

Mississippi River Basin Panel Update

MRBP held its most recent meeting in San Antonio, TX in February 2009. Three relatively unexplored vectors potentially contributing to the spread of AIS discussed at the meeting included dry hydrants, river barges, and pay or fee fishing lakes. Other important topics discussed at that meeting included screening process tools available to support regulatory decision-making, a zebra mussel eradication effort in Nebraska, Arkansas snakehead eradication update, VHS update, update on the Asian carp management and control plan and its implementation, update on the triploid grass carp review project, ANS regulations database, integrated management of common carp, and summaries of AIS boater surveys conducted in member states.

A number of recommendations were generated at the San Antonio meeting to be elevated to the ANSTF level. They include:

- It is recommend that ANSTF member agencies provide a link to the experts database on their own websites and ANSTF should explore other methods to make the database more visible.
- It is recommended that the ANSTF provide information to the barge industry regarding AIS transport and BMP's that should be performed to prevent spread, including inspection and removal of apple snail egg masses.
- Implementation of the Asian Carp Management and Control Plan needs requiring prompt attention include establishing a full-time coordinator position dedicated to implementation of the Plan, establishing an implementation committee, and exploring options to secure and direct the stable, long-term funding necessary to fully implement the Plan.
- The MRBP has taken steps to implement a recommendation from the Asian Carp Management and Control Plan which is to seek an independent scientific review and evaluation of the Triploid Grass Carp Inspection and Certification Program. MRBP requests the USFWS provide funding in FY2009 or FY2010 to support the recommended program review.