

Thank you for your comment, Craig Oliver.

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GLMRIS

Comment ID: GLMRIS50621

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Attachment: Official Letter.docx

Comment Submitted:

To: The Planning Department, GLMRIS

From: Craig W. Oliver; cwo@pentel.net

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Date: March 31, 2011

Re: The species specific isolation of the Great Lakes Basin; the
“Asian” Carp ANS Control Program.

Introduction:

I attended The ‘Public Scoping Meeting’ held in Traverse City, Michigan, February, 2011, and made an ‘impromptu’ statement at that time.

This ‘comment’ is to reiterate, restate, and clarify the verbal statement I made at the meeting and to offer my analysis, after some further study and thought, of the major issues and potential actions involved.

I will address the scientific issues, basically the ‘ANS Controls’, that will resolve the “Asian” carp invasion (transfer) with a high probability of success, and those ‘political issues’ that will pervert a basically straight forward, cost effective, easy to accomplish geologic/hydrologic engineering solution, officially designated as “ANS Controls”, that would otherwise have a very high, 100%, success rate, into a biological devastation of the largest fresh water repository on planet Earth.

These ‘influences’, all political, will not merely allow, but will guarantee the colonization (successful ‘transfer’) of the majority of the Great lakes watershed by the two species of carp, collectively referred to as “Asian” via the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS).

The ‘view point’ is from the perspective of a life-long resident of a Great Lakes coastal town, a graduate of the College of Natural Science (BS Geology), Michigan State University, and the Petroleum Technology program of Northwestern Michigan College, the site of the Public Scoping Meeting.

As a ‘native’ I have witnessed wave after wave of detrimental invasion by foreign species, from Lamprey, Alewives, various mussels, Gobies, planktonics, in an seemingly endless parade as the ‘officials’ of government stand by and do absolutely nothing beyond wringing their hands and spewing banalities. Now, faced with a species introduction that will be devastating if consummated, the government is in a position to actually intercede successfully. The \$64 K question is: “does the government have the will to actually set a precedent and do the ‘right thing’, regardless of the political hurtles arrayed against the solution”?

I doubt it.

Statement of the problem:

As I analyze the subject, it is now clear to me that there is actually a two-pronged situation involved;

- (1) “Prong One” is what I will define as the “Physical Solution”, the high probability for success ‘ANS controls’, seemingly has three components;
 - (a) The basic scientific issues of biologic and ecologic impact and the ramifications of territorial expansion into a major, biologic/ecologic favorable environment, by related, seemingly ‘successful’ large minnow species.
 - (b) The physical ‘setting’ defined by the geologic and hydrologic interface between the Great Lakes and the Mississippi River Basin. These are tightly intertwined disciplines, but are separate enough to be researched as unique. Both disciplines likewise have two discrete subsets; naturally occurring separations and potential breaches, and those that were created via human ‘engineering’ activity.
 - (c) The engineering strategy to ‘solve the problem’ has two components;
 - (a) to recreate and reinforce all geologic, hydrologic, naturally occurring, historical ‘barriers’ that were compromised by human activity, regardless of location, purpose, extent, intent, and usage.
 - (b) to research, identify and take any and all actions needed to identify and securely, physically isolate any and all naturally occurring physical, ecological ‘overlap zones’ between the water sheds that the study determines to exist.
- (2) “Prong Two” I will refer to as “Political Gamesmanship”; defined to be the political ‘reality’ that presently exists at all levels in the jurisdictions that exist and control actions in the geographic, physical locale of the two water shed’s boundaries, ‘overlap’, ‘interface’ sites and breach zones. This seems to be composed of subsidiary political components of economic-business/’legal’, and monetary considerations with a minor societal influence.

Conclusion:

My analysis concludes that the “Prong Two” factors will be those actually controlling the outcome of the ‘Asian carp problem’.

The “Prong One” solution is relatively cheap to accomplish, easy to implement, permanent, and successful. It is a purely physical resolution to the problem, straight forward and relatively simple and easy to execute. Yes, some components of the Chicago infrastructure must be abandoned, and rebuilt to modern standards; but this should be a ‘plus’; except the financing and displacement; which is where the real problem becomes apparent; Who will pay both physically and financially?

Repugnantly, any conclusions and/or actions recommended by the GLMRIS will be ignored, thwarted, or rebuffed via legal or financial means. The carp will be ushered into the Great Lakes ecosystem as a matter of Republican Party plank, ‘Tea Party’ radicalism, Chicago political machine mechanisms, and Roberts Supreme Court neo-fascism.

I am betting that the GLMRIS does not have the political ‘clout’ to overcome these political forces aligned against it to bring to fruition a ‘permanent scientific solution’ to the problem, no matter what is claimed as to who wants what, or who is backing them politically. Let’s see if my analysis is correct.

Discussion of the “Issues”:

The biology of the pests must be researched to determine their behavior and methods to control. This should be a basic research facility and field work issue that should not take long to complete.

The basic (geo/hydro) physical resolution of the problem;

This is a very simple geologic facies; an onshore beach, both recent and fossil, developed very recently on a veneer of recent glacial ground till, tending to be of a high sand content.

Hydraulically the water shed of the lake extends miles to the west where it meets with, and is separated by mostly well-defined physical, topographical barriers, from the watershed of the Mississippi River which drains westward.

The geologic history of the geography and topography, formed on a deposit of mostly poorly sorted ground till with a shallow water table, resulted in a tendency to produce marsh land. If these were developed at the convergence of the water sheds, a flooding of the lowlands may result in localized, temporary, connection of surface waters of both water sheds.

Please note the use of the words: local and temporary.

These 'zones' need to be identified and studied as to the probability of interconnection, to any extent of intersection, and potential for carp migration. A plan to isolate the water sheds must be designed and implemented.

This will take time to do the research, the field work, the studying, and physical implementation of the solution. Time is not a real issue as invasion via this route however widespread or rare these zones turn out to be, has a very low probability. So a several year span to bring this facet of the problem to fruition is not excessive. The costs would be relatively minimal, and the solution simple engineering surface alterations to relatively remote marshlands.

The likely scenario: The Chicago Machine will stonewall. President Obama will waffle. Republicans will defund the GLMRIS and denounce its conclusions. "Asian" carp will infest. After Social Security is handed to "Wall Street" by its Tea Party sycophants, you will be reduced to eating carp.

How many, how large, what was/is the purpose, how extensive, how disruptive, if x jobs are lost, who will pay the bill to eliminate, what will be the effect on the infrastructure, or on the local 'economy', all just details.

THESE PASSAGES MUST BE SEALED OFF ASAP!
END OF DISCUSSION. Any other 'resolution' is nothing short of blatant dereliction of the government's duty to the NATIONAL SECURITY.

Can I state it any clearer? No!

Yes, basically this means abandoning, obliterating, redesigning, and rebuilding a part of Chicago's infrastructure. It must be done. In reality, a good thing. Most of the involved structure is probably over 100 years old, poorly designed, outdated, being constructed as far ago as the late 19th century. What municipality would not want modern infrastructure? None. So what would the 'problem' be?

Only two factors; where will the financing come from, and political/social inertia resisting any change. Both are political, and the political 'forces' are strongly in opposition.

The engineering needed to seal off Lake Michigan at Chicago is very straight forward, and should be of no problem for the Corp of Engineers to execute in a very expeditious manner. As I stated, a fleet of D-10s, a few truckloads of explosives, a competent crew and a few months later the problem is solved.

In an attempt to avoid the day of reckoning so to speak, the government has installed a series of 'high tech' electrical barriers to block the fish migration up river. These are impressive technological devices that, in theory, should repel the fish, but problems exist and have manifested themselves. A quick, and poorly informed, review may be in order.

In the past several 'events' occurred that indicate that the barriers may not be up to the job due to reasons that are technical and operational.

Operational first. The 'barriers', actually electric weirs, are operated by people, always seemingly the weak link. Several years ago it was reported in Michigan newspapers that the electric power levels were reduced below critical levels for extended periods of time and on multiple occasions. Rumored to be so that the power could be diverted to 'air conditioning' needs locally. If so, not just deeply disturbing but grossly negligent and indicative of severe social, if not criminal, issues at the operational level.

The fact that this could happen is indicative of severe design and operational flaws as safeguards against just such incidents should be fundamentally in place. Human tampering, or power failure, at such a crucial level should not be possible due to built-in alert, backup, and safety systems, which apparently are not engineered into the sites.

Now the technical parameters. Need I point out the total fallibility of computer systems? No engineering system is more fallible to failure than computer systems. 'Crashes' are guaranteed given a span of time. Just last week the 'news' revealed that the 'barriers' may have a design flaw that may allow small, juvenile carp to survive and pass through the 'barriers'. Nothing like a physical 'survival of the fittest' gauntlet to introduce a species into a near limitless virginal environment but hey! Why a regular carp when we can engineer a better one at the very shoreline! Brilliant!

Personally I have issues with the physical limits of the barriers. It is known that the carp move as a 'wave' upstream. Doing so up a uniform canal en masse, say 100,000 20-pound fish, this would be a situation where at some point where there would be more fish biomass than water in the canal. Such a huge mass when encountering the barrier, would short out the electrodes, and the system would be massively breached. As seen in the recent Japanese earthquake, redundant 'backup' systems are hardly the reason to sleep well.

My point is that a highly technical system is inherently its own worst enemy, a problem waiting to happen given enough time and circumstance. A permanent 'fix' at a fundamental level, free of human manipulation, is infinitely more desirable, despite circumstance and costs to emplace.

Now I discuss the political factions arrayed against the GLMRIS.

I will start at the local level. The Chicago 'Machine' has refused to even consider, much less take action to modify it's infrastructure to prevent the invasion. In fact it has taken aggressive legal action to block any move to do so.

Now a new mayor has been elected. But there is an old Rock and Roll saying; "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss." I have heard of no policy statement from the new mayor on this issue, where is he? Just another Chicago hack I suspect.

Chicago has appealed all legal actions to the federal appellate court where the Chicago Machine federal judge obeying the mandate of the Republican Roberts Court, holding that Corporations somehow have rights of Humans, ruled that barge and tour boat companies take legal precedence over States, the Great Lakes, and People. Hens the avoidance of loss of corporate revenue and corporate jobs takes legal president. There will be NO legal relief here, just defeat, all the way through the Supreme Court.

Let's examine the ramifications of the "Job Loss" straw man; have you ever heard of the Chicago Stock Yards? Were alleged to be the 'Hog Butcher to the World'! and the largest stock yard that ever existed. Must have employed thousands if not tens of thousands! Have you been to the Stock Yards lately? Just an ornamental gate memorial remains. How many work there today? NONE! ZERO! How much revenue flows into the city's coffers? NONE. I rest my case. The 'losses of a few barge and tour boat jobs can be compensated for. The barge companies can be transformed into materials transfer portage companies.

On up, the GLMRIS panel stated that the President was 'dedicated' to stopping the carp. Then why has President Obama, a Machine Product, refused to issue a "Presidential Order" sealing all physical connections. His tactic is to 'rely' on the perfect storm of unreliable electrical barrier technology run by fallible Corps of Engineers. Remember this is the same man who promised to get out of the following; Iraq; not done; Afghanistan; 50,000 more troops and years more; "Gitmo"; still there! His word is BULLSHIT! Not worth a glass of piss.

Congress has blocked ALL legislation to stop the invasion; absolutely refused on numerous legislative proposals. Where would the funds to implement the recommendations come from? Congress, and the republican/tea party clowns are willing to shut the federal government down for spending cuts. I am sure they'll cut the GLMRIS a fat check to get to work resolving the problem, and handsomely fund the rebuilding of Chicago's infrastructure. You are delusional if you do.

Ultimate conclusion:

The likely scenario: The Chicago Machine will stonewall. President Obama will waffle. Republicans will defund the GLMRIS and denounce its conclusions. “Asian” carp will infest virtually the entire Great Lakes Basin, just to save a handful of silver.

The man-made connections between the watersheds, the so-called “CAWS” must be eliminated. Period.

Copy of 300 word letter sent to local print newspapers:

This letter sums up in a cartoonish manor, due to the restrictive constraints made by a 300 word count comment, my view of the ‘Asian Carp Fiasco’. A shamefully preventable ecologic disaster:

Tea Party: LET‘M EAT CARP!

Concerning the GLMRIS “Asian” Carp Public Hearing.

The panel members made it clear that they had just been funded and received the mandate needed to begin researching, and allegedly solving the greatest ecological threat to the Great Lakes in their geologic history: the invasion of “Asian” Carp.

The solution is obvious and straight forward; immediately restore and/or reinforce all geologic/hydrologic barriers between Great Lake and Mississippi watersheds. It’s that simple.

My concern is not the GLMRIS, but the cold exigencies of ‘realpolitik’, and the ignorance of the populace to the reality of the situation: the ecological destruction of the Great Lakes by the Republican/Tea Party political agenda is a likely done deal unless you wake up fast.

It need not be so, but:

The Chicago Machine has refused to restore the physical barriers.

A Chicago Machine federal judge obeying the mandate of the republican Roberts Court holding that corporations have constitutional rights somehow equivalent to those of Humans, ruled that barge companies take legal precedence over States, the Great Lakes, and the People.

President Obama, a Machine Product, refuses to issue a “Presidential Order” sealing all physical connections. His tactic is to ‘rely’ on the perfect storm mix of unreliable electrical barrier technology run by a fallible Corps of Engineers. Poor decisions have compromised barrier performance already.

Now comes the Republican/Tea Party, their agenda precluding financing the pertection of Great Lakes ecology.

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Republican/Tea Party voters and quislings we salute your selfish, ignorant stupidity! Enjoy your political fruit; a Bay full of Carp.

Bon Apatite!

Now prove me wrong!