

Great Lakes Panel Summary and Decision Points for ANSTF Meeting

1) Please provide a **short summary** (just a few sentences) of panel activities since the last meeting.

- **Great Lakes Panel Meetings:** The fall meeting of the Great Lakes Panel was held December 2-3, 2008 in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The meeting featured a strategic discussion session on the work of the Panel over the next two years; a session on ballast water focusing on the status of state and regional programs; and follow-up on action items from the spring 2008 meeting. Major standing committee initiatives are summarized below:
 - **Information/Education Committee:**
 - Continued work with Great Lakes Commission staff to implement a dissemination strategy for the *Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions* (GLAI) booklet. Approximately 4,400 of the 10,000 copies have been distributed thus far to agencies, legislators, user groups and others at a variety of regional events. In cooperation with the province of Quebec, a draft French language version of the booklet was produced and distributed at the Great Lakes Panel meeting in December 2008.
 - **Research Coordination Committee:**
 - Completed work on a regional regulated invasive species list. This list is a compilation of all AIS regulated in each of the Great Lakes states and provinces (not including aquaculture or bait regulations).
 - Working on a bioethics position statement for new AIS discoveries by academic researchers
 - **Policy Coordination Committee:**
 - Led the submittal of two recommendations to the ANS Task Force:
 - (1) re-submittal of a Feb. 2008 recommendation on the need for an effective, national strategy to regulate ballast water and
 - (2) a letter requesting a session at the upcoming ANSTF meeting dedicated to the unmet funding needs of the regional Panels and state ANS management programs.
- The spring Great Lakes Panel meeting is scheduled for June 25-26, 2009 in Grand Island, NY. Meeting information for both meetings is available on the Panel website.

2) If you have any **panel recommendations/decision points** for the panel update session, please provide them in priority order. This is due to time constraints. Please keep in mind that each panel (minus WRP) will have 15 minutes for updates and discussions.

- **Ballast Water:** The Great Lakes Panel remains concerned about the continuing threat of AIS introduction and spread posed by discharge of vessel ballast water. To this end, the Panel sent a letter to the Task Force on February 22, 2008 asking that it take all available measures to facilitate the passage of effective federal ballast water regulation. In the intervening year since our 2008 recommendation, and in the continued absence of an effective national program, a patchwork approach to ballast water regulation has evolved among the states in the Great Lakes region. In response to inadequate regulation of ballast water and other discharges under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's December 18, 2008 Vessel General Permit (VGP), states have added more stringent discharge requirements of varying degree to the VGP through the Clean Water Act Section 401 certification process. Hence, vessel operators will now face varying requirements from state to state in order to maintain compliance. In light of this development, on February 19, 2009 the Panel reiterated the urgent need for the ANSTF and its member agencies to work towards national ballast water regulation. ANSTF action on this recommendation is respectfully requested.

- **AIS Risk Assessment:** In conjunction with the MRBP, in July of 2008 the Great Lakes Panel recommended that ANSTF member agencies consider funding the development and evaluation of AIS risk assessment screening tools. The ANSTF response to this request is respectfully requested.