





Preventing Establishment of Asian Carp in the Great Lakes: The Wabash / Maumee River Connection


What is the issue?

There is a potential pathway for invasive Asian carp to move into Lake Erie during flooding via a natural connection of glacial origin between the Wabash and Maumee River basins.

How is this possible?

 Spawning populations of Asian Carp were found in late May 2010 in the Wabash River near Lafayette, Indiana, and large adult Bighead Asian carp were pulled from the Wabash River at the base of the Roush Dam about 20 miles south of the Fort Wayne area in 2004.

 The Wabash River (Mississippi) drainage basin abuts the Maumee River (Great Lakes) drainage basin in Northeastern Indiana at the location of the Eagle Marsh in Fort Wayne.

 A stream called “Graham McCulloch Ditch” from the Wabash Basin and a stream called “Junk Ditch” from the Maumee Basin are separated by less than one mile of flat land in Eagle Marsh, a wetland restored from farmland. When the Maumee River floods, water backflows and may flood the Eagle Marsh with enough water to theoretically allow the passage of carp from the Wabash Basin into the Maumee Basin.

 It was thought this only happened during large and infrequent floods, but USGS streamgauge data

indicates that it could happen at lower floods. Preliminary data shows that the Maumee River has gotten high enough to flood Eagle Marsh at least four times between 2004 and the date of this publication (the gage was installed in 2003).

What is the flood route?

During a flood, the potential route for fish from the Wabash River would be: up the Wabash River to the Little River; up the Little River to Graham McCulloch Ditch; up Graham McCulloch Ditch to Eagle Marsh; across Eagle Marsh to Junk Ditch to the Maumee River.

Are there any barriers currently in place to stop the Asian carp?

There are no natural or man-made barriers to stop fish in that route, except for an old and deteriorated low head dam (approximately six feet high) on the Little River, which is drowned out during floods. Erosion at one abutment of the dam has created a potential fish ladder.

What is being done to stop this from occurring?

An interagency group met at Eagle Marsh on Friday July 9 to discuss potential fish barriers at key location(s) on the Marsh. Meeting attendees discussed potential solutions and agreed to pursue short-term solutions such as putting in fencing similar to what is being

built on the Des Plaines River to prevent inter-basin transfer; and longer term efforts such as hydraulic and biological data acquisition and hydrologic simulations to develop viable methods to restrict Asian carp movement during annual or more frequent flooding-related interconnections in the basin.

As part of the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Inter-basin Study (GLRMIS), the US Army Corps of Engineers is forming a team of the best experts within the USACE and the State and Federal resource agencies surrounding the Great Lakes. The team will conduct a systematic exploratory survey and produce a concise characterization of the risks of Aquatic Invasive Species transfer at all potentially significant hydraulic connections between the basins. A reconnaissance level risk characterization report is scheduled to be completed in September 2010, and it will include the Little River-Maumee River connection.

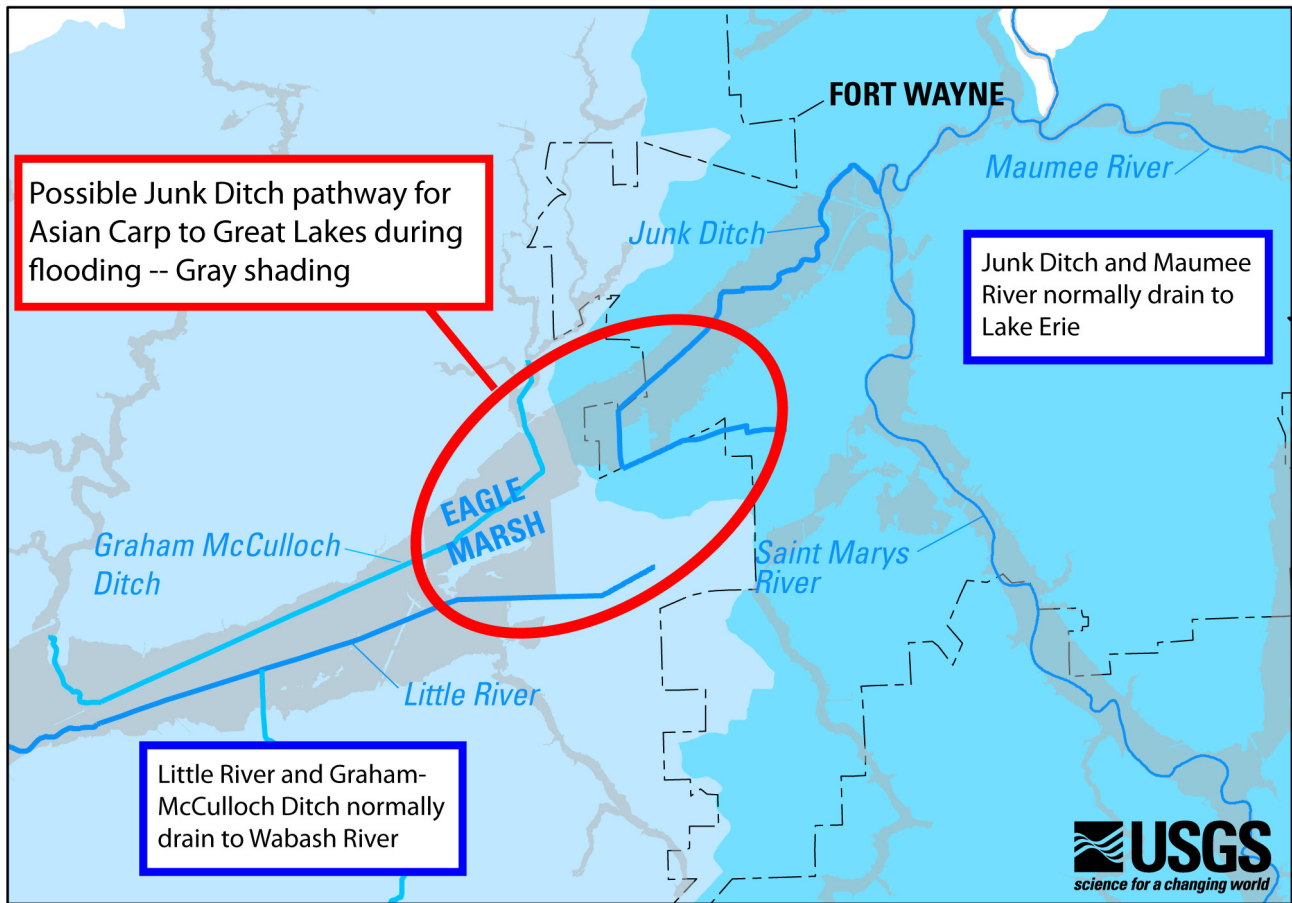


Ft. Wayne, IN: Stakeholders meeting to discuss one potential Asian carp pathway from the Wabash to Maumee River.

Photo Credit: USGS

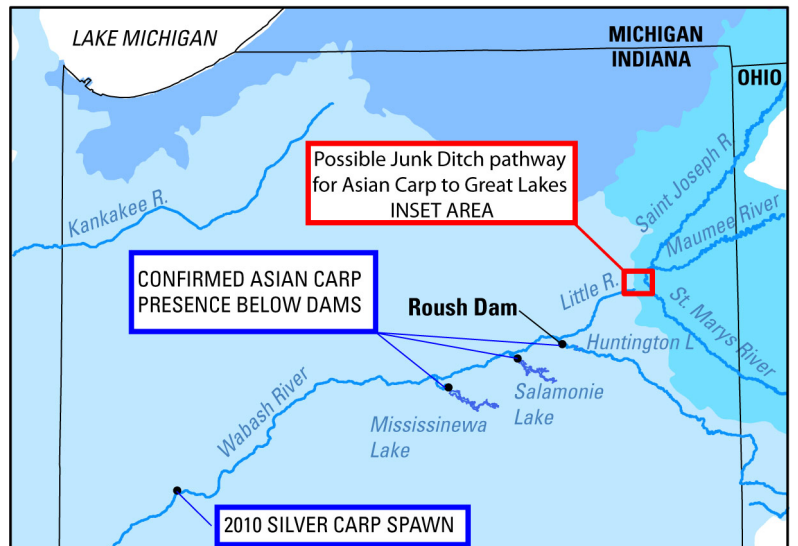
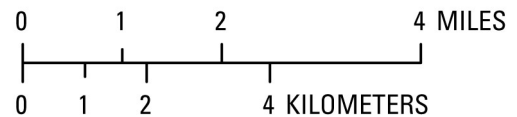
Stakeholders: • Allen County Soil & Water Conservation District • IN Dept. of Natural Resources • Little River Wetlands Project • Maumee River Basin Commission • U.S. Army Corps of Engineers • U.S. Dept. of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service • U.S. Environmental Protection Agency • U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service • U.S. Geological Survey

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EXPLANATION

- FLOOD PLAIN -- approximate
- DRAINS TO LAKE ERIE
- DRAINS TO LAKE MICHIGAN
- DRAINS TO MISSISSIPPI RIVER



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