

# **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **ASIAN CARP TO SHUT OUT CHICAGO BOATERS**

CHICAGO—DECEMBER 29, 2009—In an attempt to prevent the Asian carp from entering the Great Lakes, the state of Michigan filed a lawsuit on Dec. 21, 2009, to enforce the closure of Chicago-area locks. Since then, Ohio and Minnesota have also joined the lawsuit as plaintiffs.

The Great Lakes Boating Federation is calling for a public hearing, during which all Great Lakes stakeholders using the Chicago Locks have an opportunity to express their concerns about the locks closure. As it stands, some 7,000 Chicago area boaters would be adversely affected by the closure. Boaters plan to file an amicus brief, to accompany the defense by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Permanently closing the locks would prevent boaters from accessing inland waterways from Lake Michigan or vice versa. It remains unknown how these recreational boaters would be accommodated if the Supreme Court sides with the states of Michigan, Minnesota and Ohio, and favors closing the locks.

The river system and the Great Lakes are integral parts of the boating scene in Chicago, and they are used recreationally from April to November each year. Area boaters utilize the Chicago locks during their migratory seasons, as a way to travel from Lake Michigan to the cold-weather storage facilities for their vessels, and from the locks to Lake Michigan at the beginning of the boating season.

Asian carp can weigh up to 100 pounds, and can leap into the air when vessels pass, injuring boaters and damaging vessels. This agitation is attributed to vibrations from the motors of passing boats. The Great Lakes invasion by Asian carp could have horrific consequences for area fish, and could disrupt the sport fishing of some 73 percent of the 1.5 million boaters on the Great Lakes. The Asian carp could fundamentally disturb the Great Lakes ecosystem by consuming the plankton at the bottom of the food chain. Local fish depend upon this nourishment, indicating that many of them are likely to disappear if enough Asian carp are able to swim upstream into the Great Lakes to form a self-sufficient population and dominate the food chain.

“Without a workable solution to access the river from the lake, boaters will be unable to continue using the river system that they have utilized for decades recreationally and for storing their boats. Boaters would like to help protect the Great Lakes from the Asian carp, and to know what solutions are available for them to participate in this endeavor,” said F. Ned Dikmen, chairman of the Great Lakes Boating Federation. “Shutting the locks permanently could jeopardize the \$80 million economic impact that flows into Chicago’s economy. The Chicago Park District continues to depend on the \$15 million in

mooring fees it derives from Chicago boaters to subsidize the cost of creating and maintaining jogging tracks, tennis courts and other recreational amenities that Chicago citizens enjoy,” he added.

The Great Lakes Boating Federation is the advocacy voice and marketplace for the 4.3 million boaters on the Great Lakes ([www.greatlakesboatingfederation.com](http://www.greatlakesboatingfederation.com)).