

Thank you for your comment, Luke Skinner.

The comment tracking number that has been assigned to your comment is GLMRIS50590.

Comment Date: March 31, 2011 10:05:22AM

GLMRIS

Comment ID: GLMRIS50590

First Name: Luke

Middle Initial:

Last Name: Skinner

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Privacy Preference: Don't withhold my personal information from the website and NEPA documents

Attachment: MN DNR comments to GLMRIS 033111.pdf

Comment Submitted:



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Division of Ecological Resources

500 Lafayette Road
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155
Telephone: 651-259-5140

March 30, 2011

Colonel Vincent V. Quarles
Commander, Chicago District
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

Dear Colonel Quarles:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS). The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has been active in the prevention and management of aquatic invasive species for more than twenty years. The concern of invasive species moving between the Great Lakes Basin and the Mississippi River Basins is of concern. Below are specific comments related to the study:

- We appreciate the USACE and others taking on this much needed and long-overdue task to look at the connections.
- We feel the process evaluation and implementation is too slow and needs to be accelerated. Too much can happen in the timeframe as laid out by the USACE. More urgent action is necessary to prevent the spread of invasive species, especially Asian carp. We encourage exploring short term actions, such as barriers, that can be implemented while developing the long-term options.
- The USACE should consider opportunities to prevent the spread within basins as well as between basins. Much of the Upper Mississippi River watershed is not currently impacted by Asian Carp. Actions to prevent their spread upstream into Minnesota will not only protect the Upper Mississippi River basin, but it will also prevent inter-basin movement at the points identified in Minnesota. Simply targeting the point of connection may not be the best strategy for preventing the spread of invasive species between basins.
- We encourage continued engagement of the states in decision making. States can provide expertise and valuable perspectives and the study progresses. Actions related to the study by the USACE will directly affect the states and partnerships are imperative.

- The ACOE should look more broadly at the species of concern that could move between basins (assume more will arrive), there could be a new species in Lake Michigan tomorrow. In addition, other pathways need to be considered other than exploration of connected waters.
- In regards to the Chicago Area Waterways System (CAWS), the local benefits of recreational use of locks, industry, disposal of sewage, and flood control in Chicago come with negative impacts that affect half of the states in the United States. This seems to be lost in the interbasin Chicago discussion. Only the local impact in the Chicago area of closing locks is being discussed, however, Minnesota and many other states are impacted by decisions made regarding prevention measure in the CAWS.

We look forward to working with the USACE on continued efforts to prevent the spread of invasive species within and between the basins. Please feel free to contact us if you require clarification or simply want to engage the continued discussion on GLMRIS.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke Skinner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Luke" being more prominent than the last name "Skinner".

Luke Skinner, Ph.D.
Invasive Species Program Supervisor
Division of Ecological and Water Resources