

NEW ACTION PLAN WILL ADVANCE PREVENTION AND CONTROL EFFORTS

By: Ron Martin, Chair, Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species

The Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species has adopted a "landmark" policy statement that will measurably advance prevention and control efforts in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region. A *Great Lakes Action Plan for Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Species Prevention and Control* and associated addendum present a vision statement, goals, principles, objectives and strategic actions that provide a framework for individual and collective action by the region's jurisdictions and other interested parties. In so doing, they promote a strong regional agenda that complements efforts to implement comprehensive state aquatic nuisance species (ANS) management plans, which are the principle mechanisms for regional ANS prevention and control. The Great Lakes Action Plan and addendum will help address inconsistencies in jurisdictions and assist in regional priority setting.

The Action Plan—a concise statement focusing on goals and principles—has been forwarded to the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence governors and premiers for their signatures. The addendum—a more detailed statement presenting associated objectives and strategic actions—has been endorsed at the Panel member level.

In many respects, the Action Plan ties together and advances other Panel products. For example, it echoes the three goals embodied in the *Model Comprehensive State Management Plan*:

- ♦ prevent the unauthorized introduction of nonindigenous aquatic species;
- ♦ limit the spread of established aquatic nuisance species within the region; and
- ♦ minimize the harmful ecological, economic, social and public health impacts resulting from aquatic nuisance species already present.

The Action Plan also presents 10 principles to guide programs in the region. They recognize that prevention and control is a shared responsibility involving multiple levels of government and the entire binational Great Lakes-St. Lawrence community.

They recognize that success is fundamentally dependent upon comprehensive, multidisciplinary research; a coordinated and responsive management structure; and an informed and involved public. And, significantly, the principles recognize that this is not just a Great Lakes issue; jurisdictions within and outside this region share

Action Plan - Vision

We ... envision healthy aquatic ecosystems where new introductions of nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species are prevented, and adverse ecological and economic impacts of species already present are minimized.

responsibility, given the interconnectedness of hydrologic basins (and vectors of introduction) in North America.

The addendum's 11 objectives and 36 strategic actions support these principles and are organized under the categories of management programs; research and monitoring; and information, education and collaboration. All items are practical and pragmatic; they are measurable outcomes by which progress can be assessed over time. For example, one calls for the establishment of a regional emergency response procedure for new introductions. Another calls for the establishment of ballast water standards and criteria to evaluate associated technologies and management practices. Yet another calls for a regional monitoring regime to provide early detection of new introductions.

Why is the Action Plan important? Simply put, we need to enhance focus on this issue at the highest levels of state and provincial government. Thanks to the work of the Great Lakes Panel over the past decade, researchers, managers and educators have an effective forum for coordination and collaboration. However, more work needs to be done. We need mechanisms to ensure timely and aggressive multijurisdictional response to documented new introductions. We need adequate funding over the long term to meet prevention and control goals.

And, we need to elevate the issue of biological pollution within the individual and collective Great Lakes jurisdictions.

Individually, the governors and premiers have expressed their concern over the biological pollution issue; some see it as the leading threat to ecosystem health.

Their signatures on the Action Plan would formalize and publicize this concern and their associated commitment.

As with the *Model Comprehensive State Management Plan*, the Great Lakes Action Plan and addendum are readily adaptable to the needs of jurisdictions in other regions. In fact, it might even provide the basis for a unified statement endorsed by all panels established under federal law.

As the newly elected chair of the Great Lakes Panel, I'm pleased to acknowledge the leadership that my predecessor, Gary Isbell, brought to Action Plan development. Implementation of Action Plan provisions will be a priority during my tenure as chair. I invite the entire community of regional interest to join me in that effort.

Editor's Note: Ron Martin, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, was elected chair of the Great Lakes Panel on May 11, 2000. He can be contacted at 608-266-9270 or martir@dnr.state.wi.us. The full text of the Great Lakes Action Plan and addendum is available from the Great Lakes Commission. **Contact:** Michael J. Donahue, 734-665-9135 or mtonahue@glc.org.

Great Lakes Panel Update

The spring meeting of the Great Lakes Panel meeting was conducted in Duluth, Minn., May 10-11. Highlighted was the Panel's final approval of the addendum of *A Great Lakes Action Plan for Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Species Prevention and Control*. The addendum, coupled with the core Great Lakes Action Plan approved in fall 1999, is a "landmark"

policy statement providing regional vision to advance the laws, agreements and programs established to prevent and control aquatic nuisance species in the Great Lakes.

Significant progress was made at the meeting in revising the *Information/Education Strategy for Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control*. Panel discussion on the strategy focused on new ANS programs, the expanding role of coordination, new species introductions, emerging complexities of control efforts and challenges of implementation. Also covered was ballast water management, considered a leading vector for ANS introductions in the Great Lakes and nationally. There was strong agreement among the membership to take aggressive action on this issue, which culminated in the establishment of a Panel committee charged with assessing management options for ballast water management.

Newly elected officers officially began their two-year terms at the meeting: Panel Chair - Ron Martin, Wisconsin DNR; Panel Vice-Chair - Pat Charlebois, Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant; Chair of Policy and Legislation Committee - Gary Isbell, Ohio DNR; Chair of Information/Education Committee - Doug Jensen, Minnesota DNR; Chair of Research Committee - Phil Moy, Wisconsin Sea Grant.

Contact: Kathe Glassner-Shwayder, Great Lakes Commission, 734-665-9135, shwayder@glc.org.

Washington Watch

The Great Lakes Ecology Protection Act of 2000 (H.R. 4191), introduced by Pete Hoekstra, R-Mich., is being proposed as an amendment to existing laws and requires ships entering the Great Lakes to sterilize their ballast tanks or otherwise ensure that they will not introduce non-native organisms through the discharge of ballast water. The bill will act as a catalyst for the reauthorization process for the National Invasive Species Act (NISA), due next Congress. Sponsors hope the bill will jumpstart hearings on the U.S. Coast Guard ballast program in the Coast Guard and Water Resources subcommittees of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Congressional deliberations on H.R. 4191 offer the Great Lakes community an opportunity to discuss specific needs of the Great Lakes region that should be addressed in the upcoming NISA reauthorization. A Great Lakes agenda could focus on several concerns, including design requirements for construction of new ships; requirements to review and revise current Great Lakes programs; and the creation of incentives to enhance research, development and early compliance.

The Northeast-Midwest Institute held a forum on ANS prevention in December 1999 with the goal of reviewing current management efforts and creating an agenda. Next steps include the promotion of common goals, harmonizing the message of outreach efforts to industry, the develop-

ment of standards for treatment, the creation and coordination of baseline surveys to evaluate the success of programs, and enhanced data sharing. **Contact:** Allegra Cangelosi, Northeast-Midwest Institute, 202-544-5200, cangelo@nemw.org.

Around the Basin

ILLINOIS: With funding from IL-IN Sea Grant, the Illinois Natural History Survey is conducting a pilot project to raise and release *Galerucella* beetles for purple loosestrife control. The DNR has formed an Exotic/Invasive Species Interdisciplinary Team. Funding has been obtained to allow for completion of the Chicago Waterways dispersal barrier project this fiscal year. A *Goby Round-Up* was conducted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service this spring with results available by the end of June. **Contact:** Pat Charlebois, IL-IN Sea Grant, 847-872-0140, p_char@ix.netcom.com.

MINNESOTA: The DNR adopted amendments to the permanent rule regarding harmful exotic species and infested waters, which cover designating additional infested waters, a permit application process for harvesting live bait from infested waters, allowing personal harvest of bait from Eurasian watermilfoil infested waters without a permit, and changing conditions for appropriation of water from infested waters. **Contact:** Jay Rendall, MN DNR, jay.rendall@dnr.state.mn.us.

NEW YORK: Biologists and technicians in the Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources began their sixth season of zebra mussel monitoring within the Finger Lakes, a series of long, narrow, glaciated lakes that are morphologically similar. Their similarity has allowed for the development of an ecological baseline database in which characteristics of colonized lakes can be compared to the uncolonized lakes. Analysis of the data is used for strategic fisheries management planning. **Contact:** Web Pearsall, NY DEC, 716-226-5339, wepearsa@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

OHIO: The DNR is reviewing and updating permitting processes for aquaculture-related activities (e.g., fish raising, fish hauling, bait dealers) using of the Great Lakes Panel's model guidance on ANS legislation, regulation and policy. Other initiatives include the development of a zebra mussel alert card for lake monitoring and ANS signs for boat ramps at state park lakes infested with zebra mussels. Sixty zebra mussel prevention signs, developed by the Ohio River Valley Ecosystem Team, are also being posted at boat ramps along the Ohio River. **Contact:** Randy Sanders, OH DNR, 614-265-6344, randy.sanders@dnr.state.oh.us.

WISCONSIN: The DNR will be posting signs on uninfested waters to enhance public awareness that clean boats can make a difference. Radio public service announcements will be aired for the first time since the early 1990s to focus attention on invasive species problems and the precautions boaters should take to avoid

ANS spread. Displays on problem species have been developed for use at state parks and other areas. Efforts are also being made to disseminate more brochures, pamphlets and watch cards to lake associations, recreational boaters and anglers. **Contact:** Ron Martin, WI DNR, 608-266-9270, martir@dnr.state.wi.us.

National ANS Task Force

The ANS Task Force met April 3-5, 2000, in Miami, Fla. A field trip was taken to restoration sites in the Everglades to observe invasive fish species, including the Asian swamp eel, at a water management canal south of Miami. Agenda items included presentations and discussions on local/regional issues, as well as Task Force business. Local/regional presentations included an overview of invasive species issues in Florida, the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Program, and National Park Service efforts to address invasive aquatic plants. National issues included updates on the status of various committees and updates from each of the regional panels, including the Great Lakes Panel. Control issues and efforts involving the black carp and Asian swamp eel were also discussed. The U.S. Coast Guard gave an overview of ballast water management activities, including updates from several committees and the International Maritime Organization. On a state level, seven ANS management plans have been approved by the Task Force, as well as approval of the Lake Champlain Interstate Management Plan. The final draft of the State ANS Management Plan Guidance developed by the Task Force should be released within the next month.

The next meeting of the ANS Task Force will be held in Burlington, Vt., July 31- Aug. 2, 2000. Details will be available at www.anstaskforce.gov. **Contact:** Sharon Gross, Executive Secretary, 703-358-2308, Sharon_Gross@fws.gov.

On the Bookshelf

- ▶ *Plants Out of Place:* An educational poster on non-native, invasive plants has been developed by the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC), in cooperation with several state, federal and private organizations. Copies of the poster are available free of charge at cooperator offices. **Contact:** Miles Falck, GLIFWC, 715-682-6619, miles@glifwc.org. Posters in Minnesota are available at the DNR Exotic Species Program, 651-296-2835.

Upcoming Events

- ▶ Meeting of the ANS Task Force, July 31-Aug. 2, 2000. Burlington, Vt. Details at www.anstaskforce.gov.