

THE GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE RESEARCH INVENTORY: YOUR WINDOW TO GREAT LAKES ECOSYSTEM RESEARCH

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The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Research Inventory is an innovative tool affording convenient, online access to information about research projects related to the Great Lakes ecosystem. The research inventory, created by the Council of Great Lakes Research Managers (The Council) serving the International Joint Commission, is ideal for collecting project descriptions, networking, identifying potential collaborators and gauging research activity. The inventory covers a broad spectrum of Great Lakes ecoresearch topics, including aquatic nuisance species (ANS), toxic pollutants, natural ecological processes, land use and habitat, resource management, economic impacts, among others. More than 21 percent of the projects in the inventory address the issue of Great Lakes ANS, indicating the high level of regional concern for this problem.

The Council developed this inventory as a means to provide guidance and advice on the adequacy of Great Lakes research. In 1996, after a decade of conducting periodic research inventories, the Internet was utilized as a platform for the inventory to facilitate a more efficient, accessible approach to data collection. This web-based tool, located at www.ijc.org/rel/boards/cglr/, is an interactive and searchable database helping both professionals and the public learn about Great Lakes ecosystem research projects.

The research inventory, which is in the public domain, also allows research project information to be entered through the Internet. Only basic information, including the start date, title, a brief description and contact information is needed to make an initial entry. Researchers can add new data and update ongoing projects as new information becomes available, thus alleviating the requirement for annual surveys of multi-year studies. Database integrity is maintained through password access and staff review. To access inventory data, visitors can use either a simple key word search or a powerful advanced search that sorts through projects by research topic, lake, state, province,

funding agency, investigator or a host of other categories. A significant attribute of the research inventory is the broad and inclusive listings upon which it is based. If research is related to problems facing the Great Lakes, although not directly being conducted in the region, it may be entered into the database.

The Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species recognizes the importance of the research inventory given its capacity to facilitate coordination and collaboration in the conduct of ANS research on a regional basis. The research inventory is regarded by the Panel as a valuable tool to collect, analyze and disseminate Great Lakes research findings on a coordinated basis. Panel members have worked directly with the Council to design the current data collection fields for the ANS projects. The data entry form has six special fields covering biology and life history, control and mitigation, ecosystem effects, prevention and introduction, socioeconomics and the spread of established ANS populations. The research subcommittee of the Great Lakes Panel continues this work by reviewing the inventory and providing the database manager with recommended areas for improvement. Also provided is an optional online comment section so all users can make suggestions for improvement.

Since the research inventory is voluntary, a comprehensive assessment of research activity in the basin is not completely reflected in current inventory statistics. As the inventory grows and matures, the Council plans to use the inventory as a key decision support tool. For example, statistics from the research inventory could provide critical information in making funding decisions for new research proposals. Institutions providing grants for new research may use the inventory to compare proposed studies with those that have been or currently are being conducted throughout the Great Lakes basin.

A goal of the Council is to build maximum participation and establish the research inventory as a tool for gauging the

level of research activity and identifying research needs. The inventory is poised for rapid expansion with data on nearly 600 projects and work underway to gather and load existing data from major research institutions throughout the region.

Researchers are encouraged to submit new project information and update past entries to keep the database current.

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Great Lakes Panel Update

Initial planning is underway for the next Great Lakes Panel meeting, set for March in Ann Arbor, Mich. A prospective component of this meeting is a collaborative workshop with the Baltic Sea Fellowship Program to advance international collaboration among research scientists and policy makers. The minutes from the Great Lakes Panel's summer meeting (July 22-23, 2003) are now available online at www.glc.org/ans/initiatives. Work continues on the *Rapid Response Plan for Great Lakes Invasions* with incorporation of comments on the draft plan. Also in progress is a survey of monitoring organizations to aid in the development of guidelines and recommendations for the pilot (ANS) early detection and monitoring network for the Lake Michigan basin. **Contact:** Kathe Glassner-Shwayder, Great Lakes Commission, 734-971-9135, ext. 108, shwayder@glc.org.

Washington Watch

The House Energy and Water Appropriations bill includes \$800,000 for Fiscal Year 2004 for the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal dispersal barrier demonstration project. Of the amount provided, \$500,000 will be used for operation of the existing barrier, and \$300,000 will be used to initiate the design work necessary to make this barrier permanent. Additionally, the bill includes

\$750,000 for work on a second barrier. The Senate bill includes \$500,000 for operations. The *Water Resources Development Act* (H.R. 2557), passed by the House of Representatives on September 24, 2003, includes language to advance work on a second dispersal barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal. Rep. Candice Miller (Mich.) introduced the *Great Lakes Water Protection Act of 2003* (H.R. 3122) to amend the mandatory ballast water program in the Great Lakes and prohibit a vessel with a ballast water tank from entering the Great Lakes if more than 5 percent of the capacity of the tank contains ballast water. For more information about the legislation, go to <http://thomas.loc.gov/>. **Contact:** Joy Mulinex, Senate Great Lakes Task Force, Northeast-Midwest Institute, 202-224-1211, joy_mulinex@levin.senate.gov.

Around the Basin:

ILLINOIS: The DNR has created the Aquatic and Terrestrial Invasive Species Task Force to comprehensively address invasive species issue throughout the state. Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant instituted an in-state version of the Great Lakes Panel's *ANS Update* to facilitate state-wide communication on the ANS issue. Illinois DNR, Sea Grant, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are working on a project to print the "Stop Aquatic Hitchhiker" campaign logo on all Illinois boater permit renewal notices and permit envelopes. **Contact:** Patrice M. Charlebois, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant College Program, Illinois Natural History Survey, 847-872-0140, charlebo@uiuc.edu.

INDIANA: Indiana's comprehensive state management plan has been approved by the governor's office and the ANS Task Force. Gwen White was instrumental in developing the plan both as a DNR employee and later as a member of the consulting firm contracted to develop the plan. Tom Flatt, serving in the DNR's Fisheries Division, has recently replaced Ms. White as Indiana's representative on the Panel. **Contact:** Tom Flatt, IDNR, Division of Fish and Wildlife, 317-232-4093, tflatt@dnr.state.in.us.

MICHIGAN: The Office of the Great Lakes received a grant from the U.S. EPA-Great Lakes National Program Office to develop an angler monitoring network which will complement and augment agency and organizational ANS monitoring in the state. The network will develop an information and education system that provides anglers with tools for identifying ANS; a system for anglers to report sightings of new ANS; and an evaluation component. Information regarding identification, range maps, regulations, ecological/economic effects, disposal options, look-alike species, and life histories will be made available on the web. Michigan will participate in a three-state Aquatic Nuisance Species and Boater Survey to be conducted this fall by

the Minnesota Center for Survey Research. **Contact:** Emily Finnell, MDEQ, 517-241-7927, finnelle@michigan.gov.

NEW YORK: The state legislature passed a bill creating the New York State Invasive Species Task Force. The task force, to be co-chaired by the commissioners of the DEC and the Department of Agriculture and Markets, will include representatives from several other state agencies as well as academia and non-governmental organizations. The charge of the task force is to produce a report for the governor and legislature containing specific recommendations regarding existing state laws, regulations, programs, policies, practices and resources available to prevent ANS introductions and to detect and respond to introductions in a cost effective, environmentally sound manner. **Contact:** Timothy Sinnott, NYS DEC, 518-402-8970, txsinnot@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

OHIO: New regulations have been established prohibiting possession of smallmouth bass in Ohio waters of Lake Erie during May and June. The new regulations are intended to prevent anglers from removing smallmouth bass guarding their nests. This change resulted from a long-term study examining the impacts of round gobies on smallmouth bass reproduction. Findings showed that round gobies would decimate smallmouth bass nests by consuming eggs if the male smallmouth bass was removed. No Asian carp were collected in surveys by DNR's Division of Wildlife on tributaries to the Ohio River to assess the presence and abundance of this invasive fish. **Contact:** Joseph B. Mion, ODNR, Division of Wildlife, 614-265-6346, Joe.Mion@dnr.state.oh.us.

ONTARIO: A number of aquatic invasive species increased their range in the inland waters of Ontario this season. The province continues to work with the Canadian government to develop a national strategy to address the threat of aquatic and terrestrial non-native invasive species. Research on fanwort (*Cabomba caroliniana*), in the single lake where it is known to exist in the country, has been completed and results will be available shortly. The Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters, partner of OMNR in the Invading Species Awareness Program, has expanded the program as a result of additional funding allocated by the province. **Contact:** Beth MacKay, OMNR, 705-755-1950, beth.mackay@mnr.gov.on.ca.

WISCONSIN: The comprehensive state management plan has been approved by the ANS Task Force. In September the DNR discovered a 24-inch giant snakehead in the Rock River south of Janesville during a routine fish survey. It is not probable that the snakehead, speculated to be an aquarium release, would survive Wisconsin winters and become widespread. In the wake of the snakehead discovery, the DNR is working with the legislature to ban the sale, transport and possession of high-priority invasive fish species. Just weeks after

the snakehead was found, spiny water fleas were discovered in the Gile Flowage in northern Wisconsin near Lake Superior. This was the first inland sighting of the spiny water flea in an inland Wisconsin lake. **Contact:** Ron Martin, WIDNR, 608-266-9270, martir@dnr.state.wi.us

National ANS Task Force

The fall meeting of the ANS Task Force was held November 4-5, 2003, in Arlington, Va. Mamie A. Parker was welcomed as the new co-chair of the Task Force, representing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Timothy R.E. Keeney serves as co-chair representing the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Topics covered at the meeting included ballast water, regional panel reports, and reports from committees and working groups. Also discussed was a review of federal agency activities for FY 2004 and updates on the status of injurious wildlife activities and the North American Brown Tree Snake Control Team. A significant outcome of the meeting was approval of comprehensive state management plans for Hawaii, Indiana and Wisconsin and establishment of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Panel. The Task Force also approved control/management plans for the Chinese mitten crab and the European green crab. The next Task Force meeting is tentatively scheduled for the spring of 2004 in St. Louis, Mo. The minutes of the November 2003 meeting will be available on the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force web site (www.anstaskforce.gov/). **Contact:** Sharon Gross, ANS Task Force, 703-358-2308, sharon_gross@fws.gov or Joe Starinchak, USFWS, 703-358-2018, Joe_Starinchak@fws.gov.

Upcoming Events:

- *Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel Meeting*, December 11-12, 2003, Derby, Conn. **Contact:** Michele Tremblay, 603-796-2615, info@northeastans.org
- *Call for Abstracts: 13th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species*. Abstracts are due by December 31, 2003. **Contact:** www.aquatic-invasive-species-conference.org/ or 800-868-8776
- Mississippi River Basin Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel Meeting, January 8-9, 2004, New Orleans, La. **Contact:** Jerry Rasmussen, 309-793-5811, ijrivers@aol.com

On The Bookshelf:

- An Asian carp WATCH Card developed by Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, the Illinois Natural History Survey, Illinois Department of Natural Resources and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. **Contact:** Susan White at 217-333-9441 or white2@uiuc.edu