

Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species Regional Panel Annual Report

*As prepared by Great Lakes Commission staff for the Period of July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007
and submitted to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force on November 2, 2007*

The Great Lakes Commission is an interstate compact agency serving the Great Lakes states and provinces and dedicated to the informed use, management and protection of the Great Lakes basin. The Commission is responsible for providing staff support to the Great Lakes Panel, as indicated under Section 1203 of the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990. To advance the mission of the Panel, Commission staff provide specific support services, including preparation of an Annual Report on Panel accomplishments. The Annual Report and other administrative materials are submitted to the Executive Secretary of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force.

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Operational Framework

Under the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act (NANPCA) of 1990, the Great Lakes Commission (Commission) was directed to convene and provide administrative support for the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species (Great Lakes Panel, Panel). The first of six regional ANS panels established to advance aquatic nuisance species (ANS) prevention and control, the Great Lakes Panel works to coordinate efforts in the region. The Panel has a diverse membership representing state, provincial and federal government agencies from the U.S. and Canada, tribal authorities, commercial and recreational groups, NGOs, and others. The Panel operates on a consensus basis in coordinating ANS prevention and control activities in areas of information/education, research coordination and policy.

The Great Lakes region is strongly united in concern over aquatic invasions of the Great Lakes. Addressing the ANS problem, a top priority for both government and the nongovernmental community alike, has been recently galvanized by the development of a common action-based set of priorities through the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) established by Executive Order 13340 in May 2004. This important initiative brought together more than 1500 regional stakeholders representing federal, state, tribal and local governments, industry, conservation groups and tribal interests. The GLRC process produced a strategy for Great Lakes restoration that included actions and recommendations from eight different strategy teams including one focused on aquatic invasive species (AIS). The AIS chapter of the December 2005 report titled: *Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy to Restore and Protect the Great Lakes*, provides a blueprint for a regional AIS action plan. This plan is consensus-based and reflects the efforts of the basin's governmental leaders and other stakeholders to respond to the problems posed by AIS species to the Great Lakes. The plan, through a series of recommendations, identifies important AIS priorities, many of which the Great Lakes Panel has been working to address.

The regional priorities identified as part of the GLRC have provided a shared focus and direction for the region and subsequently, the Great Lakes Panel. Guided by the Executive Committee (ExCom) and standing committees on Information/Education (I/E), Research Coordination (Research) and Policy Coordination (Policy), the work of the Panel during this reporting period has been shaped by this theme of collaboration and shared vision. The following report will highlight collaboration-based recommendations, accomplishments and initiatives of the Great Lakes Panel over the past year. During this period, the following members served on the Panel's ExCom:

Panel Officers:

Chair: Mike Conlin, Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Vice Chair: Jim Grazio, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Panel Standing Committee Chairs:

Information/Education: Rochelle Sturtevant, Great Lakes Sea Grant Network

Research Coordination: Phil Moy, Wisconsin Sea Grant

Policy Coordination: Jennifer Nalbene, Great Lakes United

The Great Lakes Panel at-large membership is another significant component of the Panel, contributing to the work of the Panel based on special expertise, interest, or advisory capability regarding AIS issues and/or priorities. The following at-large members served on the Panel during this reporting period:

John Andersen, The Nature Conservancy, Great Lakes Program

Ted Batterson, North Central Regional Aquaculture Center

Doris J. Bautch, U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration

Allegra Cangelosi, Northeast-Midwest Institute

Francine MacDonald, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters

Mike Murray, National Wildlife Federation

Recommendations

The Great Lakes Panel has submitted the following recommendations to the ANS Task Force during this reporting period.

Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal ANS Dispersal Barrier

- **Recommendation:** Support immediate authorization and funding to construct, operate and maintain the ANS dispersal barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal

During this reporting period, the Great Lakes Panel developed and submitted a recommendation to the ANS Task Force encouraging the Task Force, through the leadership of its members, to support authorization and funding of the ANS dispersal barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal (Canal). The recommendation, submitted to the ANS Task Force in January 2007, is available online at: <http://glc.org/ans/panel.html#recommendations>. Through this recommendation, the Panel asserts that authorization and appropriations for the Canal barrier system is critically urgent to protect the environmental and economic health of the Great Lakes region and beyond. This recommendation also reflects the broad consensus of the AIS Strategy Team convened under the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC), as conveyed in the final GLRC Strategy document. The Mississippi River Basin Panel submitted a similar recommendation to the Task Force, highlighting the importance and wide-spread need for this project to be completed and sustainable. As of this report, authorization for the barrier system has been included in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), which has been passed by both the chambers of Congress, but has not been signed into law. Appropriations for construction and operation and maintenance of the barrier system have also been included in both House and Senate appropriations bills.

Also of significance in relation to this recommendation is the collaborative effort between the Panel and Great Lakes Commission (Commission) regarding support for the dispersal barrier. The Commission submitted a similar recommendation to Congress supporting authorization and funding of the dispersal barrier. In so doing, the Great Lakes Panel recommendation to the ANS Task Force was referenced to highlight the high level of solidarity on this issue among the diverse membership of the Panel.

State Management Planning for ANS Prevention and Control

- **Recommendation:** Increase federal support and improve guidance for development and implementation of state management plans for ANS prevention and control.

As an outcome of the NOAA funded, Great Lakes Commission project, *A Collaborative Approach to Advance Implementation of State Management Plans for the Prevention and Control of Aquatic Nuisance Species in the Great Lakes Region*, recommendations and suggestions were presented to the ANS Task Force at their joint meeting with Great Lakes Panel in May 2007 in Erie, Penn. A one-day session, moderated by the Panel, was held at the meeting highlighting the progress of state management planning (SMP) for ANS prevention and control in the Great Lakes region. The session provided an opportunity for ANS Task Force members to engage in discussions with state and regional representatives to advance the SMP process. The first of the recommendations directed to the Task Force was two-fold:

- 1) the Task Force should work with members and other partners to obtain authorization for additional funding for the regional ANS panels and to the states in support of the state management plans and
- 2) the Task Force and its members should pursue other forms of federal assistance – such as equipment, staff and technical support – to implement state-led control and response strategies.

These recommendations were further endorsed during break-out discussions taking place at the meeting. The discussions yielded the following additional suggestions:

- Revise Task Force SMP guidelines to better reflect the needs of the states, including elimination of guidelines that are no longer applicable or are restricting (e.g. allow for the submission of comprehensive aquatic and terrestrial plans, even though only the aquatic portion is eligible for Task Force funding);

- Streamline the reporting process for funding;
- Create a timeframe for distribution of federal funds;
- Provide incentives to the states for acquiring other funding; and
- Maintain an equal level of funding among the states.

Each of the regional ANS panels was asked to review the guidelines and funding strategy and submit their recommendations on revision to the Task Force. Other ideas shared during this meeting included focusing on positive outcomes to show the benefits of the SMP process and related ANS prevention and control activities to stakeholders. The need for an evaluation process was identified to help demonstrate successes and ensure funding is spent wisely. Given the limited availability of funding, a variety of creative strategies for funding SMP activities were shared, including using a consultant to develop a long-term funding strategy and financial management plan; applying to other federal grant programs; prioritizing activities at which to direct funds; leveraging private funding sources with the aid of the regional ANS panels; and utilizing lobbying resources of the Sea Grant Network to advocate for increased appropriations. The discussion also emphasized the importance of state and federal cooperation and communication on regulatory issues. A summary of this session is available on the Great Lakes Panel website at <http://glc.org/ans/panel.html#glpmeet>.

Invasive Species Experts Database

- **Recommendation:** Formalize the request to experts for inclusion in the ANS Task Force Invasive Species Experts Database

The ANS Task Force has previously requested the help of the regional panels in populating a new initiative, the Invasive Species Experts Database. While the Panels have made some progress in obtaining information for “Tier 1” experts, they have been struggling with the “Tier 2” experts. At the spring meeting of the ANS Task Force, the Great Lakes Panel requested that the Task Force develop and submit a letter to each of the Panel leads formalizing the request for experts to contribute their name and information to the Invasive Species Experts Database. The letter was subsequently drafted and forwarded to the Panels after the meeting. It is available online the Great Lakes Panel website at: <http://glc.org/ans/panel.html#recommendations>. The formal letter will help to legitimize the request, as well as inform and encourage experts to submit their information for inclusion in the database.

Major Accomplishments

Note that the following accomplishments and projects have been pursued in accordance with the legislative guidelines as stipulated in NANPCA listed above. The following broad categories have been assigned for each accomplishment indicating where efforts have been focused: Prevention (P), Detection & Monitoring (DM); Control & Management (CM), Education & Public Awareness (EPA), Research (R)

Great Lakes Panel Operational Guidance Document (EPA)

The Executive Committee, with the support of Commission staff, finalized the *Great Lakes Panel Guidance for Operations* document. The final document was presented to the Panel at the spring meeting, May 10-11, 2007. The guidance document formalizes the conduct of the Great Lakes Panel, ultimately helping to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Panel as a multijurisdictional entity to advance AIS prevention and control programs on a regional basis. It provides needed direction for the Panel to do business and grounds Panel decisions in protocol. It is available on the Panel website at: <http://glc.org/ans/panel.html#guide>.

Meetings of the Great Lakes Panel (EPA)

The strength of the Great Lakes Panel comes from its diverse membership and Panel meetings which provide opportunities for communication, coordination and collaboration on AIS prevention and control issues on both a multi-jurisdictional and multi-disciplinary level. The Panel meetings are structured with a combination of plenary sessions and breakout sessions to facilitate information exchange between

members and also to provide opportunities for building partnerships between members. During this reporting period, the following formal Great Lakes Panel meetings were conducted:

- December 13-14, 2006 at the Courtyard Marriott in Ann Arbor, Mich.
- May 10-11, 2007 at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center in Erie, Penn.

Meetings were also conducted throughout this period with the Panel's Executive Committee and standing committees through conference calls. Further details on the Panel meetings covered in this report are available on the Panel website (www.glc.org/ans/panel.html#glpmeet) where meeting agendas, presentations, summaries and action items are posted.

December 13-14, 2006 Panel Meeting

The fall meeting of the Great Lakes Panel was held December 13-14, 2006 in Ann Arbor, Mich. Rapid response planning, including early detection and monitoring, provided the main focus of the meeting and presentations were offered on federal, regional and state initiatives addressing these issues. Break-out sessions allowed the Panel standing committees to discuss and strategize ways to advance to rapid response initiatives in the region. Discussion topics included development of a Great Lakes rapid response protocol; challenges to rapid response planning; and tools needed to implement rapid response. Committees made recommendations to the Panel resulting in the development of an ad-hoc Rapid Response Committee to address those issues. Other noteworthy topics covered included Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS); the Great Lakes Panel Operational Guidance document; and suggestions in revising the *Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions* publication.

May 10-11, 2007 Panel Meeting

The spring meeting of the Great Lakes Panel was held May 10-11, 2007 in Erie, Penn. The meeting was held in conjunction with the spring meeting of the ANS Task Force, May 8-10, with an all-day session taking place on May 9 on *ANS State Management Plans: Great Lakes Regional Perspectives*. The all-day session provided the Great Lakes states an opportunity to address the ANS Task Force regarding the progress and obstacles of ANS state management planning. It was also an opportunity for members of the ANS Task Force to actively engage with state representatives to develop recommendations for facilitating state ANS management planning at a regional and federal level. Discussions during this session also generated strategies to help overcome certain obstacles states are experiencing, such as a limited availability of resources and a lack of public/political support for ANS management initiatives. Other noteworthy topics covered during the Panel portion of the meeting included emerging issues such as the recent discovery of *Hemimysis anomola* ("Bloody" red shrimp), the spread of the nuisance plant *didymo* and the progress of AIS management initiatives at the federal level.

Great Lakes Panel Committee Work

Three standing committees operate under the auspices of the Great Lakes Panel: Information/Education (I/E), Research Coordination (Research), and Policy Coordination (Policy). The committees convene formally during Panel meetings as well as by email and conference calls between meetings. During this reporting period, staff has supported each of the committees in their development and implementation of work plans and priorities, as outlined below. Documents completed as part of this Committee work are available online at <http://glc.org/ans/panel.html#committees>.

Information/Education Committee (EPA, R)

Commission staff worked with I/E Committee Chair Rochelle Sturtevant (Great Lakes Sea Grant Network) and other members on the following items:

Mission Statement & Objectives: Committee members worked to develop a mission statement and objectives to guide future work of the Committee. A draft of these guiding principles is complete and once finalized, will be posted on the Panel website and included in the Panel *Guidance for Operations*.

Work Plan: The I/E Committee has worked to finalize a work plan and carry out associated priorities, which include, among others:

- Finalizing a mission statement and goals for the Committee;
- Developing a dissemination strategy for the Committee priorities document; and
- Populating the national ANS Task Force Experts Database which has progressed significantly over the last year in part due to the work and the leadership of the Committee Chair.

Grant-Making Priorities: Committee members worked to develop a priority statement regarding near-term priorities for AIS information, education and outreach for a grant-making selection process. These priorities are available on the Panel website (noted above).

Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions Booklet: I/E Committee members aided in developing a dissemination strategy for the recently published *Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions* booklet. (For more information, refer to section below under *Great Lakes Commission Projects*)

Research Coordination Committee (R, P, CM, EPA)

Commission staff worked with Research Committee Chair Phil Moy (Wisconsin Sea Grant) and other members on the following items:

Research Priorities Document: The Research Committee worked to finalize and develop their *Aquatic Invasive Research Priorities Document*. Related to this, Committee work included:

- Identifying overlap between the Committee's research priorities and those of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration (GLRC) AIS Strategy;
- Addressing recommendations directed toward the Panel, specifically, the development of a regional prohibited and restricted species list.

The regional prohibited and restricted species list will be a compilation of all species regulated in each of the Great Lakes states and provinces. The list will be used to increase awareness and advance consistency on both regulatory and voluntary management of high-risk species in the region.

Priority Species List: The Committee has worked to update a Priority Species List to draw attention to those organisms with known and significant adverse impacts on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River ecosystem, its users and uses. The list is intended to be dynamic, shifting and changing as research develops, populations fluctuate, new impacts are found and new organisms of concern appear on the horizon. Committee members and staff have also worked to develop criteria for listing and de-listing to form the basis for screening species. The Great Lakes Panel Priority Invasive Species List will be posted online (noted above) once it is finalized.

Grant-Making Priorities: Similar to the I/E Committee, the Research Committee also developed a priority statement regarding near-term priorities for AIS research for a grant-making selection process. These priorities are available on the Panel website (noted above).

Policy Coordination Committee (P, CM)

Commission staff worked with the Committee Chair Jennifer Nalbome (Great Lakes United) and other members on the following items:

Mission Statement & Objectives: Committee members worked to develop a mission statement and objectives to guide Committee work. The objectives of the exercise was to lay out guiding principles and a strategy by which the Committee could do work and provide valuable information and tools to the region, as well as recommendations to the ANS Task Force. Once finalized, these guidelines will be posted online and incorporated, along with those of the other standing committees, into the Panel *Guidance for Operations*.

Work Plan: The Committee also developed a work plan for the year which was subsequently approved by the Panel. Work plan items staff has and continues to work with the Committee on include:

- Development of a recommendation for the ANS Task Force encouraging the Task Force, through their leadership, to support authorization and funding of the ANS dispersal barrier in the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal;

- Development of a recommendation for federal comprehensive AIS legislation;
- Formation of a Panel ad-hoc committee to address rapid response recommendations from the Task Force; and
- Investigation of the potential for a Panel meeting session exploring the relationship between International Maritime Organization ballast water standards and domestic regulations.

Great Lakes Panel Initiatives

Rapid Response Planning (DM, CM)

Staff has worked with the Panel's Executive Committee and the Policy Coordination Committee in the formation of an ad-hoc Rapid Response Committee in response to requests from the 2006 fall meetings of the ANS Task Force and Great Lakes Panel. Potential ad-hoc committee co-chairs have been identified and invited to serve. It is anticipated that further discussion on establishing this ad-hoc Committee, including staff to support the leadership of this committee, will occur at the fall 2007 meeting. A work plan of the ad-hoc Rapid Response Committee will be determined by the co-chairs; however, several priority issues have been suggested, including the investigation of the applicability of the Incident Command System (ICS) as a protocol for AIS response. In addition, the Great Lakes Interagency Task Force of the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration has recently completed a communications protocol for rapid response as part of a broader AIS Rapid Response Initiative being led by U.S. EPA. An anticipated role for the Panel ad-hoc Committee would be to help EPA implement this communications protocol as well as evaluate the potential for adding a rapid response component to existing management planning efforts, including state management plans.

Website Communications (EPA)

Commission staff manage a website serving Great Lakes Panel information through the Great Lakes Commission website at <http://www.glc.org/ans/panel.html>. This site provides "one stop shopping" regarding developments of the Panel, including links to

- Panel publications with a page dedicated to the publication of the ANS Update;
- Current Panel and Commission initiatives and projects;
- Information on past and upcoming meetings;
- Contact information for Panel members;
- Information on Committee activities including their priorities documents; and
- Upcoming AIS-related events.

During this reporting period, staff has added a section to the website for posting recommendations and communications submitted to the ANS Task Force. As part of the Great Lakes Panel website, considerable effort is invested in keeping membership information current which, over the years, has proved to be in a constant state of flux. Staff is also considering restructuring the website to facilitate easier use and create a more dynamic resource with an emphasis on management tools for AIS prevention and control.

In addition to the Panel website, staff are responsible for invasive species information maintained on the Great Lakes Information Network (GLIN). The invasive species pages of GLIN (<http://glin.net/envt/flora-fauna/invasive/invasive.html>) help to enhance communication and the availability of consistent information. This helps to foster cooperation in addressing unique environmental and economic challenges, including those posed by aquatic invasions. These pages provide users with links to a variety of sites related to AIS issues, including sites for species-specific information, invasive species in the Great Lakes and recent publications related to aquatic invasions. Given the continuing advancements in AIS knowledge and recent discovery of several new invaders, staff anticipates completing an extensive update of these pages with in the coming year. A new staff member, an intern from the Government of Québec, will be assisting with this initiative.

Great Lakes Commission Projects

The following AIS related projects are being conducted under the auspices of the Great Lakes Commission and are presented below given their significance in advancing the AIS prevention and control on a regional basis as closely aligned with the goals and objectives of the Great Lakes Panel. It is also noteworthy that Great Lakes Panel membership has played a significant role in identifying the need for these projects as well as guidance for project development and review of products/outcomes.

Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions Booklet (EPA)

Staff completed work on the development of a comprehensive publication: *Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions*. Great Lakes Panel members played a significant role in reviewing the content, graphics and layout for the 14 page booklet. Expertise provided by Great Lakes Commission graphic designers Elizabeth Schmidt and Christine Manninen was also instrumental during this phase of development. The publication was printed at the end of February 2007 and unveiled with initial distribution in March at the Commission sponsored Great Lakes Day 2007 events in Washington, DC. Copies were also provided to members of the national ANS Task Force, the Panel and other interested parties at the Joint Meeting of the ANS Task Force and Great Lakes Panel in May 2007. Staff have distributed over 2,000 of the 10,000 copies to agencies, legislators and others at a variety of regional events. Further distribution of this educational tool will continue to be targeted toward state and federal legislators, as well as other prime user groups from the recreational and commercial sector. The Panel I/E Committee will also be asked to aid in the development a feedback survey to track the distribution and perceived value of the booklet. An electronic version and associated references is available online at <http://glc.org/ans/aquatic-invasions>.

ANS Update Newsletter (EPA)

The *ANS Update* is a 2-page newsletter produced twice a year by Great Lakes Commission staff. It has historically been used as a vehicle of the Great Lakes Panel to raise awareness and understanding of priority and/or emerging AIS issues. This publication provides brief updates on state/provincial, regional and federal agency AIS programs. Each issue of the *ANS Update* is inserted in the Commission's publication, *The Advisor*, which is distributed on a wide-scale basis to a Great Lakes readership. Distribution is also directed to Panel members and interested parties who are notified of each new issue and directed to the online posting at: <http://www.glc.org/ans/ansupdate>. Feature articles highlighted in the newsletter provide an effective means to raise awareness on emerging policy and scientific/technical developments in areas of interest on Great Lakes aquatic invasions. The following feature articles were published in the *ANS Update* during this reporting period:

- **ANS Update (Volume 13, No. 1):** This issue of the *ANS Update* featured an article authored by Gary Whelan, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, addressing the recent discovery of Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) in the Great Lakes. This issue was published in May 2007.
- **ANS Update (Volume 13, No. 2):** This upcoming issue of the *ANS Update* will feature an article authored by Erika Jensen, Great Lakes Commission Program Specialist, describing the outcomes of the recently completed Commission project and session at the ANS Task Force meeting on state management planning for prevention and control of AIS. Expected publication of this issue is October 2007.

State Ballast Water Regulation (EPA, P)

An article on state specific ballast water regulation was published in the July-September 2006 issue of the *Great Lakes Seaway Review*. The article, written by 2005-2006 Great Lakes Commission Sea Grant Fellow, Lisa Butch, provided highlights of U.S. Supreme Court cases which could offer insight on the potential constitutionality of such regulations. The timeliness of this article is illustrated by recent events, including the implementation of Michigan's ballast water permit and associated U.S. District Court decision upholding that regulation.

State Management Planning for ANS Prevention and Control (P, CM, DM, EPA)

The project, *A Collaborative Approach to Advance Implementation of State Management Plans for Prevention and Control of ANS in the Great Lakes Region*, supporting state ANS management planning efforts was completed in May 2007. Through a series of state-specific workshops funded by the NOAA National Sea Grant Program, this project has facilitated collaboration between Great Lakes Commission staff and representatives from Sea Grant programs and natural resource agencies in the Great Lakes states in an effort to advance the development and implementation of ANS state management plans (SMPs). State-specific SMP workshops were successfully conducted in six Great Lakes states: Wisconsin, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. The culminating event of this project was an all-day session of the ANS Task Force spring meeting showcasing state management plans in the Great Lakes region with a focus on successes and obstacles in state management planning. The session brought together project partners and the ANS Task Force to strategize ideas for improving and promoting the implementation of state management plans, including collaboration across jurisdictional lines. (*Please refer to the section Recommendations above for a summary of outcomes from this session*). Complete documentation of the project, including outcomes, workshop agendas, presentations and summaries are posted on the project website at <http://glc.org/ans/initiatives.html#advance>.