

**Regional Panel Recommendations and Activities for the  
Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force  
Meeting, Arlington, Virginia, October 28-29, 2008**

Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species (GLP)  
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**High-Priority and/or Emerging Regional Issues**

- **Evaluation of Risk Assessment Methodology:** The need was identified during the joint meeting (June 2008) of the Great Lakes Panel (GLP) and the Mississippi River Basin Panel (MRBP) to compare/combine risk assessment frameworks to ensure that they are based on the best available science. It is requested that the ANSTF give consideration to the recommendation submitted jointly by the GLP and MRBP (below) indicating the need for a standardized evaluation of risk assessment methodology.
- **VHS Control Guidelines:** As viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS) has emerged as a priority Great Lakes regional issue, there is concern for the inconsistency regarding VHS control guidelines across jurisdictional lines. State/provincial panel members will be communicating with their agencies on the need to work together in achieving greater consistency on VHS management and outreach (joint priority of GLP and MRBP, June 2008).
- **Statement of Need:** It was agreed upon by both the GLP and MRBP on the importance of developing a statement of need regarding funding of regional ANS panels and state management plans (joint priority of GLP and MRBP, June 2008). Specifically to be addressed in this effort is the need to fully utilize existing funding mechanisms, as well as to explore and establish alternative funding sources (e.g. a trust fund) to support Panel and state ANS activities (joint priority of GLP and MRBP). This effort will be pursued with consideration for the assessed needs of the panels/states as related the federal mandate, the ANS Task Force Strategic Plan as well jurisdictional priorities. The intent is for the statement of need to be based on consensus of the six regional ANS Panels.
- **ANSTF Annual Report to Congress:** The need was recognized for the ANSTF to resume submitting their annual report to Congress.
- **Rapid Response / Risk Assessment Ad hoc Committees:** Identified was the ongoing need for an integrated/coordinated regional framework for rapid response and risk assessment. It has been recommended by the GLP that development of these regional frameworks addressed under a Panel ad hoc committee, however, progress on this priority has stalled due to funding constraints.
- **Organisms in Trade:** The trade of live organisms and associated risks for ANS introduction and spread is a priority issue, as identified the GLP and the Great Lakes Commission (GLC). GLC project work is being conducted, with guidance from GLP state representatives, to identify and evaluate high-risk commercial pathways contributing to AIS introduction and spread, including the role of aquaculture, live bait, aquarium, water garden, and live food fish industries, among others.

## Key ANS activities from May 2008 to October 2008

### Panel

- **Ad hoc Nominating Committee:** As outlined in the Panel's *Guidance for Operations* (<http://glc.org/ans/panel.html#guide>), the Panel Executive Committee and staff convened an ad hoc Nominating Committee in the conduct of Panel elections. New Panel officers and at-large members were elected and announced at the spring Panel meeting (see below). The new officers will serve a term of two years; at-large members will serve for four years. The 2008-2010 Panel officers are:
  - Panel Chair  
Jim Grazio, *Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection-Office of the Great Lakes and Coastal Resources*
  - Panel Vice Chair  
Phil Moy, *University of Wisconsin Sea Grant*
  - Research Coordination Committee Chair  
Lindsay Chadderton, *The Nature Conservancy*
  - Information/Education Committee Chair  
Rochelle Sturtevant, *National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration-Great Lakes Environmental Research Lab, and Sea Grant Extension*
  - Policy Coordination Committee Chair  
Mike Murray, *National Wildlife Federation*

Two new at-large members were also elected: Cathie Cunningham Ballard, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality-Coastal Management Program, and Doug Jensen, Minnesota Sea Grant.

- **Great Lakes Panel Meeting:** The spring meeting of the Great Lakes Panel was held June 17-19, 2008 in Milwaukee, Wisc. The meeting agenda, action items and summary can be found online, through the Panel website at <http://glc.org/ans/panel.html#glpmeet>. The meeting was held as a joint meeting with the Mississippi River Basin Panel. Featuring issues of interest to both Panels, the agenda included presentations on preventing the transfer of species between the basins, controlling viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS), and advancements in ballast water management. The meeting also provided an opportunity for the standing committees of the Panels to jointly explore opportunities for coordinated action. A number of action items resulting from the meeting are discussed above and are also available on the aforementioned Panel website. Overall, this meeting served as a valuable opportunity to strengthen collaboration, communication and coordination between the two Panels to guide work on issues of common concern as related to the adjoining watersheds of the GLP and MRBP.

The fall Great Lakes Panel meeting is scheduled for December 2-3, 2008 in Ann Arbor, Mich. Staff is currently working with the Executive Committee on planning for this meeting. Meeting details, including logistics and an agenda, will be posted on the Panel website (noted above) as they become available.

- **Research Coordination Committee:** Staff is working with the committee on development of a regional regulated species list. This list is a compilation of all AIS that are regulated in each of the Great Lakes states and provinces (not including aquaculture or bait regulations). Committee members have also worked to further refine their Priority Species List and associated criteria for listing and de-listing. As part of this work, the committee is using the Priority Species List to identify species-specific research priorities and needs. This information will support regional, state and local decision making in areas of prevention, detection and monitoring, response, and policy, among others.
- **Information/Education (I/E) Committee**
  - 1) **Dissemination of the *Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions* Booklet:** Work has continued with the I/E committee to expand distribution of the *Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions* booklet. Approximately 2,700 of the 10,000 copies have been distributed to agencies, legislators and others at a variety of regional events thus far. Recently, state and provincial lawmakers have been targeted with booklets being distributed in Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Ontario. Staff is also working with agency staff in Québec on a French translation of the booklet. An initial draft of the French translation was distributed with the booklet distributed at the Great Lakes Commission Annual Meeting held in Québec City, Oct. 6-7, 2008.
  - 2) **Great Lakes Panel Wiki:** Panel staff is working with the I/E Chair to develop a GLP “wiki” website to house information on Panel member organization activities to streamline the member update process. The wiki is a website that allows visitors to add, remove, edit and change content, typically without the need for registration. This ease of interaction and operation makes a wiki an effective tool for creating collaboratively-based documents. The wiki will be organized by themes and will allow members to update activities on an ongoing basis. The wiki may be used to identify priority activities to highlight at meetings.
  - 3) **ANS Update (Volume 14, No. 1):** This issue of the *ANS Update* featured the article, “Ballast Water and Saltwater Flushing: Closing a Gap in the Protection Framework of the Great Lakes.” The article, authored by David Reid of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration – Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory, explains the effectiveness of saltwater flushing of ship ballast tanks in reducing ANS introductions. The issue, published in July 2008, was also translated into French for distribution at the Great Lakes Commission Annual Meeting in Québec City.

### **State/Interstate**

- **Illinois Outreach Funding Targets Recreational Boating:** River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) was recently awarded a grant from the Boat US Foundation's Clean Water Grant program to produce and install educational signage around boat ramps to encourage people to clean their boats/trailers and remove any plant debris to stop the spread of aquatic invasive species. CWMA is a collaborative effort between multiple agencies and organizations to coordinate efforts and programs for managing invasive plants.

- Indiana Risk Assessment:** The 2007 Lake Manitou hydrilla eradication project resulted in an estimated 86 percent reduction in the tuber population. The goal of eradication will take multiple years of treatment. A collaborative project also continue with a work group involving businesses in the aquatic plant trade, aquatic plant enthusiasts, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, University of Notre Dame, and The Nature Conservancy. A screening tool was developed to trim the number of aquatic plants needing a formal risk assessment. The group has slightly modified the New Zealand Weed Risk Assessment to better fit the needs of Indiana. Assessment of aquatic plants through the modified risk assessment is underway. Eventually the group will identify risky invasive species in trade and develop strategies to limit their use or prevent their release.
- Michigan Great Lakes Plan:** The state of Michigan is working to put an action plan in place that will protect and restore the Great Lakes. Prevention and control of AIS is an important component of this plan, and the state has identified a set of near-term action items to address this issue. A series of public meetings will be held in October and November to give citizens an opportunity to share their ideas on ways the lakes can be protected for generations to come. More information is available at: [http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3313\\_3677\\_51091---,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/deq/0,1607,7-135-3313_3677_51091---,00.html).
- Minnesota Ballast Water Permit:** The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) issued a ballast water discharge general permit on September 24, 2008, covering the ballast water discharges of commercial vessels that transit the Minnesota waters of Lake Superior. The permit covers both seagoing and Great Lakes-only vessels. More information is available at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/programs/ballastwater.html#mnpermit>.
- New York:** The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has established an Office of Invasive Species Coordination within the Office of Natural Resources (December 2008). As recommended to the Governor and legislature in the 2005 state report of the Invasive Species Task Force, this newly established Office will serve as a permanent body within New York State government to coordinate the activities of state agencies as well as those of non-government organizations, industry, academia and other stakeholders. The Office will also help state agencies meet the requirements of new invasive species legislation enacted in 2008.
- Ohio State Management Plan:** Ohio DNR Division of Wildlife continues work on revising the State Management Plan, including development of a rapid response component.
- Ontario HACCP Training:** The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) is moving forward on HACCP implementation for bait harvesters and dealers. In 2007, HACCP training occurred for bait harvesters, who are required to complete an OMNR approved HACCP plan. Effective January 2008, commercial bait dealers face the same requirement.
- Pennsylvania AIS Rapid Response Exercise:** In partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection conducted a mock AIS rapid response exercise at Presque Isle, Pennsylvania on July 29-31, 2008. A table top exercise was performed, as well as "rapid assessment" using boats on the water. On July 30th, a short "Clean Boats" media event was held, in conjunction with the mock exercise media session, in order to help get out the message on the importance of preventing introductions of invasive species in the Great Lakes.

- **Quebec French Translation of AIS Booklet:** In September, the Quebec Ministry of the Environment worked with the Great Lakes Commission on the translation of the *Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions* booklet into French. The French translation has been used as an insert for the booklet, distributed at the Great Lakes Commission Annual Meeting in Quebec City (Oct. 6-7, 2008). The English version of the booklet is available online at: <http://glc.org/ans/aquatic-invasions/>.
- **Wisconsin Invasive Species Rules:** The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Wisconsin Council on Invasive Species have been working over the last three years to develop rules to classify and regulate invasive species. A proposed rule has been developed and was available for public comment until Sept. 2008. The DNR expects to have a final rule by December. The Proposed Invasive Species Identification, Classification and Control Rule and associated species for consideration are available online at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/invasives/classification/>.

### **Panel Recommendations to the ANS Task Force**

- **Evaluation of Risk Assessment Methodology:** This recommendation on risk assessment (RA) was submitted jointly by the GLP and the MRBP to the ANSTF on July 15, 2008 as an outcome of their joint meeting held in Milwaukee, June 17-19, 2008. The focus of the recommendation (online at: <http://www.glc.org/ans/panel.html#recommendations>) is based on the recognized need “to develop and implement screening tools that enable rapid assessment of risk non-native species pose to native species.” Specifically recommended is a comparative evaluation of proposed RA methodologies that inform steps in a full screening process. This evaluation will help users understand strengths and weaknesses of each RA model. To support the evaluation process, the MRBP and the GLP recommend to the ANSTF consideration of the following: 1) scientifically evaluate the accuracy, sensitivity, ease of use, and cost effectiveness of existing RA screening tools, 2) report on the strengths and weaknesses of each screening tool, and 3) recommend how to adapt screening approaches and risk assessment methods that rapidly and accurately assess risks to native species and ecosystems.
- **State Management Planning Guidelines:** The ANSTF recommendation submitted by the GLP on November 7, 2007 (online at: <http://www.glc.org/ans/panel.html#recommendations>) regarding state management planning indicates a need to:
  - Revise Task Force SMP guidelines to better reflect the needs of the states, including elimination of guidelines that are no longer applicable or are restricting (e.g. allow for the submission of comprehensive aquatic and terrestrial plans, even though only the aquatic portion is eligible for Task Force funding);
  - Streamline the reporting process for funding;
  - Create a timeframe for distribution of federal funds;
  - Provide incentives to the states for acquiring other funding; and
  - Maintain an equal level of funding among the states.

The GLP requests an update from the ANSTF on efforts to address this recommendation (joint request of the GLP and MRBP).