

STATE REPORTS



ILLINOIS

There is good news from Illinois. Well, maybe it is good news, but only time will tell.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced recently that it will activate a new electric barrier, known as Barrier IIA, in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal near Lockport, Ill.

The Army Corps has been operating a similar demonstration barrier in the Sanitary and Ship Canal since 2002. Both Barrier IIA and the demonstration barrier will operate at the same time to provide redundant back up. Both will operate at field strength of one-volt per inch. The purpose of the barriers is to block the passage of aquatic nuisance species between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. Currently, the greatest concern is preventing Asian carp from moving into the Great Lakes.

Chicago District Commander, Col. Vincent V. Quarles, hailed the activation of Barrier IIA as a significant step forward in halting the spread of invasive species via the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. He cautioned, however, that much more work remains to be done.

"The barriers are not a panacea," Quarles said. "They serve to plug the biggest hole, but much more work needs to be done and we all need to start looking at options for blocking other pathways."

Although Barrier IIA was designed to be able to operate at levels higher than one-volt per inch, the barrier has not yet completed safety testing at higher levels. The Army Corps is working with the Coast Guard and marine industry waterway users to complete higher voltage safety testing this summer. The Army Corps is also working with fisheries biologists to determine the optimal voltage required to repel all sizes of fish, including smaller juveniles.

Results of the safety testing and voltage requirement studies will be used to determine future voltage settings for the barrier project. In the interim, Quarles said the Army Corps and the Coast Guard are developing potential options for operating at higher voltages if juvenile fish are detected in the barrier area

The U.S. Coast Guard has established a regulated navigation area and safety zone in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal around the navigable waters located adjacent to and over the barrier system. The temporary interim rule places navigational and operational restrictions on all vessels transiting those navigable waters, including the requirement for all commercial red flag vessels to be escorted through the area by Army Corps-provided bow boats.



INDIANA

Implementation! You may have noticed that Hoosiers have been a mite boastful about our state's enactment of implementation language when we passed the Great Lakes Compact! But we cannot rest and must continue our work.

And here are two of the next steps: