

## Fact Sheet: USACE GLMRIS Report January 2014 Release

### *Background:*

In January 2014, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) released the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) Report. This report catalogs potential options for limiting the movement of invasive species from over nearly 30 different aquatic pathways between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.

The report presents many options and technologies to combat invasive species. By Congressional mandate, one option reviewed in the report is a partial separation of the basins through closure of the Chicago Area Waterway System – an essential waterway connection between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River network that provides substantial environmental and commercial benefits to the Great Lakes and Midwest.

Substantial evidence shows that ***separation is simply not a solution*** to invasive species concerns. With human transfer as the greatest risk for the introduction of most invasive species – particularly Asian carp – the only effective solution is a comprehensive region-wide plan for controlling invasive species populations.

### *Enacting a comprehensive long-term solution:*

We urge Congress to put GLMRIS' findings to use, by funding and promoting a comprehensive and regional invasive species control programs that provides long-term benefits. Any effective control program must:

- **Maintain the value of America's waterway transportation network.**
  - The economic well-being of the Midwest and the broader Mississippi region is inextricably linked with the valuable waterway transportation infrastructure that has served the region for over a century. A study done for the Ports of Indiana<sup>1</sup> found that locks are responsible for over \$1.9 billion in economic activity and 17,655 jobs across the region. Many industries are not viable without access to the cost benefits provided by waterway transportation.  
(<https://mpcms.blob.core.windows.net/6864e884-8313-4d1f-97b8-696c824cfd60/docs/aa0603d3-f527-4849-b812-b79154339e8b/37435711-final-study-economic-impacts-of-waterborne-shipping-on-the-indiana-lakeshore-1-.pdf>)
  
- **Protect water quality in the Great Lakes.**
  - Separation will result in diversion of sewage from Illinois and Indiana into Lake Michigan, substantially impacting water quality.

➤ **Address flooding and quality of life concerns for impacted communities.**

- The closure or separation of any part of the regional waterway network will disrupt current flood control measures that rely on the lock system.
- Communities built around the waterways for centuries depend on the waterways for much more than flood control. Recreational use and activity generates substantial value for local communities. And as the most environmentally efficient method for moving freight products, any closure or limitation will result in substantial quality of life impacts for communities facing increased truck or rail traffic.

***The Next Steps:***

We support the Corp's efforts to continue advancing control efforts for invasive species and offering policy makers with new control options.

Any successful program must ensure the maintenance of America's premiere waterway network; protect the water quality of the Great Lakes; and address flooding and other quality of life impacts for impacted communities.

Solutions that will be most successful are those that control the populations of high risk invasive species like Asian carp, while preventing reproducing populations from establishing in the Great Lakes.

Unfortunately, a decision by Congress in the 2012 transportation bill to expedite the GLMRIS study limits the next steps for the options presented in GLMRIS. Before action can be taken, most control measures must undergo a NEPA review process that includes stakeholder input.

GLMRIS does provide important information for policy makers to consider when evaluating which solutions to advance. The report demonstrates that options like separation have significant drawbacks – including substantial environmental challenges, long timelines for implementation, high costs, and questionable effectiveness. Other options, such as population control efforts, show a great deal more promise at substantially lower cost.