corps also doing the dredging, which we're having problems with that they say we're getting more and more water is leaving, and the last study I saw was where the lake water is down and that could affect us also.

So by total separation, that would take care of a couple of those problems, and the Corps hasn't been too quick about getting anything done, and I sure hope that you were -- would be able to get moving a lot faster. And that's all I have to say. Thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you.

COLONEL BERCZEK: Yes. One thing, sir, I do want to mention I do have here. It was the National Invasive Species Act of 1996 that authorized the demonstration barrier.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Well, that concludes the 11 people that had indicated when they arrived that they'd like to submit oral comments to us. At this time I'd like to ask if there's anybody else in the audience that has not had a chance to address the panel, if they would now like to do so, please come to the microphone. Go ahead, sir. If you want to start with your name and information, that would be most helpful.

MR. KAMERLING: My name is Garrett Kamerling and 53217. I don't represent a large group as many have already and very effectively, but I have a modest 20-foot sailboat in McKinley Marina, and so officially maybe I represent the thousands and thousands of recreational boaters on Lake Michigan.

And judging by my checkbook, there's a considerable economic impact there, both here and in Michigan. We have an incredible treasure in this great fresh water lake and I hope that everything can be done to protect it most expeditiously before it's too late.

I know a number of comments have been made regarding the electric barrier. I had some engineering background. I'm wondering whether that was very poorly designed or it's just not operated correctly, but we need some kind of a barrier that will protect the lake. I don't want to -- some carp to jump up and push one of my little grandsons off my sailboat while I'm out there either, but there are many reasons to protect the lake and thanks for the opportunity to speak.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you, sir. Anybody else that would like to take an opportunity to address the panel and give us an oral comment? This would be the time to raise your hand or approach the microphone.

Seeing no activity that way, I'll ask then anybody that has already made a comment, a statement for us today, if you would like to have a second opportunity to come to the microphone, now would be the time to do so. Yes.

MR. POLLESCH: Todd Pollesch. 53224. I've got a couple of questions. As far as the Eagle Marsh and the Maumee River there, have they found Asian carp in the Maumee River and do they believe that the Maumee River could be the other and the second one as I saw what you were showing that the Eagle Marsh was one of

the worst ones or another potential --

MR. SAFFRAN: I guess the first question is have there been any Asian carp found in the Maumee River or any evidence and the answer to that is no. The Ohio DNR recently did eDNA sampling in the past fall in the Maumee, in the St. Joseph's and in the St. Mary's watersheds. So those have all been checked out.

There was also the Indiana DNR did eDNA sampling this past fall in Eagle Marsh itself. I'll start over again. The Ohio DNR has done eDNA sampling and analysis this past fall in the St. Mary's, St. Joseph's and Maumee River and -- well, in the St. Mary's and in the Maumee. The Michigan DNR has done eDNA sampling in the St. Joseph's River, and the Indiana DNR has done eDNA sampling in Eagle Marsh itself as well as to the west in the Wabash basin this past fall. All of those samples have turned out negative, no positive detections of Asian carp.

Now, below the Roush Dam, which is in Huntington about 22 miles to the west of Fort Wayne, Asian carp have been collected in the past. This past fall water levels were very low, so it's believed that the carp actually migrated farther downstream because of low water levels. So there's plans for additional sampling to occur this spring when the water levels are

starting to come back up again.

You had another question I forgot. Eagle Marsh -- well, the concern I guess with that location is that the Maumee River and Lake Erie are considered to be very suitable habitat potentially for Asian carp establishment. So again, that's another reason why there's a strong concern there to keep them from having the opportunity to even access that area.

MR. POLLESCH: I have another question. With the Canadian government, have you guys had much talk with them? I see that in the last week or so that basically they're coming on board here with this and is there any dialogue that you guys have had with that?

MR. GOSS: Yeah, I think there's no doubt that the Canadian government is very committed to working on the Asian carp threat and very, very closely watching what we're going to be doing on the other invasive species. The Ontario fisheries budget this year has about $500,000 for this appropriation.

So as we know, putting money in is a commitment, which is great, and also they have been working closely with the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission as a partner and it will -- it will be a very organized effort. They had a meeting with probably about 50 people in Detroit a few weeks ago,

and they have all the right scientists doing their different assignments this year to do that risk assessment all the way around the Great Lakes. So I think we're going to know a whole lot more by the end of this year with the help of the Canadians but also thanks to the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission.

MR. POLLESCH: The only other thing, I'd just like to urge Congress again to, you know, keep you guys funded here, and like I said, I won't repeat myself again but haste is no waste. Thank you.

MR. GOSS: Todd, I can address the funding thing very quickly. The president's budget that was just announced for 2012 would put 350 million in the Great Lakes Restoration Fund and that should keep us at the level of carp fighting projects and the GLMRIS study project funded. So if the president's budget stands for 2012, there should be no reduction and we should be able to continue everything.

We're still at the mercy of Congress for the rest of 2011. We've been operating at the levels we had in the 2010 budget. We still don't have an answer on that. If you get a chance to speak to your congressman, tell him we need that resolved ASAP. Thanks.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Anybody else that

would like to comment? Yes, go ahead.

MR. DUKOWITZ: Cliff Dukowitz, Kenosha Charter Boat Association. I just wanted to say who I represented here today. Thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you. Okay. Anybody else that would like to comment? Yes, sir.

MR. GOSS: Let me volunteer one more information piece. A couple of people mentioned ballast water, which is obviously very significant and closely related to these projects that we're dealing with but is not part of this study that we're talking about today.

The schedule for the Coast Guard to bring forward the draft rule is for May or June to have the federal draft rule out for public comment. So this summer there will be significant discussion about the rest of the story on ballast water and hopefully we'll make progress on cutting off what we know to be the source of many, if not most, of our aquatic invasive species. Thanks.

MR. BLUHM: Okay. I had a hand here. Come on up to the microphone when you're ready.

MR. HAMILTON: Thank you. Doug Hamilton. I'm representing SHOWS. We are a -- zip code is 53070. SHOWS is a group of shoreline property owners between

Port Washington and Sheboygan, seasonal and year-round residents. We live right on Lake Michigan, and in Lake Michigan we enjoy swimming, fishing, power boating, sailboating, water-skiing and other water sports. The potential of the Asian carp coming into the lake and the impact that the Asian carp might have on those activities could affect property values, and within Sheboygan County and Ozaukee County we pay a good portion of the property taxes because of the value of those properties on the lake. The introduction of carp into the lake could reduce those property values and decrease tax revenue in that area.

And I think if you extrapolate and take that all around Lake Michigan and all the Great Lakes, I would ask that you study the impact of tax revenue, the carp would have on property tax revenue if they're introduced into the lake. Another point would be once the carp are in the lake, what effect are they going to have on the upstream rivers, Milwaukee River, Sheboygan River where the salmon breed and all the other aquatic creatures in those rivers. Thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Thank you.

MR. GOSS: We know those impacts are going to be looked at very closely and certainly there is expected to be significant impact on the tributaries

and spawning grounds for our other fish. So that will be a key part of the analysis.

MR. BLUHM: Anybody else? Yes, a hand here.

MR. TRENTADUE: Angelo Trentadue, 53405. I just want to again stress that we need to go quick, very quick. We've had an invasive species problem going on on Lake Michigan from when, the fifties, sixties, seventies? If this is how our government works in the past, we can only expect you guys to do the same, and I hope you really go a lot quicker. Thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you. Yes, go ahead.

MS. FRANK: Barbara Frank, 53092, Green Tree Garden Club. A question, what can you tell us about the documented effects of the Asian carp in the Mississippi River and coming up to Lake Michigan so far?

MR. GOSS: I'll start. We may get some help on this. Commercial fishermen tell us that there are several areas of the Mississippi where the only fish they can catch are Asian carp. I know in southern Indiana in the Wabash in the last five to seven years that the population of other fish has been greatly diminished because of Asian carp.

Just one anecdotal story from a farmer who is a friend who floods his fields for duck hunting along the Wabash told me that in the last two years there's only one species of fish that are coming in when he opens up to the river to let water into his areas to intentionally flood them. They're all silver carp, and in the past there's been at least a half dozen of the regular native fish there and he's not seeing native fish.

So it happens pretty quickly. Their concentration is moving up the Ohio system. We know that they're all the way to Pennsylvania. We know that they are moving to the west through the Missouri and they're coming up the Mississippi into Wisconsin waters and Minnesota waters in the future if we do not find ways to slow them down.

So part of the benefit of this investment in the carp weapon development is coming up with ways to reduce those populations in all of our rivers where we already have a significant problem.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you. Anybody else? We've still got a couple more hands. Go ahead.

MR. WINCEK: Bob Wincek, 53146, Great Lakes Sport Fishermen Club. Just a quick question. We've listened to a lot of things, cutting off, separating

the water, hydrologic separation, so forth.

Has anyone gone to the University of Wisconsin-Madison and asked our genetic companies, our engineers, the scholars, what do they think about the situation? Is there something that could be done genetically to, A, keep them from breeding; B, make them go away? I've seen nothing that anyone's even brought the question up, so I leave it with you.

MR. GOSS: USGS has 10 or 12 research projects along that line, biological, genetic and other ways that we hope we can slow down the carp breeding population by reproductive interference, possibly things that would cause them to not digest food properly or otherwise, and slow them down.

So there are several different studies that are underway. Most of them are led by USGS scientists but they are also including academic folks as partners in many of those studies. And that is approximately six or eight million dollars of each year of the carp money is going towards those kind of research projects.

MR. WINCEK: I only bring that up because University of Wisconsin-Madison leads the nation in obtaining licenses and so forth. So thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Thank you. And another hand over here? Yes, sir.

MR. KOZAR: My name is Jerry Kozar and it's 53045, and I'm here as a Great Lakes sport fisherman, which I love and have been doing since '76, before that in Lake Superior.

And I just want to end with a sort of anecdote and it sort of rings home on what we've been talking about on how critical it is to make decisions and do them fast. It's like what starts with an engagement ring, the wedding ring and then the suffering, and if this is not done, we're going to be doing a lot of suffering all our lives. So that's what I want you to remember, stop the suffering.

MR. BLUHM: That is a first at this meeting, sir. Very good. At this point we've heard from 19 speakers at the microphone. Would anybody care to be number 20? Okay. Last call. It's 3:45. Any last opportunity to come to the microphone and make an oral presentation or comment? Yes, go ahead.

MS MONTGOMERY: Lia Montgomery from Algoma. Mr. Kindra got up and talked about barge traffic and all that, and I do remember in that short video I was just mentioning that they said one barge actually replaces 80 truckloads maybe, somewhere around that, and how environmentally conscious or friendly that was to take by barge instead of those trucks.

But I'm wondering in your study, if that becomes the future where we no longer see our Great Lakes and our waterways as a highway and we do put these salt and coal and everything else that's being used on these barges in trucks, I see that as 80 jobs per barge. If you've got -- if you're no longer putting this material on barges and you're putting it in trucks, I'm sure you're adding more gas or emissions into the air, but isn't that going to be a beneficial factor in terms of jobs? And is there always just way to look at this whole barge industry? It's -- you know, there might be something better by just changing the way we've been doing business.

MR. WETHINGTON: Thanks for your comment. I'm not going to kind of influence my own personal thoughts on air pollution or whatever else, but essentially the purpose of the study will be to look at the economic, environmental and social impacts of what these changes to the waterway uses will be. And so what you're getting at, it will be addressed in this study, and so that's pretty much the answer, it will be addressed as part of the study.

MR. BLUHM: Next? One more.

MS. NENN: Hello. Good afternoon. My name is Cheryl Nenn, N-E-N-N, and I work with a group called

Milwaukee River Keeper. We're 1845 North Farwell in Milwaukee, 53202. We -- our mission is essentially to protect the water quality and wildlife habitat of the Milwaukee, Menominee, Kinnickinnic River watersheds. We're very concerned about potential impacts from the carp on our rivers. I don't think that anyone's saluting themselves that if they get into the lake, they're going to be up in the Root River and the Milwaukee River in short order. I think there's some questions about how viable the Asian carp will be in the lake themselves but we know that the rivers will be a very suitable habitat for them.

Our rivers already have grass carp, have a lot of challenges, and so we're clearly worried about the impacts of the carp on our native fisheries here in Milwaukee, as well as our recreation and our quality of life. We also have a motor boat downtown that we use to patrol and to do water monitoring. Clearly we concerned about impacts of the carp on motorized recreation as well and also on paddlers that use the river system.

And we'd just really encourage you to fast track the study if at all possible. We're very concerned about how long the process has been taking. Clearly it's a very complicated issue and it's very

clear that there's going to be no easy solutions, but I really do think that we need to come up with faster short-term and long-term measures to ecologically separate the Great Lakes and the Mississippi basins, not only because we're worried about the carp getting into the lake but conversely a lot of the invasives. I think the estimate's now we're getting a new invasive every eight months into the lakes, you know, from the St. Lawrence and that system.

So clearly I think ecological separation is in the best interests of both the Mississippi and the Great Lakes Basin and we would just encourage you to fast track this study as quickly as possible and get some real solutions in place. Thank you.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you. Okay. We've got 21. Anybody want to be 22? Last call. Well, we've had just a shade over one hour of testimony that we've heard this afternoon and I want to thank you all for the comments.

Let me remind you if you have any prepared statements or documents for us, be sure to turn them in with myself or at the front table here before you leave. And keep in mind if you have any written statements, any additional comments you want to put on our comment form, those can be submitted to us via e-

mail through our Web site. We've got some computers set up in the back of the room. If you'd like to jot that down on that right now, that would be fine. Otherwise this form and any other form of communication you have for us needs to be turned in by March 31st, 2011 to be considered as part of the scoping process. Anything on our Web site does help connect you to the process that we're working on.

And then lastly, I'd like to mention that if you wouldn't mind helping us recycle our materials. If anything you've been given today is excess, you do not need it any longer, you can leave it on your chair or leave it on the table as you depart and we'll be glad to recycle that.

If you need more copies or additional packets of information, we'll also supply them to you as well. Just go to the back table and we'll give you as many extra copies that you need for anybody that may not have had a chance to make it here today.

And then lastly, I'd like to mention that our evening meeting will start at 5:30 sharp and that will be a duplicate presentation of what you just saw. Anybody that's here is welcome to sit for that as well as the comment period that follows that.

With that said, the time is now 3:50 and

we'll adjourn this session. Thank you so much for your time and have a safe trip home. Thank you.

(Recess taken.)

(Second Public Scoping meeting begins.)

MR. BLUHM: It's 5:30 and we will begin. Good evening and welcome everybody. My name is Kevin Bluhm. I am the facilitator for tonight's meeting. I come from the St. Paul District Corps Office and thank you all for attending our meeting.

This evening's meeting is our tenth meeting for the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study, otherwise known as the GLMRIS study, and this is serving as a NEPA public scoping meeting.

I just want to let you know, the materials that you received when you arrived, this is a picture that shows what they are. If you don't have the packet and would like to get a packet, just raise your hand and we'll make sure that we get one to you, and I'll just take a couple seconds to go through what's in that.

The green half sheet is the agenda. This is the same agenda we followed at all the other meetings as well as earlier today. The quarter size sheet as well as the little booklet are very good informational pieces that tell you a little bit about the study

overview as well as details of our schedule here.

The half sheet of paper, the white piece here is the most important part regarding our scoping period. I want to make sure that everybody understands that this is designed to allow you to write down any comments you have on the inside or on the back. There's plenty of room, as well as you can supplement this at any time. Just know that any comments that you want to mail in to us need to be to us by March the 31st.

A few other of the full size sheets, the purple sheet here talks about some of the frequently asked questions along with their answers. The salmon-colored sheet here has information about other efforts that are going on and you'll hear more about that in our presentation to follow.

And then the yellow sheet is designed to help us if you're interested in making an oral presentation to the board here tonight, and then the blue sheet of paper is designed to help us if you wish to submit documents for record. This will help put the documents in the proper order. And then lastly we've got a copy of all the slides that we'll be showing from the Corps of Engineers tonight. So these are materials that are yours to take with you.

Our GLMRIS team has organized this public meeting to accomplish two goals for you. Our first goal is to present information about the study itself, and then secondly, we want to be able to solicit your comments on the significant issues that should be included in GLMRIS and then those other issues that are insignificant that can be eliminated from further study.

The Corps is holding 12 of these such meetings throughout the study area in an effort to provide opportunities for those interested in the study to learn more about the study itself and to provide your oral comments. Again, please note the NEPA public scoping period closes on March the 31st, 2011.

As indicated on the agenda, this public meeting is organized in two sessions. The session this afternoon was identical with the same presentation followed by an oral comment period. The first meeting started at 2:00 o'clock today and ended just shortly before 4:00 o'clock. Our meeting starting now at 5:30 will conclude after we've heard from the last persons interested in making oral comments to us.

If you have any concerns or questions, staff will be able to be addressed individually after the meeting itself in the lobby or in the room here. Just

keep in mind any conversations you have with panelists or staff members while the meeting is not in session will not be recorded as part of the public comment period. So if you have things that you want to make sure are included in our scoping process, it would be important to write those down and submit them officially or use the microphone during the meeting before it's adjourned so those can be part of our NEPA documentation.

I'd like to now introduce our panel members. Starting at the table here on my left, first person closest to me is Mr. John Goss. He is the Asian carp director for the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Next to him is Lieutenant Colonel David Berczek. He is the deputy commander of the Chicago District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Next to him, Dave Wethington. Dave is the GLMRIS project manager. And on the far side of the table Mr. Mike Saffran. Mike is the Other Pathways project manager, and you'll hear from each one of these gentlemen as soon as I'm done and they have a chance to speak.

So with that, I'd like to turn the meeting over to Mr. Goss and he can begin his presentation on this portion of the meeting. Thank you.

MR. GOSS: Thanks, Kevin, and thanks for each

of you for taking some time to join us tonight. Hopefully it's going to be educational for you and if you have thoughts and comments about this process, that's why we're here, and we want you to talk to us about those ideas or concerns that you have on the front end of this project.

This is a really important effort that is part of a coordinated effort from federal agencies, state agencies and local organizations, primarily to stop the Asian carp but the additional benefit is that this Great Lakes

Mississippi River Interbasin Study is hopefully going to provide us with a permanent solution to the ongoing problem we have: Wave after wave of invasive species invasions in the Great Lakes.

I am working for the White House Environmental Policy Office. It's called the Council on Environmental Quality, and my job is to coordinate all the resources and get everybody doing what they do well, and that includes getting organizations around the Great Lakes involved in this discussion, getting business people who have interests to be involved, getting conservation and environmental groups and recreational boaters and sport fishermen and all of the groups that are going to see an impact from -- if we

have another invasive species problem like Asian carp, what's going to happen to our lake.

I want to tell you that there are interim measures in the Chicago area that are working, in the Chicago Ship Canal, which is the biggest concern area that we'll be talking a lot about tonight. The electric barriers are stopping carp from coming on up the Illinois River toward Lake Michigan. We have now redundant electric barriers there that are functioning and also some other things have been done recently to help make sure that carp are not invading the barrier.

There's a new fish fence along the Ship Canal for 13 miles in areas where there have been some flooding in the past, and so carp that might be in the Des Plaines River that runs parallel to the Ship Canal might have been able to escape, get around the barrier and get into the Ship Canal and into the lakes, that's been stopped. And I want to thank the Corps for identifying that, getting that project funded and completed, actually underbudget and ahead of schedule.

Some other things that have happened recently, Congress passed the Lacey Act Amendment to include a ban on the transport of live Asian carp anywhere in the United States. That's going help us make sure that no one is actively moving carp around.

It's going to be a federal offense or it is a federal offense effective now.

Also there's some risk assessments that are being conducted. The Canadian government is working with the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission to look at what they project to be the actual threat of Asian carp to the Great Lakes, including Canadian waters, looking at what is likely to happen if we should have an outbreak of Asian carp, and we'll have that study coming in about a year. So I think that's going to be helpful to us to look at specific things that we need to be concerned about around the Great Lakes or points that might be particularly attractive to Asian carp that we need to monitor very carefully and make sure they're not establishing a population in those areas.

Also in the area between the barriers and the Lake Michigan area we're going to continue what's been going on for the past two years, which is very aggressive monitoring. We've got fish biologists from the Fish and Wildlife Service, Corps of Engineers, Illinois Department of Natural Resources out there basically every day doing water sampling for DNA, traces of DNA from carp, electrofishing, netting, identifying fish.

And, in fact, this fall in a six- or eight-

week period, they did net and identify over 10,000 fish in that area and found no Asian carp. So the guys that know how to look for fish are not able to find Asian carp there.

Commercial fishermen have also been used both above the barrier with their large net techniques. They haven't been finding any Asian carp. Below the barrier there are a lot of Asian carp in the Illinois River. Commercial fishing has taken out over a hundred thousand pounds this past fall and they have a goal of taking out over a million pounds in 2011. So we're hoping to reduce the carp population that is numerically a threat to moving on up the lake as much as possible, push that -- push that line back south in Illinois in the river and hopefully improve our chances that we're not going to have any escape.

Just want to mention that this effort is unprecedented in that we're working ahead of the establishment of a new invasive species. It's very important that we win this. The Obama administration is very committed. We have over 45 individual actions that are funded, including research and development, looking at biological controls possibly for managing carp, looking at all kinds of other techniques for creating possible barriers that could be used in

addition to an electric barrier, looking at bait shops to make sure that we don't have carp minnows that could be transported to other bodies of water. In fact, I think we just got some DNA test results this afternoon on that from all the bait shops in the south Chicago area, finding no evidence that any of those minnows are Asian carp minnows in the bait shops, which is another good news.

And all this is going to continue hopefully if we have funding. The president announced the proposed budget for Great Lakes restoration for 2012 today, and that includes $350 million for Great Lakes restoration projects. So if Congress agrees and that gets approved, that will keep the Asian carp projects most likely at the same level that we've been doing this year.

There's still an ongoing discussion about the budget for 2011 which they haven't approved yet. We've been operating on 2010 levels, so hopefully we're going to get that resolved in the next few weeks and be able to continue this year with all the projects that are underway.

The Corps of Engineers are really the lead agency on this longer term analysis. There will be a lot of roles for every other organization, and I think

that's part of what I hope you'll pick up on tonight, that there are ways that each group can contribute to this process, and it is a process for evaluating what the long-term options are for stopping invasive species from moving from the lakes to the rivers and the rivers to the lakes.

It's pretty complicated. There are a lot of things that need to be included in this analysis. It's not going to be a quick turnaround. It is going to be a pretty long discussion over the next three and a half years or so. We are looking for ways to speed that up. We will take advantage of information that's brought in by other sources and, you know, seriously look at it and hopefully the Corps will be able to use it in their analysis process.

So the rest of the discussion, I just wanted to give you that overview that things are in good shape as far as keeping an eye on the carp in the Chicago area and it's buying us some time while we do this thorough analysis for the long-term solution.

And Colonel Berczek's going to take over and walk you through the plan of how we're going to do this full analysis.

COLONEL BERCZEK: All right. Good evening everyone. Welcome and thank you for attending. I just

want to talk to you a little bit about this GLMRIS study, the Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study.

In a five-year review of Executive Order 13112 on invasive species, the National Invasive Species Council in their opening statement in both the executive summary and the main body of the text talked to invasive species inhabit all regions of the United States in every nation. For these reasons invasive species are a great national and global concern.

In their National Invasive Species Management Plan in 2008 to 2012, they talked to invasive species from around the globe are affecting plant and animal communities on our farms, ranches and coasts, parks, waters, forests and backyards.

I'll mention a few and you can just envision a little bit about the extent of this problem and the challenge. We're heard a little bit about Asian carp and we talk -- we hear about that on a daily basis and we think about that all the time. Kudzu, hydrilla, zebra mussels, sea lamprey, snakehead fish, nutria, English sparrows, starlings, Burmese pythons. It is a national problem; it is one of significance.

In 2007 Congress in the Water Resource and Development Act authorized the Corps of Engineers to go

ahead and conduct a feasibility study to looks at the options and technologies available to prevent the spread of aquatic nuisance species between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River basins through the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and the other aquatic pathways.

Those of you familiar with the way the Corps of Engineers conducts studies recognize that the feasibility study is not the first step in establishing the federal interest in the study. This is further in the process. So that is already advancing the study along.

You see at the bottom there that last bullet that the study is 100 percent federally funded. Feasibility studies typically involve cost share with a local sponsor. In this case here Congress has said in doing this that this is enough of a significant interest, this is enough of a priority that they are fully funding us to go ahead and do this study.

This study will look at ranges of options and technologies necessary to prevent the interbasin transfer of invasive species. We will look at all options and controls that are out there to include the use of hydrologic separation. In looking at technologies that are available, we'll look at --

obviously the intent will be to prevent but we'll look at -- conduct a risk analysis, look at how each technology, how each option will go ahead and reduce that risk of transfer.

That term "prevent" and then the further explanation a little bit there was kind of guidance in our project management plan to our study team to not exclude options if it didn't look like they would be 100 percent effective in and of themselves. So we are looking through this study to look, to get to that 100 percent effectiveness.

The study area is large. It's very encompassing you can see up here. The detailed study area encompasses roughly these -- I believe about 17 states in the Great Lakes areas and those states that contribute to the upper Mississippi watershed.

An area of concern especially, you see this dashed line here, is a natural flow divide that exists, and that's why the color code is a little bit different. Water that flows, that falls north of this line contributes to the Great Lakes watershed. Water that lands south of this flow line contributes to the upper Mississippi region. That flow line is approximately 1500 miles. So when we start looking at how to contain the transfer or how to contain species

in the Great Lakes and prevent them from getting into the Mississippi River, we're looking across that entire range.

What's included in this study? You see there we talked about the aquatic connections. The study authorization language said the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and other aquatic pathways. So we are looking there. It's mentioned aquatic nuisance species. So we're not just looking at a fish. We're looking at algae and plants. We're looking at those other parasites and other types of species.

Mr. Goss mentioned a little bit about looking at the bait shops, and those are other activities that are included in the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee in the strategic framework document.

Human release, one of those types of introductory pathways, not part of the scope of this study. We're looking at waterway pathways. Does not include terrestrial or airborne transfer. We're looking at the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basin, that interface between the two, not looking at the Atlantic Slope or the St. Lawrence Seaway or Canadian introductions.

We can see down here a list of elements of what will be included in there. We will look at

options and technologies, and hydrologic separation, that's one of those options. We'll conduct regional economic modeling to understand the impacts of any type of recommendation or any type of a course of action, as well as looking at mitigating measures.

We will look at as well the risk-based ecological decision-making process to come up with benefits to each area, and this being a feasibility study will result in a feasibility report with recommendations to Congress for implementation but also will include an Environmental Impact Statement.

You notice when Kevin introduced himself that he's from St. Paul District. That's part of our Mississippi Valley Division and part of the Chicago District and part of the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division. Right there as you start to look at this, not only is this study looking across a number of states, two very large watersheds and also a 1500-mile flow divide line, it crosses the boundaries of two Corps of Engineers divisions. So we have to look at how we're going to organize for success.

The study language itself kind of gave us a start-off point where it talked about these two areas, the Chicago Area Waterways, and that represents our primary effort. Not that it has any -- that it's any

more urgent than the other pathways that we don't want to lose focus on, but that's the pathway that is continuously open and continuously in use through the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal.

We also had to figure out how to organize for success, kind of using the Executive Steering Committee, the body set up to cross the federal agencies involved and the other agencies involved in the ACRCC, which is the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee. We're using that as well as including other groups, talking to the stakeholders, and you'll see there's some of the lists of the groups involved there as well as the public at large.

There's a lot of effort involved with the study and there's a lot of analysis involved, so one of our plans of attack would be to cycle out these interim products in this report. As data is analyzed and is mature enough and can be released, we plan to do that, to keep everyone informed of the study progress and what it is we're looking at and what kind of -- and where it seems to be leading us.

Forty-five actions are being undertaken this year in the 2011 strategic framework document, so we have to be able to adapt to new and evolving information to the greatest extent possible. We can't

just be following a process and be ignorant to everything else that other agencies and other folks are doing around us. So we have to be open and available to be able to accept and incorporate that new information, and as in everything that we do in the Corps of Engineers, we'll abide by all legal and regulatory guidance.

You see here a little bit of the study purpose. We talked about some of the pathways we're going to look at. The Focus Area I, Chicago Area Waterways and other pathways, and we'll have a couple slides in a little bit and I'll have the project managers that were introduced earlier, Dave Wethington and Mike Saffran, talk to you a little bit about the efforts to date in those areas.

One of the first steps, of course, is identifying those pathways. Mike will talk a little bit about those and talk alternatives and the work done in that, and also inventorying the current and future potential aquatic invasive species. This is not just an Asian carp study. We're not waiting for this GLMRIS study to be complete to inform our actions on Asian carp. We're already engaged in that fight and we've got the barriers in operation. We're doing additional efficacy studies on how to improve actions. We're very

much involved with the monitoring and other efforts with regards to Asian carp.

This is beyond this. I like to look at these pictures that you see up there and say this is from fish to fleas. So we're looking at all sorts of nuisance species and aquatic species. And again, you see down there at the bottom we'll be looking at controls available to include the hydrologic separation. This map shows -- again you can see it's titled the CAWS, the Chicago Area Waterway System, and I'm going to let Dave Wethington explain to you a little bit about this chart.

MR. WETHINGTON: Thank your, sir. My name is Dave Wethington. I'm a project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Chicago. Just spend a couple minutes talking about the slide to familiarize yourself with some of the complexities associated with this Chicago Area Waterway System.

On the right-hand side you'll notice a map, and the map lists five points numbered one to five where the waters of the Great Lakes basin and the waters of the Mississippi River basin have the opportunity to interact. What's unique about this watershed is that each of those five points flows into a single channel. So imagine five prongs of a fork

flowing into the single handle of that fork, and that is -- that single channel is the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, which is where we have placed the electric -- the fish barrier dispersal system noted on number seven in the map.

What's also a little bit unique about this waterway system is that we have both controlled and uncontrolled waterways in here. You'll see the red dots, numbers one, two and six actually which provide some type of physical structure that control those interactions I spoke with regarding the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. One is the Wilmette Pumping Station, number two is the Chicago Lock, and number six actually controls that point number three that is T.J. O'Brien Lock and Dam.

You'll also notice that four and five are completely uncontrolled, which means that basically there is no physical structure or physical barrier that separates those two watersheds.

On the left-hand side is basically an outline of our Corps planning process. We're right now in steps one and two. Number one, specifying problems and opportunities, and we've put together a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers team working with other federal agencies, state agencies like DNR's, and basically we're looking

at what kind of problems, what kind of opportunities are here, and that's part of the reason why you are here this evening is to help us identify those problems and opportunities.

We're also inventorying and forecasting conditions. Well, what exactly does that mean? We have to collect an amount of data to determine what are the uses of the Chicago Area Waterway System. You might have heard a lot about navigation, commercial cargo navigation being used, but there is also significant other uses such as recreation, water supply, water discharge. The Metropolitan Water Reclamation District basically discharges all the treated wastewater, municipal discharge from the Chicagoland area into the Chicago River and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. About 70 to 80 percent of the total flow of the Chicago River is that municipal wastewater discharge.

Another very important use of the Chicago Area Waterway System is for flood risk management. It doesn't happen very often but every couple, maybe four, five years you'll get a significant rainfall event in the Chicagoland area where we need to open up that structure at number two, the Chicago Lock, in order to backflow so water will flow both toward Lake Michigan

and toward the Mississippi River basin. If we were not able to do that, there would be significant damage because of overbank flooding in downtown Chicago as well as significant wastewater and stormwater backup throughout the Chicagoland area, potentially affecting millions of residents, businesses, industries.

So once we figure out what all those uses are, we need to determine what the impacts are by implementing our aquatic invasive species controls. So what are the impacts of implementing the barrier system or potentially hydrologic separation. How are those waterway uses impacted, or if they're adversely impacted, if there's some sort of negative impact to them, what do we need to do to mitigate for those adverse impacts.

Of course, as Mr. Goss and Colonel Berczek mentioned earlier, we are collaborating across the board with not only federal agencies but local and state agencies, non-government organizations, Native American tribes, as well as the public yourself, and I appreciate you coming out this evening. With that, I'll turn it back to you, Colonel Berczek. Thank you.

COLONEL BERCZEK: This next slide focuses a little bit on the other area, the other pathways, and Mike had the easy job of trying to identify where those

were. Part of the challenge with this is not knowing where the species might transfer if we don't know some of these areas exist and Mike's going to explain to you a little bit about what he did.

MR. SAFFRAN: Thank you, sir. Pleasure to be here this evening and thank you all for all coming out.

The other pathways, as Colonel Berczek said, when we first started into the GLMRIS, we had a pretty good knowledge base relative to the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and the history of invasive species transfer that's occurred through that one particular location. On the other hand, those last four words that were in the authority, and other aquatic pathways, we had very little knowledge of those locations, where they existed and/or the relative risk of those locations relative to the interbasin transfer of aquatic nuisance species.

General Peabody, our commanding general in the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, last summer, realizing what a tremendous amount of investment has been made in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal to construct the barriers, to do the very intense monitoring, all of the work that's being done there, realized that there could be a potential risk to the Great Lakes through other potential aquatic pathways;

for instance, the Portage location in Wisconsin here that was a former connection between the two basins.

He tasked us last summer to within 60 days produce a draft report that provided an inventory of all of the potential locations along that 1500-mile-long basin divide that stretches from upper Minnesota to western New York and to do a preliminary risk characterization of each of those aquatic pathways relative to the interbasin transfer of aquatic nuisance species.

That was a very -- as Colonel Berczek said, very challenging task because a lot of that basin divide is very, very flat topography. It's not like your typical continental divide where you've got a mountain range that clearly distinguishes which way the water flows. The areas in northern Ohio, Indiana, Wisconsin, Minnesota, very flat topography and it has very subtle changes in the way water, surface water flows there.

To attack that problem, we established two teams among -- well, that had multi-agency involvement. A team of hydrologists, experts in surface water hydrology that were from the Army Corps of Engineers, from the state Departments of Natural Resources, the U.S. Geological Survey Water Science Centers. They

were very influential in helping us identify the locations where aquatic pathways may form, either exist or may form, as well as procuring and collecting and organizing the data to support that.

Also in parallel we had aquatic nuisance species biologists working in parallel to develop a list of all of the aquatic nuisance species that were known to be in the Great Lakes but not yet located in the river system and vice-versa, non-indigenous species in the river system that have not been identified in the Great Lakes.

We brought those two teams together basically and did a risk characterization on each of the locations. We identified a total of 36 across the states, eight of them actually within the state of Wisconsin. Eighteen of those 36 locations were identified as posing some level of risk that was unacceptable.

One of those locations, though, really posed a very imminent risk, and that was the Eagle Marsh location in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In the Eagle Marsh we have a very special circumstance where a heavy rainfall, generally a rain event that would be the largest you'd expect to occur in any given year, causes flow to occur across the basin divide from the Maumee

River basin which flows into Lake Erie, it causes a backflow condition in the town of Fort Wayne and water, flood waters will actually backflow into the Wabash River basin, which drains to the Ohio River.

When you have a 10 percent annual return frequency event, the largest storm you'd expect to occur in any ten-year period, the depth of water across that basin divide goes up to four and a half feet. When you put that in context with the fact that there are established populations of silver and bighead carp about 25 miles downstream in the Wabash River, that created a very special circumstance. We all understood that.

We basically had a meeting at the end of last July with the Indiana DNR; National Resources Conservation Service, which has been very active in the Eagle Marsh location; a non-governmental organization called the Little River Wetlands Project. We had the county surveyor, the USGS and all the Corps of Engineers folk there, and long story short, we talked about the problem, talked about potential solutions. Everybody agreed that some sort of a permanent solution needed to be implemented at this location, but we didn't know if we had enough time to do that.

And so we started talking about interim

solutions, and a temporary barrier such as the one that was used between the Des Plaines River and the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal came up as a possible alternative for an interim short-term remedy. The Indiana DNR said we can take the lead on that, and they stepped up to the plate and in less than 60 days did a design and built that barrier across the Eagle Marsh and it was in place before the end of September last year, which I think is a very good testament to the way things can work and can work quickly with government agencies. I know that's not always the case, but this is one case where it did really work well.

To wrap up on the other pathways, the Corps of Engineers is right now preparing a feasibility study for a long-term solution at the Eagle Marsh. That report is scheduled to be completed before the end of this calendar year, and likewise we are completing the risk characterization at Eagle Marsh as well as the other 17 locations where the risks were determined to be unacceptable, and that report also is scheduled to be completed before the end of this calendar year. Sir, that's all.

COLONEL BERCZEK: Thanks, Mike. So you just heard a little bit of the discussion about where we are today and we've done a lot of preparation and this time

that is being spent at the beginning part of the study process in developing the scoping and gathering the public input.

You've already heard that there's a lot that has gone on, and you can see here down this left-hand side, this is a complex study, so there's a lot of thought that has to go into. We've talked about how to go ahead and exchange information, how to work together, how to collaborate with other state and federal agencies and other partners.

And we began here in December the public scoping and here we are in February. We have two more meetings to go. So we're going to wrap up with this, but we haven't just been standing by and waiting for this to occur. You can see down here on the right-hand side there's been a lot of work that's gone on to go ahead and identify what the threat is and identify what controls should be envisioned to take care of those.

You can see some of the work there. Part of it is identifying, you know, still how we are going to target further actions against Asian carp and how do we target other aquatic nuisance species. We've got to identify the right tools and the right measures. You don't shoot skeet with a pistol. So we've got to make sure that we have the right -- the right opportunity

and we take the right approach. And you can see down there a little bit more information about Eagle Marsh and we'll talk a little bit more about what's coming up next.

This slide represents kind of a best case scenario of where we anticipate this study going along, and you can see the black star off here to the right, the draft recommended plan with some recommendations for implementation around the fall of 2014.

Concurrently, you see this timeline here and this pathway for the other pathways focus that Mike talked about a little bit there, with the preliminary report and the risk characterization that's been done and the efforts to go ahead and look at some more detailed planning and detailed planning project reports, and you can see the timeline that he's looking at with some of those activities associated there.

So we're not just going to have you sit around and wonder what's going on and talk about -- just figure out what's going on, so we want to talk a little bit here about these interim products, what's going to happen in the meantime, how you'll be kept up to date.

There's a lot of efforts going on in gathering data and doing analysis, and you can see that

as these reports are mature enough, that we might go ahead and release some things like this, talk about the types of aquatic nuisance species and the transport mechanisms, how they'll get from point A to point B.

Some of the control technology is being looked at as well. The navigation surveys, looking at the value of the use of the waterways; looking at the fishery surveys, looking at the value of the fisheries; looking at potential and -- current and then potential uses of the waterways; and again, talking about interim updates, providing that information so that you can be kept informed of what's been coming out of the study and you see just what we are looking at.

A key to this process all along, I mentioned about being adaptive and flexible in information, and that includes the information we receive at meetings such as this and then responses should some of those other reports come out. And then at the top and the bottom you see some of the example inputs. We talked about the collaboration and talked about, in this case here, to borrow a phrase from a book title, it really does take a village. This is a large-scale effort. There's a lot of work involved with this. A lot of these other agencies represent levels, areas of expertise that we need to draw upon and take into

consideration in looking at this study.

This just shows a schedule. Back in December this schedule had a little more meaning where you could maybe plan on where you might want to go next if you wanted to show up at another one of these meetings, but now here we are down here to February 15 and we've got one or two left to do. But if anybody's interested in going to New Orleans, I hear the parades start this Saturday. We'll be down there before then. You may have the same luck we found, that we had in trying to find a hotel room down there with Mardi Gras approaching.

And the Ann Arbor meeting you can was rescheduled from the 3rd of February because of weather, but those would be the last two meetings we plan on having right now as far as for the public comment period to keep things on track.

Other ways to provide inputs, you may have already seen that there is a Web site dedicated to this study. I'm trying to do a little bit of almost brand recognition type thing. You see the button on there. It looks very similar to the business card and the materials that you have handed out earlier today. If you go to the Chicago district Web site, you'll see a button that looks like this. This will take you to the

Web site to keep you up to date and current with all the information that's out there.

And then also you can see down there, I can't talk much to social media because I'm still not in Facebook and my family lets me know all the time, but there are those options available as well. If you want to keep up to date with Dave sitting over here on the panel telling you what I'm saying, he'll tweet you up with that.

Anyway, we thank you for your time today, and now it's very critically important that we get the opportunity to hear from you and receive your comments and hear your questions, and we'll go ahead and answer whatever we can. Thank you very much.

MR. GOSS: I just wanted to mention one additional source of information on top of the Corps' Web site. There is a Web site asiancarp.org that is a constant update from all of the projects, the coordinated strategy projects, and if you check that every so often, you'll see what is new that we're finding out from each of the other projects that we're working on. So it's just asiancarp.org.

MR. BLUHM: Very good. Thank you. Okay. Well, that concludes part one of this evening's meeting, and as the colonel mentioned, we've told you a

little bit about what we've been working on, the efforts that are happening in the area regarding what the Corps is doing, and now it's time to hear from you, the public. We've had great success in these other sessions throughout the first ten meetings and this evening is going to be the same as the rest. We want to give this opportunity to any persons in talking to us. This would be the time.

Before we start that, I'd like to mention to you that any persons that are interested to subscribe to any e-mail list mailings, our Web site has a nice function for that. You have an e-list service there and that will be a link that will allow the Corps to e-mail and distribute any updates on such things as documents that have been added to our Web site, any additional opportunities for public involvement and any other important news or events regarding our study. The GLMRIS project Web site can be found on the brochure and on this little business card, and then also we'll have information on some of the social media things as well.

Moving into the comment period then, at this point I've got one person that has registered to speak, and so we will start with that person. So Mr. Meyer, if you're available, we'll definitely start our second

portion here.

I would ask that our stenographer here tonight is recording all of our information and we want to make sure we utilize the microphones. If you could start with your name and then any affiliation that you represent as well as the zip code for us, we'd greatly appreciate it, and with that, go ahead when you're ready.

MR. MEYER: My name is George Meyer. I'm representing the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, and my zip code is 53717.

MR. BLUHM: Thank you.

MR. MEYER: And Mr. Goss and representatives of the Corps of Engineers, thank you very much for this opportunity to present our comments on the scoping process for the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study.

The Wildlife Federation is the largest conservation organization in the state comprised of over 160 hunting, fishing, trapping and forestry related groups with over 100,000 members. Among our membership club affiliates are Great Lakes sports fishing groups in virtually every port from Kenosha to Marinette. In addition, we also represent the Wisconsin Federation of Great Lakes sport fishing

clubs. I understand there were representatives of some of those clubs at the meeting here this afternoon.

Lastly, there are sportsmen and women in virtually every group that we represent statewide that fish on the Great Lakes during the course of one year. Sports fishing in Lake Michigan and Lake Superior is a multi-billion dollar economic enterprise, but just as importantly, it forms a significant part of the culture and tradition of many Wisconsin communities.

Let me indicate first that we are not hydrologists or hydraulic engineers, so we cannot tell you the exact solution to stop the interbasin migration of invasive aquatic species, but our members can tell you what's at stake. We have seen the major degradation of fisheries and overall biomass of Lake Michigan because of aquatic invasive species. We know that the addition of the various invasive carp species in the Illinois River system into Lake Michigan will cause further serious degradation. We only have to look at those water bodies where they are now and where they're prevalent to see what the damages are.

The federation and it's members have been fighting for stronger efforts by the federal and state government for ballast water regulation for international shipping on the Great Lakes for many

years. Also for many years we've been pushing the federal government to deal with the open passageway to Lake Michigan through the Chicago canal system, which we are very -- which was shown on one of your exhibits.

We are very glad to see more sturdy electric barriers in place along the system. We've taken a tour. They're very impressive, and the one thing we're glad is that we don't have to pay the electrical bills for those. But we know that these are merely a non-foolproof, temporary measure.

We have become familiar with the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal, and for people who like to spend their time in a little bit more pristine areas, it's quite eye opening to see the hydrology and the hydraulics and the close connections. We know this isn't an easy task, but we can tell you our bottom line is we're strong supporters for hydrologic separation. It has to take place. It has to be a system that is foolproof. There's too much at stake if, in fact, these carp species and other aquatic species get into the Great Lakes. We've seen the damage from the 185 previous species that have gotten there.

We appreciate the study is underway. We know it's very complex. It's a lot to be studied, but we are very dissatisfied with the long time frames

proposed to deal with this permanent solution to invasive species transfers. It's hard to go back and talk to average people about time frames where the feasibility studies was shown. Just the feasibility studies not getting done till 2015, it's hard for people to understand that when there's such a feeling of urgency.

Then we know that after that's done, and we realize there's interim reports, but until that's done, then it has to have agency approval, the Corps' process, and then the chief of engineers report is sent to Congress recommending authorization of a proposed plan. Then Congressional action is taken, and that is not always the fastest thing, but that's required for further study authorization and appropriations for the design and implementation of the recommended plan.

Then we assume there must be further studies, design work, contracting and then if there's construction, final construction. At a minimum, it will be safe to estimate that, in fact, it is a structural solution in places, especially in the complexity of the Chicago basin, that this project will not be completed until after 2020 and possibly significantly later.

This lack of apparent urgency -- and I'm not

saying people aren't serious and doing a lot of hard work. Obviously a lot of hard work has been done already, but to the public it's hard for them to understand especially when what we have at stake is from the greatest water systems in the world and one that is very important to our Wisconsin Great Lakes sport fishermen. There's just so much at stake.

So please take the following message back to those you're representing. First, this process for the final solution of interbasin invasive species transfer must be greatly expedited. And two, the temporary measures to prevent the transfer of invasive species from the Illinois River system into Lake Michigan must be made 100 percent foolproof in the interim.

In conclusion, we are truly grateful that you traveled to Milwaukee to listen to our concerns and we greatly appreciate the work you've done and the work you're going to do. Please let us know if there's anything that we can do to help you protect the Great Lakes in an expedited way. On behalf of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, thank you very much.

MR. BLUHM: Thank you. Appreciate it. Okay. That concludes the list of people that have indicated when they came into the room that they'd like to make a comment. At this time I'd like to see if there's

anybody else that has since then in joining us that would like to make a comment. If so, either raise your hand or step to the microphone.

Okay. Just for your information, this afternoon we had 21 such attempts to the microphone. We had a discussion for more than an hour. We heard a lot of very interesting and compelling statements. One last call. Anybody like to go to the microphone, now would be a good time to do so.

The time is 6:20 and with that I'd like to make a motion to adjourn the meeting. I'd like to thank you for your statements and let me remind you that if you do have any materials prepared for us, turn them in either to myself or to the front panel table.

In the back of the room we do have some computers set up that are able -- they're online and able to take comments if you'd like to enter them online, as well as keep in mind the white comment sheet and any of the mailing information to our Web site will allow you future opportunities to comment on our comment period, keeping in mind that the March 31st date is the date for our deadline for any of the comments to be considered as part of our NEPA scoping process.

With that in mind and that said, help us

recycle our materials. If there is anything you've been given tonight that you do not need any longer, you can leave it on the chair with you or take it to the back table and recycle that with us. We'll use it at our future meetings. And if you need any additional materials for others that were not here tonight, we can supply some additional for you as well.

Thank you for your attendance and with that we'll adjourn the meeting. Have a good night.

(At 6:21 p.m. the meeting concluded.)

STATE OF WISCONSIN)
MILWAUKEE COUNTY) SS:

I, MICHELLE HAGEN, Registered Professional Reporter with the firm of Halma-Jilek Reporting, Inc., 207 East Michigan Street, Suite 404, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202, do hereby certify that I reported the foregoing proceedings taken on February 14, 2011, and that the same is true and correct in accordance with my original machine shorthand notes taken at said time and place.

_____
Michelle Hagen
Registered Professional
Reporter.

Dated this 25th day of February, 2011, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.