

The Great Lakes Action Plan: A Time for Implementation

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The eight governors and two premiers of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin set a binational precedent this past summer in signing a regional policy, *A Great Lakes Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Aquatic Nuisance Species*. It is the first time that the region's leadership has formally embraced a single set of principles to guide their individual and collective efforts to prevent and control aquatic invasions. By endorsing the Action Plan, the signatories acknowledge their responsibility to act "promptly and decisively" to achieve three goals: preventing unauthorized introductions; limiting the spread of established nuisance species; and minimizing the impacts of those already present (refer to *ANS Update* feature in Volume 6, No. 2). The Action Plan provides a sound foundation to facilitate timely, multijurisdictional action on ANS prevention and control.

It is now time for policymakers, resource managers, researchers and educators, among others, to work together in advancing implementation. Augmenting the Action Plan is an addendum adopted by the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species, which presents several dozen specific objectives and strategic actions designed to realize the plan's goals. Categories include management programs; research and monitoring; and information, education and collaboration.

In the area of "management programs," strategic actions emphasize the need for consistency in terms of legislation, policy and regulations. This comprehensive approach is to include an assessment of pathways of ANS introduction and spread, so as to reduce the relative risk of ecological and economic harm caused by invasive species. Other recommended tools include policy, education, research and best available technologies that will facilitate the most effective ways to interrupt pathways of introduction and spread.

Priorities identified under the "research and monitoring" section focus on the need for interagency coordination in efforts to

identify the most effective approaches to ANS prevention and control. Recommended strategic actions advance prevention of new species introduction through a regional monitoring regime that provides for early detection. There is also a call for measured control strategies that are firmly based on a set of criteria evaluating ecological, social, economic and public health issues. A multidisciplinary/multijurisdictional approach is a basic premise underlying the research and monitoring strategic actions.

The "information, education and collaboration" section promotes deliberate steps to ensure coordination of all stakeholders in prevention and control efforts, recognizing that invasive species cross jurisdictional boundaries of a shared watershed. The strategic actions in this section call for comprehensive state ANS management plans to play a central role in orchestrating strategic actions on a multijurisdictional level. Integral to these coordinative efforts is development and dissemination of consistent messages regarding prevention and control efforts along with evaluation of existing ANS programs. As we move ahead to advance implementation of the Action Plan, every effort must be made to inform the public on how to act responsibly to minimize new ANS introductions and control the spread of existing populations.

We're pleased that this precedent-setting document has generated support and interest at the highest levels. In the words of Gov. John Engler of Michigan, "They [invasive species] harm both our ecosystem and our water-based economy. The Great Lakes Action Plan affirms my commitment, and that of my fellow governors and premiers, to work together to address this problem."

It's now time to get down to business, and use the Action Plan as a guiding force in our individual and collective prevention and control efforts. **Contact:** Katherine Glassner-Shwayder, Great Lakes Commission, 734-665-9135, shwayder@glc.org.

Great Lakes Panel Update

The Great Lakes Panel will hold its fall meeting on Nov. 29-30, 2001. Agenda topics include, among others, issues related to reauthorization of the National Invasive Species Act (NISA), panel membership update and discussion regarding coordination of regional panels on a national level. Further details on the meeting will be available in mid-October.

The Great Lakes Panel has developed recommendations to be included in reauthorization of NISA. These recommendations are based on discussion during the symposium *Looking Forward, Looking Back: Assessing ANS Prevention and Control* held this past spring. Once finalized, these recommendations will be disseminated among regional and national decisionmakers involved with the reauthorization process. **Contact:** Katherine Glassner-Shwayder, Great Lakes Commission, 734-665-9135, shwayder@glc.org.

Washington Watch

In early May, Representative Peter Hoekstra (MI) and 13 members of the Great Lakes delegation introduced the Great Lakes Ecology Protection Act. The purpose of the act is to prevent ANS introductions into the Great Lakes by requiring the U.S. Coast Guard to issue regulations to prevent the discharge of ballast water containing invasive species into the lakes. A similar measure (S. 1034) was introduced in the Senate on June 13, 2001, by Sen. Debbie Stabenow (MI) and 12 other Great Lakes senators. In preparation for an invasive species research legislative package, the House Science Committee's Environment, Technology and Standards Subcommittee held a hearing on invasive species research on July

26, 2001. Testimony may be obtained at www.house.gov/science/ets/etshearings.htm.

The Northeast-Midwest Institute, Lake Carriers' Association and Great Lakes Protection Fund hosted the International Ballast Treatment Investment Fair in September in Chicago. The purpose of the event was to spur growth in emerging ballast water treatment technologies by encouraging investment, providing resources and contacts and discussing critical policy needs. Details can be seen at www.nemw.org/fair_about.htm. **Contact:** Joy Mulinex, Senate Great Lakes Task Force, Northeast-Midwest Institute, 202-224-1211, joy_mulinex@levin.senate.gov

Around the Basin

ILLINOIS/INDIANA: Sea Grant has developed new outreach materials for anglers and water gardeners to prevent the spread and/or introduction of ANS. Stickers with the logo "Don't Dump Bait" have been sent out to bait shops encouraging anglers to properly dispose of their unused bait. The brochure *Invasive Aquatic Plants: What Every Plant Enthusiast Needs to Know* informs water gardeners about the problems with invasive aquatic plants and what they can do to prevent their spread. Several Indiana resource agencies are developing a coordinated state web site for invasive species, and have begun preliminary planning efforts for a state ANS management plan and state-level advisory council on invasive species. **Contact:** Pat Charlebois, IL-IN Sea Grant, 847-872-0140, charlebo@uiuc.edu; or Gwen White, IN Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, 317-232-4093, gwhite@dnr.state.in.us.

MICHIGAN: Senate Bill 152, sponsored by Sen. Kenneth Sikkema, was signed into law on Aug. 6, 2001. Supported by the maritime industry, this bill amends the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act by requiring the DEQ to compile lists of local and foreign shippers that are in voluntary compliance with certain specified ballast water management practices or are using ballast water treatment methods. The list will be distributed to companies using vessels for the transportation of cargo. Companies using vessels that are not listed will not be given any grants, loans or awards administered through the DEQ. Evaluation also must be conducted by the DEQ on the effectiveness of ballast water treatments. **Contact:** Emily Finnell, MI DEQ, 517-241-7927, finnelle@state.mi.us.

MINNESOTA: Sea Grant, the DNR and University of Minnesota Extension Service 4-H Program hosted a summer youth program to help combat the spread of purple loosestrife through biocontrol with releases of *Galerucella weevils*. A "Beetle Mania" release picnic for participants was sponsored by the St. Louis River Remedial Action Program Community Action Committee. The Duluth Community Sailing Association, Duluth Boat Club and the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service lent support by providing boats. **Contact:** Doug Jensen, MN Sea Grant, 218-726-8712, djensen1@d.umn.edu.

NEW YORK: As part of the revision process for the state ANS management plan, three public meetings were held throughout the state to gather information on public concerns and needs regarding aquatic nuisance species. Issues/concerns varied regionally from zebra mussels and round goby to invasive aquatic vegetation such as Eurasian watermilfoil and water chestnut. **Contact:** Timothy Sinnott, NY DEC, 518-402-8970, txsinnot@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

OHIO: Ohio is in the fifth year of implementation of the state ANS management plan with current activities focused on purple loosestrife control, stream monitoring for non-native species and the development of a new educational program for middle schools. The new ANS display at the state fair attracted large numbers of people. Other efforts include the development of a zebra mussel alert card and signs for boat ramps at lakes and streams infested with zebra mussels. **Contact:** Randy Sanders, OH DNR, 614-265-6344, randy.sanders@dnr.state.oh.us.

ONTARIO: Ontario has established an Introductions and Transfers Committee to evaluate the impacts of proposed introductions or transfer of aquatic organisms for stocking or aquaculture purposes. As part of the Fish Rescue Program, pet stores will soon provide a flyer to new aquarium owners outlining the potential ecological hazards of the release of aquarium fish. Two aquarium fish (Pacu and South American catfish) were caught by anglers in southern Ontario in July, demonstrating that release of aquarium pets is an ongoing problem. The spiny water flea (*Bythotrephes cederstroemi*) has invaded Lake Nipigon in northern Ontario. **Contact:** Alan Dextrase, 705-755-1950, alan.dextrase@mnr.gov.on.ca

PENNSYLVANIA: Dreissenid mussels were documented for the first time in inland lakes last year. A large, well-established zebra mussel population was documented in Sandy Lake in Mercer County, and an extremely small zebra mussel population (possibly not self-sustaining) appears to be present in Canadohra Lake in Crawford County. Both lakes lie within the Allegheny River drainage in northwestern Pennsylvania. **Contact:** Kelly Burch, PA DEP, 814-332-6816, kburch@state.pa.us.

WISCONSIN: Gov. Scott McCallum has created a 20-member advisory task force on invasive species with the mission to evaluate the severity of ANS impacts in the state. The task force serves a pivotal role in developing a statewide plan to combat ANS introduction and spread and securing federal funding to be used in the implementation of the plan. The DNR has recently published an aquatic exotics insert for its *Natural Resources* magazine titled *Out of Place: How aquatic exotic species alter Wisconsin waterways*. It is available on the DNR

website (www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/glwsp/exotics/index.html). **Contact:** Ron Martin, WI DNR, 608-266-9270, martir@dnr.state.wi.us.

National ANS Task Force

The Task Force meeting, originally scheduled for October 4-5, 2001, has been postponed. Information will be available on the Task Force's web site (www.anstaskforce.gov) once the new meeting date has been determined.

The 11th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species has been rescheduled for Feb. 25 - March 1, 2002 (refer below to Upcoming Events). As part of this conference, the session *Building Consensus for Regional Policy on Aquatic Invasive Species Prevention and Control* will be held (Thursday morning, Feb. 28, 2002) to encourage dialogue between the ANS regional panels nationwide. **Contact:** Sharon Gross, Executive Secretary, ANS Task Force, 703-358-2308, sharon_gross@fws.gov.

Upcoming Events

- *North American Lake Management Society Annual Conference*. Nov. 7-9, 2001. Madison, Wis. Special one-day session on exotics scheduled for Nov. 8. Conference's web site: www.nalms.org/symposia/madison/.
- *Meeting of the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species*. Nov. 29-30, 2001. Ann Arbor, Mich. **Contact:** Katherine Glassner-Shwayder, 734-665-9135, shwayder@glc.org.
- *11th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species*: Postponed until Feb. 25 - March 1, 2002. Conference web site: www.aquatic_invasive_species_conference.org/ **Contact:** Elizabeth Muckle-Jeffs, Conference Administrator, 800-868-8776, profedje@renc.igs.net.

On The Bookshelf

- *Biological Control of Purple Loosestrife: 4-H Manual and 4-H Leaders Guide*. 2001. Youth manual \$2; leader's guide \$8. **Contact:** Purdue University Media Distribution Center, 1-888-898-4636, Media.Order@ces.purdue.edu.
- *Aquatic Nuisance Species - Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point Training Curriculum*. 2001. Single copies free, multiple copies \$10. **Contact:** Doug Jensen, MN Sea Grant, 218-726-8712, djensen1@dumn.edu.
- *Minnesota Zebra Mussel Watch Volunteer Monitor Instruction Guide*. 2000. Free. **Contact:** Doug Jensen, MN Sea Grant, 218-726-8712, djensen1@d.umn.edu; or Gary Montz, MN DNR, 651-297-4888, gary.montz@dnr.state.mn.us.