FEBRUARY 2010 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY FACT SHEET

Great Lakes Commission des Grands Lacs

Stopping the Spread of Asian Carp: An Action Agenda for Congress

Priorities for Stopping Asian Carp

The Great Lakes Commission calls on Congress and the Administration to take immediate action to keep Asian carp from invading the Great Lakes. While the regional response has been strong, additional resources and authorizations are needed to enable federal agencies to move aggressively to halt the spread of the carp. It is not too late to prevent this ecological and economic catastrophe!

Request: Support the following actions to provide immediate and long-term solutions to Asian carp.

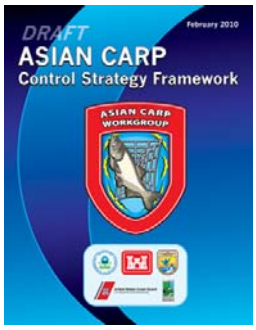
- Fully fund short-term actions in the comprehensive Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework, including completing the electric barrier system and establishing structural measures to prevent the inadvertent introduction of Asian carp into the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal from floodwaters in the Des Plaines River.
- Immediately provide significant resources to expedite the investigation and implementation of ecological separation as a permanent solution to prevent the transfer of aquatic invasive species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins.
- Direct the Army Corps of Engineers to complete feasibility studies related to ecological separation by September 30, 2011.
- Reinforce authority and provide funding to the Army Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies to take action beyond September 2010 to implement any measures necessary to prevent further migration of Asian carp.

Status of Asian Carp

Asian carp are established in the Mississippi and Illinois rivers and are migrating toward Lake Michigan. Monitoring has confirmed their presence in the upper Illinois River 60 miles from the lake. In 2009 a carp was found in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC) below the electric barrier in the Lockport Pool. In January 2010 carp DNA was found in Lake Michigan in Calumet Harbor and in the North Shore Channel near the Wilmette pumping station (see map on reverse). While DNA testing indicates that carp are present in these areas, no live carp have been found above the electric barrier.

The Federal Response

In February 2010 the U.S. EPA-led Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee established the *Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework* to integrate contributions from federal and state agencies and other partners. The framework is intended to provide a comprehensive approach that builds on past research, monitoring and control efforts. It outlines a series of short and long-term actions to combat the spread of Asian carp, with a projected cost of $79 million. The strategy proposes that $58 million be allocated from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and $21 million from base agency budgets. Federal agencies plan to update the framework as new actions are identified.



Resources from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

Controlling aquatic invasive species and preventing new introductions is one of the GLRI's key focus areas. The Initiative will fund numerous agency programs as well as research and monitoring aimed at Asian carp. Responding to the current situation, $13.5 million in FY 2010 GLRI funds have been reallocated to support immediate actions to prevent carp from getting into the CSSC above the electric barrier system. The FY 2011 spending plan is expected to allocate additional resources toward this end.

Keep Great Lakes Restoration on Track

Ongoing control efforts for Asian carp must not derail the broader effort to restore the Great Lakes. The GLRI is off to a strong start. Great Lakes states and other entities recently submitted nearly 1,300 restoration projects seeking more than one billion dollars. A permanent solution to prevent carp from entering the Great Lakes from Chicago-area waterways is complex and will take years implement. In the meantime, it is vital to maintain funding for the GLRI and sustain momentum in restoring the Great Lakes.

See reverse for a map of Chicago-area waterways and locations where Asian carp DNA has been detected, along with additional information on efforts to keep carp out of the Great Lakes.

Great Lakes Commission des Grands Lacs

Contact Tim Eder, *teder@glc.org* or Matt Doss, *mdoss@glc.org*
2805 S. Industrial Hwy., Suite 100 Ann Arbor, MI 48104-6791
tel: 734-971-9135 *fax:* 734-971-9150 **www.glc.org/restore**

Actions Proposed in the Asian Carp Control Strategy

In the near term the *Asian Carp Control Strategy Framework* focuses on keeping Asian carp from establishing populations in the Great Lakes. It will evaluate the operation of Chicago's navigation locks; increased monitoring; construction of barriers to prevent fish passage during floods; completing a third electric barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (CSSC); and studying options to modify the operation of existing structures to prevent the migration of carp into Lake Michigan. In the long term, the strategy calls for new research on tools for controlling Asian carp; educational and enforcement efforts to prevent live carp from being sold or transferred; additional chemical treatments; assessing the possibility of transfer of carp in ballast and bilge water; expanding the market for Asian carp; and studies to permanently prevent the interbasin transfer of aquatic invasive species.

The Dispersal Barrier System

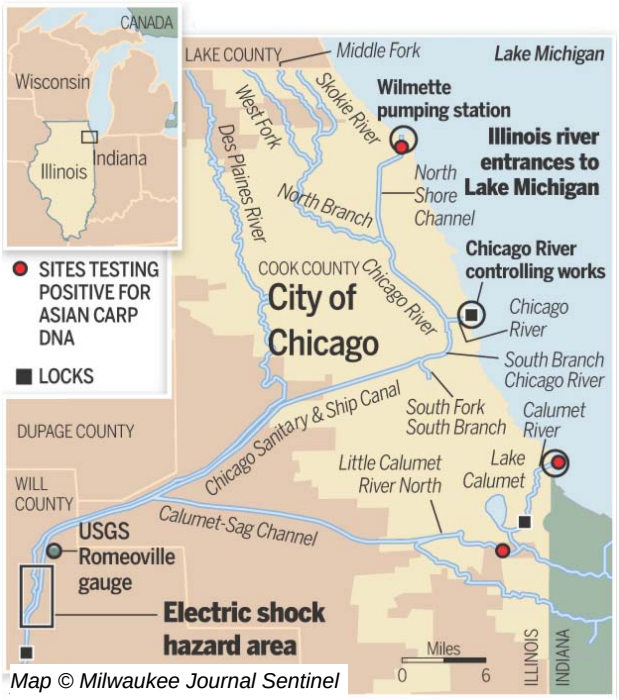
Since 2002 the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has operated a dispersal barrier system on the CSSC, a man-made part of the Illinois River system that links the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. In 2007 the Corps was authorized to upgrade the original demonstration barrier (Barrier I), build a second barrier (Barrier II) and operate the system at full federal cost. Barrier II consists of two electrical arrays and control houses, known as Barriers IIA and IIB. They can be operated independently, but the ultimate goal is to operate both at the same time. Barrier IIA was completed in 2006 and is now in continuous operation. Barrier IIB is expected to be completed in 2010.

Army Corps of Engineers Studies

The Corps is conducting two studies authorized in 2007. The **Dispersal Barrier Efficacy Study** is investigating hazards that might reduce the effectiveness of the electric barriers, including the possibility that carp could bypass them via the adjacent Des Plaines River or other water-ways during flooding. An Interim Report was released in early 2010 and other portions are expected later this year. The **Aquatic Nuisance Species Interbasin Transfer Study** (or "feasibility study") will investigate the feasibility of options and technologies to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River watersheds via the CSSC and other aquatic pathways, including separating the two watersheds. The study began in 2009 and the Administration requested $400,000 in FY 2011. Congress should increase funding for this complex challenge.

Emergency Response Authority

The Corps' FY2010 appropriations provided authority to implement recommendations in the efficacy study and emergency measures to prevent aquatic nuisance species from bypassing the dispersal barrier system and entering the Great Lakes. In December 2009 $13.5 million from the GLRI's FY 2010 funding was reallocated to the Corps for this purpose. This authority will expire in September 2010.



Map © Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Lock Closure

In December 2009 the Michigan Attorney General filed a petition with the U.S. Supreme Court seeking temporary closure of the O'Brien Lock in the Calumet-Sag Channel and the Chicago Controlling Works in the Illinois River until a permanent solution can be found to prevent Asian carp from getting into Lake Michigan. The court has denied the request. Those opposed to lock closure cite economic losses from disruption of commercial and recreational boat traffic, and the need to open the locks to prevent flooding. Ultimately, a sustainable solution is needed that permanently prevents the passage of aquatic invasive species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins while retaining benefits from com-mercial navigation, recreational boating and flood control.

Ecological Separation

Separating Lake Michigan from the Mississippi River is the preferred permanent solution to prevent Asian carp and other aquatic invasive species from moving between the two watersheds. In the early 1900s a complex system of rivers and canals was built in the Chicago area to divert wastewater from Lake Michigan to the Illinois River. The waterways are also used for commercial and recreational boating, flood control and emergency response. Ecological separation would require modifying water structures or building physical barriers to stop the flow of water while accommodating commercial traffic and other needs. In 2008 the Alliance for the Great Lakes published a preliminary feasibility report on separating the two watersheds. The Corps is working on a full feasibility study that considers ecological separation and other options and technologies. Congress should direct the Corps to focus on ecological separation.

More Information

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: www.greatlakesrestoration.us
Asian Carp Management: www.asiancarp.org
Asian Carp Control Strategy: http://www.asiancarp.org/RegionalCoordination/documents/AsianCarpControlStrategyFramework.pdf
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Asian Carp Factsheet: http://asiancarp.org/RegionalCoordination/documents/AsianCarpBriefingPackage.pdf
Army Corps of Engineers-Dispersal Barrier: http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/projects/fish_barrier/index.html
Army Corps of Engineers-Efficacy Study: http://www.lrc.usace.army.mil/pao/ANS_DispersalBarrierEfficacyStudy_Interim_I_FINAL.pdf
Alliance for the Great Lakes Ecological Separation Study: http://www.greatlakes.org/Document.Doc?id=473
Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species: www.glc.org/ans/panel