**Chicago Area Waterway System**

**Aquatic Invasive Species Stakeholder Group**

**Goals and Operating Principles**

**Adopted 4/20/18**

1. **GOAL**

The goal ofthe Chicago Area Waterways System (CAWS) Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Stakeholder Group (Group) is to contribute to efforts to develop and move forward with implementation of a viable and sustainable plan to prevent the two-way movement of AIS through the CAWS, while maintaining other beneficial functions of the system, by the end of 2020.

1. **FUNCTIONS OF THE GROUP**

The primary function of the Group is to serve as a forum for the exchange of information on matters related to efforts to prevent the movement of AIS through the CAWS, and the relationship between those efforts and other major interests, including business, shipping, water management, recreation, ecology and urban development. This information exchange is meant to inform members of the latest science, policy decisions, and other variables necessary for them to make individual, organizational, collaborative, or consensus recommendations and in some cases take actions on options to prevent AIS movement between waterways in northeastern Illinois and northwest Indiana and the Great Lakes Basin through the CAWS.

A secondary function of the Group is to provide the input of the Members to appropriate decision-making individuals or bodies regarding policy, budget, planning or operational decisions related to preventing the movement of AIS through the CAWS. This will typically involve discussions with government officials during meetings and/or sharing meeting minutes summarizing viewpoints and key considerations. Audiences with which the perspectives of Group members may be shared may include federal, state, provincial and local elected officials, agencies, or departments in the U.S. or Canada. Where possible, this input will articulate shared opinions and differences that may stem from Members’ respective geography, industry, or perspective. The intent is to organize and provide decision-makers with the varied insights, expertise and concerns of a diverse group of informed stakeholders that, collectively, broadly reflect the range of entities interested in or affected by measures to prevent AIS transfer through the CAWS.

There may be occasions when, following minimal negotiation led by the facilitator, the Group is able to express positions or recommendations to the appropriate decision-making individuals or bodies in advance of policy, budget, planning or operational decisions relevant to the prevention of the movement of AIS through the CAWS. Full consensus is an aspiration of the Group, and offering unanimous positions exhibits the full manifestation of the Group’s collective strength. In certain situations, recommendations may be expressed in ways that communicate a generally prevailing opinion while also acknowledging and expressing alternative viewpoints. The benefit of information exchange is in itself valuable, and should be not undermined or diminished by unsuccessful efforts to seek unanimity. See sub-section 5.f. for additional narrative on Group actions, decisions, and/or positions.

**3. GENERAL OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

* Members acknowledge the goal and functions of this Group, and will adhere to discussions and interactions consistent with them.
* Members acknowledge that AIS movement through the CAWS is a significant concern, and appropriate actions to prevent AIS movement between the Basins are necessary. The Group will discuss the consequences of AIS migration, and a range of viable options and potential solutions.
* Members also acknowledge that while Asian Carp are a visible and very important species about which to be concerned, there are numerous other species that may be of concern in terms of movement between the Mississippi River Basin and the Great Lakes. Strategies for controlling AIS need to consider this variety of species. With regard to Asian Carp, group discussions will generally focus on options and alternatives between no additional controls (beyond the current practices and controls) at one end of the spectrum, and full separation via a constructed barrier at the other end of the spectrum.
* This Group is convened by and for participants who willingly attend and participate in meetings, assess and analyze presented information, and share input with other participants. Further information on roles and participants is provided below.
* Members commit to transparent, truthful and thorough discussion and explanation of their positions, concerns, and AIS-related activities away from the proceedings of this group. Members agree to be honest and forthcoming with each other and recognize that discussion topics are a result of engaged participants who want to learn from each other. Note that Members are not under an absolute obligation to disclose all AIS-related activities outside of proceedings of the Group, but trust will best be achieved across the Group and unfortunate surprises can be avoided if Members share with each other the positions, views, and significant actions of their organizations relevant to the topics at hand.
* Nothing prohibits Members from taking actions outside of this group, for example, advocating for a position regarding budgets or AIS control measure plans. However, participants will seek to be forthcoming about their positions or expected actions, and will strive to treat other members of the Group with respect in internal and external communications.
* Members agree not to speak on behalf of the Group nor to make pronouncements about decisions or positions of the Group to other organizations, or in other forums, or to the press, except when the Group has formally adopted a statement or position. In such cases Members should use the specific wording on the statement or position agreed upon by the Group. Members are encouraged to speak with constituents (see following bullet) and other groups about meeting topics, and should use the meeting summary documents in order to reflect discussions and statements as accurately as possible. Summary documents of meetings, once approved, can be distributed as a means of ensuring accuracy in reporting on Group matters.
* Members agree to seek the input from their organizations on matters to be discussed during Group meetings in advance of those meetings, and to share the views and experiences of their organizations when relevant to topics being discussed. The facilitator and Steering Committee will disseminate agendas and discussion topics with sufficient notice so that each Member may seek input in advance of discussions. In this way Members can be a conduit of information to and from their organization and regularly inform and consult the leadership and membership of their organizations about the work of the Group.
* In an occasion where a consensus position or recommendation seems possible, Members will participate fully and transparently in the facilitator’s efforts to negotiate a unanimous position. And, if unanimous consensus is not feasible in a timeline deemed reasonable by the facilitator, Members agree to not belabor that point, and to return to information sharing or other productive activities.
* Members can abstain from formally expressing a position on a topic or casting a vote at any time.

**4. ROLES/PARTICIPANTS**

1. Members. The Group consists of Members with knowledge of and/or interest in approaches for reducing the risks of AIS movement between the Great Lakes and Upper Mississippi Basins. The Group seeks to have inclusive membership representing a wide breadth of interests and knowledge in order to explore and understand the many dimensions of the relevant issues and ideas. Members may include stakeholder organizations such as constituency groups, membership organizations, civic organizations, and regional or local governments (more below).

The Group Administrative Agent will maintain a list of Group members. Group members can drop out if they discontinue participation in meetings and deliberations. New members can be added to the Group if existing Members see the importance or benefits of adding a new voice, if the incoming member has expressed a desire to join, and if the incoming member agrees to adhere to the goals and operating principles articulated in this document. This process is outlined in sub-section 5.e.

As a general rule, Members of the Group are expected to represent interests in one or more of these topics, to have some level of subject matter expertise in one or more of these topics, or to represent organizations working the Mississippi River basin, Great Lakes basin, or CAWS-adjacent communities that affect or are affected by these issues.

As a general rule regional or local government agencies (whose actions are most likely to be compelled or motivated by the authorities, decisions and funding of federal/state/provincial governments) can be Members. It is recognized that some of these agencies may themselves play a role in the design and implementation of solutions.

Members will attend meetings in person or by phone to the maximum possible extent. Members should appoint an alternate(s) to participate in meetings when the member cannot attend. Alternates should be selected who have knowledge of the relevant subject matter to allow for productive and efficient discussions and deliberations during the meeting.

1. Ex Officio members. The Steering Committee may designate non-voting Ex Officio members to provide representation from agencies with a role or authority related to AIS prevention through the CAWS or associated issues. As a general rule, agents of the United States or Canadian governments, as well as state and provincial representatives, will fall into this membership category. These representatives are often in the position to authorize, fund, design, build, regulate, operate and/or maintain the range of solutions most likely to be implemented. Ex Officio members can share updates and information with Members, and listen to ideas and input from Members.
2. Observers and Subject Matter Experts. Individuals with subject matter expertise may be invited to meetings where they can add to discussions, for example a university professor with expertise on AIS. Meetings of the Group will be open to the public to attend in person as Observers. In the event an Observer or Subject Matter Expert wishes to become a Member or Ex Officio member, the standard process of vetting a new Member will apply (see sub-section 5.e).

d. Steering Committee. The full Group will identify and maintain a Steering Committee. The Steering Committee will be a subset of the full Group, typically comprised of 6 to 8 members. It is anticipated Steering Committee members will volunteer for this role and will serve a 2-year term, but may withdraw from the role at any time. Committee member terms will be staggered to ensure some continuity in the Committee composition. Nothing prevents an individual or organization from serving for multiple terms. The Steering Committee will include a diverse membership with varying interests and constituency groups represented. Members will be asked to volunteer their time on the Steering Committee.

The role of the Steering Committee will be to plan meetings and take actions to facilitate the effective functioning of the Group. Among the responsibilities of the Steering Committee will be to plan meeting topics and agendas, solicit input from Members to identify issues to be considered by the Group, identify subject matter experts and Members who can provide updates/briefings on issues during meetings, encourage active participation in meetings, monitor Group participation and possible additions or removals, and generally lay out a path for Group operations to maximize achievement of Group goals. The Steering Committee may also create framework drafts for annual or bi-annual Group workplans.

At the first 2018 Steering Committee meeting following adoption of this document, volunteers will be sought for one vs. two year terms. The Steering Committee in existence at the time of adopting this document shall remain in place for the duration of 2018. At the first 2019 meeting, and year thereafter, the Group shall invite volunteers to join the Steering Committee, replacing those committee members whose term has expired. The outgoing Steering Committee will review volunteer candidates for the incoming Steering Committee and select a group that represents the diverse perspectives of the Group

1. Facilitator(s). The Group intends that a Facilitator(s) may be retained to help plan for, conduct, and follow up on meetings. Facilitators will work with the Steering Committee to plan meeting agendas, send out meeting notices, and distribute other materials, for example meeting summaries. The Facilitator(s) will administer meetings, ensuring inclusive and productive discussions during meetings, and capture discussions and viewpoints expressed during meetings. The Facilitator(s) will use their training and skills to ensure that meeting time is used efficiently and productively and to ensure that all perspectives are heard. The Facilitator(s) will work to minimize non-productive conversations, minimize conflicts and help resolve issues and disagreements to the extent appropriate for the effective functioning of the Group. When requested, they will develop communications from the group, reflecting various perspectives, including majority and minority positions. And, when occasions arise in which a unanimous position or recommendation is possible with minimal negotiation, the facilitator will navigate that process.
2. Work Groups. The Group may form work groups or sub-committees as appropriate to explore specific issues and provide information for the Group to understand and consider.
3. Group Administrative Agent. It is anticipated the Group will have an Administrative Agent who will manage various logistical matters associated with the effective functioning of the Group. The Administrative Agent may apply for and receive funding to support Group operations, and will serve as the fiscal agent for the Group. The Administrative Agent will also work closely with the facilitator(s) on meeting arrangements, which may include identifying dates for meetings, arranging for meeting space, maintaining and updating the Group’s website, compiling and distributing information to members before or after meetings, and arranging nourishment during meetings. The Great Lakes Commission is currently the Administrative Agent, and is willing to continue in that role, but is not bound to remain in this role indefinitely.

The Group through the Administrative Agent will seek funding to support meetings and operations, but it is expected funds available will typically be limited. Group Members will seek out opportunities for cost-efficient operations, such as finding meeting rooms that can be used for free vs. contracting with a hotel.

**5. PROCEDURES AND LOGISTICS**

1. Open Meetings. The Group seeks to be transparent in its discussions and proceedings. Meetings of the Group will be open to the public to attend in person (as Observers). However, electronic recording will not be allowed, by members or observers, as this may stifle productive, frank discussions.
2. Meeting Summaries. Draft summaries of Group meetings will be developed by the facilitator(s), circulated to all parties for comment, and then provided to the Steering Committee for approval. Meeting summaries will be made available to the public (via web posting by the Administrative Agent) only after approval by the Steering Committee.
3. Agendas. Meeting agendas will be drafted by the Steering Committee and facilitator(s), accepting input and suggestions from members of the Group. A draft agenda will be distributed generally three weeks in advance of each in-person meeting, and one week in advance of conference calls when feasible. Agendas will be reviewed at the beginning of each meeting and will be refined, if necessary. It is hoped that the three week advance time will be sufficient for members to solicit their constituents for input on the relevant subjects to be discussed.

Topics to be discussed and deliberated upon by the Group may include:

* Plans and measures for preventing the movement of AIS to/from the Mississippi River basin and the Great Lakes basin through the CAWS;
* Physical, non-physical, operational, behavioral and environmental efforts to prevent AIS movement through the CAWS;
* Current and developing information on AIS locations and populations;
* Beneficial economic and environmental uses of the waterways;
* Water quality and wastewater systems;
* Stormwater management and flooding;
* Biological condition of AIS and native species, and ramifications of potential AIS solutions;
* Vitality and aspirations of CAWS-adjacent communities, businesses and native ecosystems;
* Other issues as suggested and presented by Members.

In setting meeting dates and agendas the Steering Committee and the Group will take into account the meeting topics and time commitments of Members and Ex Officio members associated with other coordinating committees and workgroups, and will be sensitive to people’s time and will seek to avoid duplication of discussions.

1. Caucus. Any subset of Group members may confer privately during or after a meeting as needed, and may invite the participation of others as resources. The facilitator(s) may also confer privately with members during or between meetings.
2. Membership Changes. New Members can be added to the Group, and Members may withdraw or have membership status be rescinded. The following guidelines apply when the Group is considering membership changes:
   * A stakeholder familiar with the goals and functions of the Group may contact the Group through the facilitator or a Member and request to be added as a Group Member. A Member may also propose that a person or organization be added to the Group. Information on the individual or organization and why they would be a worthwhile Member of the Group will need to be summarized and shared with the Group. Information about possible additions to the Group will be circulated ahead of a meeting with agenda materials when possible.
   * The Group will consider new memberships in person during meetings. If a majority of Members in attendance at the meeting in question support the addition of a new Member, the facilitator will confirm the determination and the Administrative Agent will add the individual or organization to the membership list.
   * A Member may withdraw from the Group at any time by giving notice to the facilitator and the Administrative Agent.
   * The Steering Committee may delete a Member from the membership roster if the Member has stopped attending meetings and has not responded to email contacts seeking to reinvigorate the Member’s participation.
   * As noted above, the Group seeks to have both inclusive membership and actual participation at meetings in order to represent a wide breadth of interests and knowledge in order to explore and understand the many dimensions of the relevant issues and ideas.
3. Group Actions/Decisions/Positions. As noted above, the primary function of the Group is to serve as a forum for exchange of information. Information reflecting a wide breadth of experience and perspectives can be shared across the group. This will help members be aware of current activities, pending actions or decisions, and differing points of view.

While the primary purpose or goal of the Group is not necessarily to take actions or publicly express a Group position or recommendations, there may be times that the Group may wish to do so. The following guidelines apply when the Group is considering taking an action:

* The Steering Committee and the facilitator will strive to identify action items (such as taking a Group position that can be communicated to decision makers) in advance of meetings, so that members can consider their organizational views and choices and come prepared to participate. To the maximum extent practicable, the goal is to have a “no surprises” policy for potential action items.
* During meetings, action items will be identified by the facilitator for consideration by the Group. If an action is being considered, the Group will strive for full unanimity on the action. The facilitator will pursue unanimity as an operational priority. The facilitator will “show of hands” poll the Group to determine if there is unanimity. In determining if there is unanimity on a decision or position, the facilitator will take into account any views or positions expressed by a member not in attendance at the meeting if the view or position was expressed to the facilitator and the Steering Committee in advance of the meeting. If there is consensus, this will be recorded in the meeting summary and implementation actions may proceed.
* If initial polling shows there is not unanimity across the Group, the facilitator will lead discussions to ascertain if with certain modifications or adjustments there is a position on which full consensus can be reached. Members will be able to express the rationale for their views. If, within a timeframe determined reasonable by the facilitator, full unanimity proves impossible, then the facilitator will pivot to determining what shared opinions and differences could be articulated in appropriate communications to relevant decision-makers in order to provide the collected, yet varied, perspectives of Group members. For example, a statement may be crafted which expresses a generally prevailing opinion while also acknowledging and expressing alternative viewpoints. Members will be able to review and comment on such statements to ensure their views are appropriately reflected.