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**FLOW Staff to Issue Public Statement at Army Corps of Engineers Public
Comment Forums on the Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study**

TRAVERSE CITY – The United States Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) public comment forums on the Great Lakes Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) report makes the fifth of nine stops in Traverse City, MI on Thursday, January 23, 2014. FLOW, a Traverse-City based nonprofit water policy and education center, has prepared written comments and will make public statements during today’s forum that seeks public input on the new GLMRIS report. The study enumerates eight plans for keeping invasive species, namely Asian Carp, out of the Great Lakes. FLOW encourages the ACE to implement plans that undertake complete hydrologic separation of the Great Lakes Basin and the Mississippi River Basin.

“We need strong Great Lakes policies that protect water quality and quantity, and ensure that invasive species never reach our common waters of the Great Lakes,” says FLOW Communication Designer Allison Voglesong. The present systems for keeping invasive Asian Carp out of the Great Lakes are a series of electrical barriers, but these alone are insufficient, and additional measures are needed urgently.

“To address this complex ecological and multi-jurisdictional problem, there must be a complete hydrologic separation between the Great Lakes Basin and the Mississippi River Basin,” says Voglesong. Cost estimates for ACE plans including complete hydrologic separation vary, upwards of \$15 billion in some cases. “From an economic standpoint the Great Lakes support a \$7 billion fishery and a \$62 billion overall economy,” she says, “There is too much at risk, and the cost of inaction will be far greater than the investments considered here today.”

Voglesong outlines three statements and three questions for the ACE to consider:

- The 25-year implementation timeframe is too long, and we urge research into a realistic but shorter timeframe;
- The research in the GLMRIS study is thorough, but the public and our decision-makers need better guidance from the agency for prioritizing possible solutions;
- We are proponents for plans that establish complete hydrologic separation for all five possible pathways.
- Is it economically and logistically feasible to scale back portions of these plans that are outside of the scope of managing invasives, such as water treatment, sediment remediation, and flood mitigation?
- And, are there risks with eliminating these components?
- Could other plans for complete separation, like those released by GLC and the Cities Initiative, be substituted or reconciled with your complete separation plans to find an economically viable middle-ground?

Voglesong urges the long-term implications of the plan. She says, “Doubtless, there are incomparable, difficult tradeoffs involved in solving this problem. The bottom line, however, is that we must protect the delicate ecological balance of the Great Lakes from destructive invasive species because the waters of the Great Lakes Basin are our shared commons, and our legacy for generations to come.”

For more information:

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