

MEMORANDUM FOR Files

SUBJECT: 22 September 2011 Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) Executive Steering Committee (ESC) Meeting

1. **Purpose.** The purpose of the meeting was to provide study updates to and receive comments and other feedback from ESC member agencies.
2. **Attendees.** See attached list of attendees.
3. **Summary of Discussions.** A synopsis of discussion follows.

Opening remarks were given by COL Jack Drolet. Gary O'Keefe, GLMRIS Program Manager, then reviewed actions completed since the last GLMRIS ESC meeting on 6 July 2011. Key points:

- a. MOUs were executed by USACE with USCG and with USEPA for the two agencies to act as cooperating agencies under NEPA for the development of the GLMRIS NEPA documentation.
- b. Two interim products were released - the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) White Paper on 27 July, the NEPA Scoping Report on 9 September.
- c. Hydrologic and hydraulic reviews of the other aquatic pathways have been completed, and biological assessments of the high and medium risk pathways is underway.
- d. The Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) team met with USEPA and IL EPA on 9 August to discuss regulatory requirements, and potential environmental impacts of possible measures.
- e. Meeting held in Indiana with State of Indiana, NRCS, The Nature Conservancy, CEQ and USGS to discuss potential Wabash-Maumee solutions.
- f. Upcoming public releases: Baseline Assessment of Non-Cargo CAWS Traffic, September 2011; ANS Control Technologies Report, December 2011; Baseline Assessment of Cargo CAWS Traffic, December 2011; and Wabash-Maumee Controls Report, December 2011.

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Dave Wethington, Focus Area 1 (CAWS) PM, provided an update on the Aquatic Nuisance Species White Paper, which was discussed at the previous ESC and released to the public on 27 July 2011. A teleconference was held on 10 August to allow stakeholders to ask questions and make comments. No changes to the list of high risk species came out of the call, and what modifications were made have been documented and posted to the GLMRIS website. While no changes to the high risk species were made due to the stakeholder comments, one species, the New Zealand Mudsnaill, was dropped based on a comment received from USFWS during agency review, dropping the number to 39 species.

Dave Wethington then provided an overview of the Baseline Assessment of Non-Cargo CAWS Traffic, which would be released on 28 September. The assessment documents use of the CAWS by commercial passenger, recreational, and government vessels. This information provides a basis from which the study team will compare expected changes as the result of ANS transfers between the two basins or future implementation of ANS controls.

Marty Wargo, Focus Area 2 (Other Pathways) PM, provided an update on Focus Area 2. Hydrologic and hydraulic risk assessments have been completed, including evaluations of additional sites in Pennsylvania (no viable sites identified). An in progress review was held on 20 July with the Agency Technical Review (ATR) Team (USACE, NRCS, NOAA, USGS, USFWS, GLFC, MiDNR, ILDNR). Some data gaps were identified, but overall view was that approach was sound. Biological risk assessments are underway on 13 of the original 18 sites, with the majority to occur in October and November. Final ATR would start in October with Wabash-Maumee and the low risk sites, with medium and high risk sites completed in January. It was noted that a letter has been received from several NGOs requesting that a 60 day comment period be provided at the completion of the risk assessment process. ACTIONS:

- a. Provide ESC members a copy of the letter received from NGOs.
- b. Requested of ESC members that they consider allowing

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their agency logos to be included on the final report.

- c. Requested that states identify any other pathway risk assessment efforts currently underway.
- d. Requested that states allow their agency representatives to participate with USACE in hosting a webinar and/or meeting during the public comment period.

Harry Hottell provided an update on the Wabash-Maumee study effort. The Controls report is expected to be ready for ATR in October, with detailed costs to be developed for the top five alternatives.

Tim Eder of the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) provided an update on the GLC/Great Lakes St. Lawrence Cities Initiative hydrologic separation study. The study has identified 20 sites for possible barrier construction, which will be combined into three options with associated mitigation strategies, timelines, cost estimates and cost benefit analysis. The study will be ready for public release in late January 2012. Public meetings will be held in Chicago, northern Indiana and Toronto in late October to discuss the draft results.

Chris Goddard of the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) provided an update on the Bi-National Risk Assessment being led by Departments of Fisheries and Oceans Canada. The study, which is focused solely on Asian carp, will assess the potential for arrival, survival, establishment and spread of the species within Great Lakes waters, as well as assessing the potential biological impact to the Great Lakes. A follow-on study will look at socio-economic impacts. The report was being written 19-23 September, is expected to undergo peer review 7-10 November, and will be released to the public in January 2012.

ACTION: Gary O'Keefe to work with GLC and GLFC staff to coordinate USACE public releases in December/January with the releases of the separation study and the bi-national risk assessment.

Gary O'Keefe discussed the proposed Terms of Reference for the

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ESC. A draft would be sent out for review and comment, with the
goal of posting the final version to the GLMRIS website by end
of October. ACTION: Re-send draft terms of reference to ESC with
request for comments.

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Attendees:

USACE: COL Jack Drolet, COL, Frederic Drummond, Ann Navaro, Felicia Kirksey, Gary O'Keefe, Mike Saffran, Dave Wethington, Marty Wargo, Kelly Baerwaldt, Jacqueline Tate, Harry Hottell, Shelley Tule.

CEQ: John Goss, Jim Bredin, Paul Angelone

USCG: LCDR Erik Pickering

NOAA: Felix Martinez

USFWS: Mike Weimer

USEPA: Bill Bolen

Great Lakes Fishery Commission: Chris Goddard

Great Lakes Commission: Tim Eder

International Joint Commission: Mark Burrows

Illinois: Rob Sulski (EPA), Frank Kudrna (Port)

Indiana: John Davis (DNR)

Michigan: Patricia Birkholz (OGL), Tammy Newcomb (DNR)

New York: Jennifer Tate (DEC)

Pennsylvania: Tim Schaeffer (B&FC)

Wisconsin: Bob Wakeman (DNR)

MWRD: Kevin Fitzpatrick, Ed Staudacher