

# *The Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species*

## **GUIDANCE FOR OPERATIONS**

April 2007

*The Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species was convened in 1991 under the auspices of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force as directed by Section 1203 of the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-646). The Great Lakes Panel works to coordinate prevention and control of aquatic nuisance species in the Great Lakes region. This document provides guidance for the operations of the Great Lakes Panel.*

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# *The Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species Guidance for Operations*

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## **A. Background**

### **Introduction**

The federal Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (NANPCA, Public Law 101-646, 16 USC 4701-474) provides federal legislative support for programs aimed at aquatic nuisance species (ANS) prevention and control. Under Section 1203 of NANPCA, the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species (Panel) was created to assist the national Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, also created under NANPCA to collaborate with state and local government partners on ANS prevention and control programs. The legislation was reauthorized in 1996 as the National Invasive Species Act (NISA, Public Law 104-332).

This document presents guidance for the operations of the Great Lakes Panel.

In regards to terminology, the federal legislation refers to “aquatic nuisance species” (ANS), as does the title “Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species.” Except when referencing legislation, this document uses the term aquatic invasive species (AIS), the preferred term of federal and state managers. An aquatic invasive species is defined as a species not native to the ecosystem under consideration, whereby introduction of this species does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or threaten human health.

### **History**

Enactment of the federal legislation, NANPCA, was a response to the growing threat posed by the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species to U.S. waters. A significant factor in shaping NANPCA was the invasion of zebra mussels and the associated ecological and economic impacts, particularly those related to the manufacturing and power generating industries in the Great Lakes states. Through this legislation Congress recognized that mitigation of adverse AIS impacts is dependent upon well-coordinated outreach, research, monitoring, and prevention and control programs on a national, regional and state level. The following mechanisms established under Section 1203 of NANPCA address these challenges:

**Establishment of a national Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force:** To address the ANS issue on a national scale, Congress established the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) as an intergovernmental organization for the purpose of ANS prevention and control through implementation of NANPCA. The mandates under NANPCA were expanded later with the passage of NISA in 1996. The Task Force consists of 10 Federal agency representatives and 12 Ex-officio members, and is co-chaired by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Task Force coordinates governmental efforts concerning aquatic nuisance species in the United States with those of the private sector and other North American interests via regional panels and issue specific committees and work groups.

**Establishment of regional ANS panels:** Under Section 1203 of NANPCA, the ANS Task Force was directed to convene regional panels on aquatic nuisance species for the purpose of coordinating prevention and control among local, state, and federal governmental agencies. The Great Lakes Panel was the first regional ANS Panel to be established under NANPCA, with multijurisdictional representation from the geographic region of the Great Lakes states including Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Under Section 1203 of NANPCA, the Great Lakes Commission, a regional entity established in 1955 through the Great Lakes Basin Compact, was requested to convene and staff the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species. Since enactment of the Act in 1990, the Great Lakes Panel has worked to coordinate prevention and control of aquatic nuisance species in the Great Lakes on a regional basis. Establishment of the Great Lakes Panel was followed by that of the Western Regional Panel, included in the passage of NISA of 1996. NISA included language that encourages the ANS Task Force to establish additional regional panels across the country as discussed below.

Establishment of the Great Lakes Panel created a permanent body of regional experts, including representatives from government agencies and tribal authorities, scientific researchers, policy makers, outreach specialists, commercial and recreational user groups, and other stakeholders from both the public and private sectors; all of whom are focused on the prevention and control of aquatic invasive species (AIS as defined above). To address Great Lakes aquatic invasions, the body has been structured to contribute substantially to information and education programming, research and management coordination, and regional policy coordination. Effective prevention and control efforts in the Great Lakes region continue to be the first line of defense in slowing or preventing the spread of aquatic invasive species not only in the Great Lakes, but to other regions of the country as well (e.g., the Mississippi River watershed, Chesapeake Bay, Gulf of Mexico, among others). Although the Great Lakes Panel was established under federal legislation, the engagement and participation of Canadian counterparts on the Panel are recommended by the ANS Task Force to provide advice and coordinate efforts to address AIS problems plaguing the binational Great Lakes resource.

More than 20 federal agencies and numerous state, local, and non-governmental entities are working on various aspects of AIS management, including information and education, research and monitoring, and prevention and control, among others. The need for coordination and collaboration on a regional level is essential to effectively implement AIS prevention and control strategies across jurisdictional boundaries. The Great Lakes Panel's multijurisdictional representation makes this entity well-suited to address the complex challenges posed by AIS introduction and spread. A 1994 report to Congress, *Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations of the Intentional Introductions Policy Review*, further confirmed the need for regional interjurisdictional panels in making ecologically credible decisions. In NANPCA, Congress recognizes the importance of regional ANS panels most notably in their capacity to contribute to the collective effort at the state, regional and national levels by providing sound advice to the ANS Task Force with input from regional experts.

The role and potential contributions of the Great Lakes Panel were reinforced and enhanced by reauthorization of NANPCA through NISA of 1996. The National Invasive Species Act

broadened the geographic scope of the legislation and to include the full spectrum of aquatic invasive species introduced into U.S. waters. The zebra mussel, for instance, has colonized most of the Mississippi River since its discovery in the Great Lakes in the mid-1980s and is gradually extending its range westward. To address this expanding threat, NISA strengthened existing AIS prevention and control efforts and authorized the formation of the following additional regional ANS panels to assist the ANS Task Force in developing coordinated management approaches:

**The Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species** was established in 1997. Its members are Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, and the territory of Guam. The Western Panel also focuses on issues affecting the Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan. See <http://answest.fws.gov/>

**The Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species** was established in 1999, and represents Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Georgia, and South Carolina. See [http://nis.gsmfc.org/gomrp\\_on\\_ais.shtm](http://nis.gsmfc.org/gomrp_on_ais.shtm)

**The Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Panel** was established in 1991 with a state membership of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont. AIS issues in the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Quebec are also considered. See <http://www.northeastans.org/>

**The Mid-Atlantic Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species** was established in 2003 and is hosted by the Chesapeake Bay Program. The Mid-Atlantic Panel represents Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington D.C., and West Virginia. See <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/marp.htm>

**The Mississippi River Basin Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species** was established in 2003, representing the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Wisconsin, West Virginia, and Wyoming. See <http://wwwaux.cerc.cr.usgs.gov/MICRA/MRB%20Panel%20on%20ANS.htm>

**Executive Order:** President Clinton signed Executive Order 13112 in 1999, establishing the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) to work on *both* aquatic and terrestrial invasive species issues. The NISC operates as an intergovernmental agency under the executive branch for the purpose of coordinating federal, state, and local invasive species management programs. The management plan *Meeting the Invasive Species Challenge* (2001) was developed under the auspices of NISC. The management plan includes the following components: AIS prevention and pathway identification; international cooperation; rapid response; eradication of invasive species and control of their spread; monitoring; restoration of displaced native species and damaged habitat; research; evaluation of impacts to the environment, economy, and human health; technology advancement; and education strategies.

## **B. Mission of the Great Lakes Panel**

The mission of the Great Lakes Panel is to coordinate the development of education, research and policy to prevent new aquatic invasive species from entering the Great Lakes basin and to control and mitigate those AIS populations already established. The Panel carries out this mission through activities in the following areas, per Section 1203 of NANPCA as amended by NISA, pursuant to appropriations:

- Identify AIS priorities for the Great Lakes;
- Develop regional position statements on AIS priorities;
- Make recommendations to the national ANS Task Force, as stipulated in Section 1202 of NANPCA;
- Assist the ANS Task Force in coordinating federal AIS program activities;
- Provide advice to public entities, private sector groups and other interested parties concerning AIS prevention and control;
- Coordinate AIS program activities in the Great Lakes in areas related to information and education, research and policy as well as other areas that are not cited directly in the 1990 Act; and
- Provide a forum for interagency/organizational communication and serve as a vehicle for regional dialogue and discussion on AIS issues.

## **C. Principles Governing Operation of the Great Lakes Panel**

Section 1203(a) of NANPCA (as amended by NISA, 1996) requires the ANS Task Force to encourage the development and use of regional panels in the coordination of AIS prevention and control, as indicated in the mission statement. The regional panels, along with the ANS Task Force and committees, provide an intergovernmental mechanism to implement a coordinated federal program. The principals governing the operation of the Great Lakes Panel are based on federal law.

The operations of the Panel are also influenced by its role as an advisory body to the ANS Task Force, which is governed by the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). While the Panel itself is a separate entity and does not require a FACA charter, the activities of the Panel are covered under the FACA charter for the ANS Task Force. Under that charter, the Panel is treated as a committee and reports its recommendations to the Task Force. In addition, the Panel has an independent federal mandate pursuant to 16 U.S. Code 4723 under NANPCA which provides the following guiding principles regarding the operations and conduct of the Great Lakes Panel:

- Participation by all interests in the binational Great Lakes-St. Lawrence basin will be optimized to ensure that NANPCA Section 1203 goals are fully addressed.
- The Panel will not duplicate or replace efforts by the federal, state, provincial, local, academic and nongovernmental sectors related to AIS prevention and control. The Panel will build upon and showcase these efforts and activities.

- The Panel will strive for consensus in its decision-making, agenda setting and policy development activities as defined in Section I of this document.
- The Panel will use Robert’s Rules of Order in the conduct and reporting of its meetings, a process which provides for efficient decision-making, ensures that minority opinions are heard and protects the rights of absentee members.
- The Panel will serve as a coordinator, catalyst and convener, relying upon its membership and other interested stakeholders to perform most program activities (e.g., information, education and outreach, research and monitoring, and policy coordination).
- The Panel will serve as a principal regional advisor to federal, state, and provincial agencies through the national ANS Task Force with regard to Great Lakes AIS related information and education, research and policy coordination activities.
- The Panel will coordinate, where possible, regional AIS program activities that are not necessarily conducted pursuant to NANPCA.
- The Panel will be administered by the Great Lakes Commission (hereafter referred to as “Panel administrator”).

## **D. Membership**

Section 1203 of NANPCA provides limited guidance for establishing membership of the Great Lakes Panel, calling only for the convening of a panel of Great Lakes representatives from Federal, State and local agencies and from private environmental and commercial interests. In establishing the membership of the body, it is desirable for the Panel to be both broad in representation and yet manageable in size. To achieve this, the Great Lakes Panel shall have a four-tiered membership, based on the following categories: regular members, alternate members, at-large members, and interested parties/observers.

### **Regular Membership**

The regular membership arrangement for the Great Lakes Panel will be drawn from the key agencies/organizations pursuant to the “categories of interest” identified in Section 1203 of NANPCA, listed below. In the interest of maintaining an optimal and functional Panel size, membership policy dictates that, where available, associations or other “umbrella” groups will be requested to designate a single individual to represent all members of the association.

**U.S. Federal:** One member each from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; the U.S. Coast Guard; the U.S. Geological Survey; the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; the State Department; and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

**Canadian Federal:** One member from the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and Transport Canada.

**State:** One member each from the states of Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Wisconsin and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

**Provincial:** One member each from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Societe de la Faune et des Parcs du Quebec, and Ontario Hydro

**Regional/Binational:** One member each from the Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the International Joint Commission, and the Great Lakes Commission (ex-officio)

**Tribal Authorities:** One member each from the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission and the Chippewa-Ottawa Resource Authority

**Local:** Two members representing coastal communities, preferably one U.S. and one Canadian

**Citizen/User Groups:** Representatives from citizen/advocacy groups to include Great Lakes United and the Great Lakes Sport Fishing Council

**Private/Commercial:** One member representing the Council of Great Lakes Industries; one member representing domestic shipping industry in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence; one member representing the international shipping industry; and one member from the public water supply sector

**University/Research:** Two members from the Great Lakes Sea Grant Network; one providing expertise on research initiatives, the other on advisory services/extension; one member from a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Cooperative Research Unit

The representatives serving as regular members on the Great Lakes Panel will be appointed by their affiliated agency/organization pursuant to NANPCA guidelines. Regular members serve in perpetuity or for a specific period of time as communicated by the appointing entity. The appointment can be renewed or changed as appropriate. Upon the resignation of a regular member, the agency/organization represented by that member will be asked to provide a replacement. Each regular member holds voting privileges on the Great Lakes Panel.

### **Alternate Membership**

Alternate members are designated to serve on the Panel on behalf of designated regular members when that member is unavailable to participate in Great Lakes Panel meetings and other relevant Panel initiatives. As with regular members, alternate members are selected by the agency/organization pursuant to the NANPCA categories of interest. Alternate members serve in perpetuity or for a period of time as communicated by the appointing entity. The appointment can be renewed or changed as appropriate. Alternates attending Panel meetings on behalf of a regular member are permitted to vote on all Panel initiatives. Alternates attending Panel meetings along with the regular member that they represent are generally not eligible to vote except in the following two cases: 1) when the regular member being represented is absent from the meeting or 2) when the alternate is serving as a chair of a Panel committee. Although alternate members are not eligible to vote when the regular member is present, they are encouraged to participate in Panel meetings, conference calls, relevant discussions and other related initiatives.

In cases where both the regular member and respective alternate member are not available to participate in the Panel forum (e.g., Panel meeting or conference call) and/or vote on Panel related issues, a formal letter may be submitted in advance of the meeting/call to the Panel administrator to authorize a proxy to vote on behalf of the agency, entity or individual being represented.

### **At-Large Membership**

Representatives are elected by the Panel and contribute to the mission of the Panel by bringing and applying special expertise, organizational interest, or advisory capability regarding AIS issues. There will be no more than eight at-large members each serving a four year term. Staggered terms may be established in the future to prevent the complete turnover of at-large members at any given time. Generally speaking, at-large members represent certain constituencies or areas of expertise that were not identified in the original list of Panel membership under the categories of interest when NANPCA was first passed. The intent of the at-large membership program is to ensure that there is balanced representation among all stakeholders involved in AIS prevention and control to be inclusive of emerging issues. At-large members of the Panel hold full voting privileges and may also serve as the chair of Panel committees.

### **Interested Parties/Observers**

Interested parties/observers include those individuals, agencies or organizations not formally affiliated with the Great Lakes Panel, but who are interested in participating in Panel meetings or other Panel functions and/or initiatives. The following situations may apply to interested parties/observers: Section 1203 of NANPCA does not provide for direct membership if: 1) their category of interests (e.g., environmental, commercial) is already adequately represented on the Panel; or 2) their role in AIS prevention and control programs and/or projects is comparatively limited.

Interested parties/observers do not hold voting privileges but are invited to attend all Great Lakes Panel meetings and participate in and contribute to Panel discussions as appropriate. They are also eligible to participate in committee discussions, but cannot serve as committee members. Panel members may suggest to the Great Lakes Commission any agencies/organizations that should be designated as interested parties/observers. Similarly, any such agency/organization can request that designation via communication with the Great Lakes Panel administrator.

### **Membership Appointment to the Great Lakes Panel**

- Great Lakes Panel members representing existing categories of interests as outlined in NANPCA should be formally appointed by their respective agencies, organizations or the interests they represent. Similar guidance on membership appointment applies to alternate members.
- At-large members will be added to the Panel through a nomination and election process established by the Panel Executive Committee and Nominating Committee and executed by the Panel administrator (see Section F: Election Process).
- Only the ANS Task Force can modify membership categories of interest and the individual agencies represented within the Panel's categories of interest.

- Interested Parties/Observers: The Panel administrator will handle requests for participating on the Panel as an interested party/observer. The list of interested parties/observers used to communicate with the Panel will also be maintained by the Panel administrator.

### **Membership Responsibilities**

Individuals serving as regular and at-large members on the Great Lakes Panel should be well-versed on issues related to AIS prevention and control issues with a sincere interest in being an active member of the Panel. Once appointed, Panel members assume the following responsibilities:

- Attend Panel meetings or, if attendance is not possible, arrange for participation by the alternate member;
- Represent his/her respective agency/organization at the Panel meetings;
- Provide a written AIS programmatic update (successes, challenges, concerns, status) to staff prior to each Panel meeting for reporting purposes at the meeting and for inclusion in the meeting minutes;
- Report back to his/her respective agency/organization on key Panel initiatives under discussion;
- Participate in meeting discussions and serve the Panel to the best of his/her abilities;
- Serve on one or more Panel committee and participate in committee activities;
- Participate in the process of policy development, sharing expertise as appropriate and providing feedback in the review of policy position statements;
- Provide information on Panel positions, views and relevant initiatives where appropriate, to other organizations and individuals not directly involved in Panel activities;
- Serve as ambassador for the Panel, acknowledging the mission of the Panel and promoting the work of the Panel with his/her agency/organization being represented; and
- Show esprit de corps, being respectful of others participating in Panel initiatives and their statements and opinions.

### **Members of Good Standing**

In agreeing to represent their agency/organization as a member of the Panel, individuals are responsible for complying with the aforementioned guidelines. To be in good standing, members should make a good faith effort to attend Panel meetings whenever possible. A member's good standing may be in jeopardy when he/she is chronically absent from Panel meetings (three or more consecutive meetings), committee meetings and other Panel initiatives without communicating a reasonable cause to the Panel Chair or Panel administrator.

Panel membership will be reviewed every two years by the Panel administrator. In cases where frequent unexcused absences of an individual/organization have occurred, the Panel Chair may inquire from the member to discern his/her status and level of commitment to the Panel. If an agency/organization does not wish to participate with the Panel or cannot immediately identify an individual to serve, the position will remain vacant until an appointment is made, or a letter is received asking to be officially removed from Panel membership. Those groups specifically identified in the legislation to serve on the Great Lakes Panel cannot be removed as a member until their case is reviewed by the Executive Committee and ANS Task Force.

## **E. Panel Officers**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Panel Chair**

The Chair will preside over the operations of the Great Lakes Panel for a two year term. The Panel Vice Chair (functioning as Chair-elect) will assume the position of Chair at the end of each term. As is the case for the Vice Chair, members eligible for the position of Chair are those regular members representing U.S. entities serving the Panel in good standing with at least two years of services with the Panel. The Panel Chair holds the following responsibilities:

- Preside over Panel meetings;
- Oversee the activities of the Panel Executive Committee;
- Work with the Executive Committee and Panel administrator in developing agendas for Panel meetings;
- Serve as ex-officio member of all Panel committees;
- Oversee the conduct of Panel committees;
- Assess the status of members in good standing when necessary;
- Serve as the principal Panel liaison to the national ANS Task Force, including oversight and submission of Panel recommendations and meeting reports to the Task Force;
- Serve as spokesperson for the Panel at meetings and conferences as appropriate and feasible; and
- Oversee the Panel's decision-making process, based on consensus and majority voting.

#### **Panel Vice Chair**

The Vice Chair will assist the Chair in presiding over the operations of the Great Lakes Panel. Those eligible to serve as Vice Chair are regular members representing U.S. entities serving the Panel in good standing with at least two years of service with the Panel. The Vice Chair will serve a two-year term and hold the status of Chair-elect, assuming the position of Chair at the end of that term unless there are extenuating circumstances. The Panel Vice Chair holds the following responsibilities:

- Perform duties of the Chair when the Chair is unavailable; and
- Participate as a member of the Executive Committee.

#### **Committee Chairs**

Chairs of the standing committees of the Panel will be selected from the regular, at-large or alternate membership, serving for two-year terms. Alternates selected as Committee Chairs will have full voting privileges on committee and full Panel deliberations, regardless of whether the regular member is in attendance or not. Committees Chairs will hold the following responsibilities:

- Conduct committee sessions (2-3 hours in duration) during Panel meetings, including setting the committee meeting agenda; and

- Conduct committee meetings and/or teleconferences outside of Panel meetings as needed, with support provided by the Panel administrator.

## **F. Election Process**

### **Nominations Process**

An ad-hoc Nominating Committee will be established by the Panel Chair and announced at the fall meeting of the Panel, prior to each biennial election of Panel officers and at-large members that will occur in even years prior to the spring meeting. The Nominating Committee will consist of a minimum of three members: the immediate past chair, one state member and one Canadian member. Other members may be added at the discretion of the Panel Chair. The role of the Nominating Committee will be to prepare a list of candidates eligible for election for the positions of Panel Chair (when necessary), Vice-Chair (Chair elect) as well a slate of those interested and eligible to chair the three standing committees. The Nominating Committee will also, in consultation with the Panel Executive Committee, prepare and present for election a list of candidates for at-large membership of the Panel. Individuals considered for nominations should meet general membership criteria as described in Section D: Membership. These include, among others, AIS expertise, willingness to serve, appropriate experience, ability to attend regular Panel meetings, committee meetings and other Panel initiatives, and serving as a member in good standing. Nominees should meet the specific requirements of the respective positions also described the Section D. A report of the Nominating Committee will be given at the spring meeting of the Panel prior to the announcement of the election results.

### **Positions Open for Election**

#### **Panel Chair**

The position of Chair is assumed by a regular member representing a U.S. entity of the Panel in good standing who has served as Vice Chair for the 2 prior years. In circumstances when the Vice Chair decides not to assume the position of Chair, nominees will be identified by the Nominating Committee, presented to the Panel and voted for as part of the Panel election process.

#### **Panel Vice Chair**

The position of Vice Chair is open to regular members representing a U.S. entity of the Panel, serving in good standing for at least two years. The Vice Chair is elected by the Panel membership (including regular and at-large members and those alternates acting on behalf of respective regular members and/or serving as a Committee Chair). Upon approval of the ANS Task Force, the Vice Chair will serve a two-year term. The Vice Chair will assume the position of chair upon expiration of the Chair's term, only with the exception of extenuating circumstances as mentioned above.

#### **Committee Chairs**

The position of committee chair is open to any regular, alternate or at-large member of the Panel who has served in good standing for at least one year. Committee chairs are elected by Panel

members (including regular and at-large members, and those alternates acting on behalf of respective regular members and/or serving as a committee chair), serving a two year term. If at any time a committee chair becomes vacant, the Panel Chair will designate a new committee chair from the Panel membership.

### **At-Large Membership**

At-large members serve on the Great Lakes Panel for a four year term having been nominated by the Nominating Committee and elected by the voting members of the Panel. The number of at-large members, not to exceed eight, will be periodically reviewed by the Panel Chair in consultation with the Executive Committee and the Nominating Committee. At-large members are elected by the Panel membership for the purpose of providing individuals the opportunity to serve the Panel and contribute to its mission based on the individual's special expertise, interest, or advisory capability.

*Note: Member in good standing is defined in Section D under Panel Membership Responsibilities.*

### **Voting Guidelines**

**Eligibility of Panel Officers:** To clarify membership status regarding eligibility of Panel officers (described in Section E on Panel Officers) refer to the Great Lakes Panel membership list available online at [www.glc.org/about/taskforce/glpanel.html](http://www.glc.org/about/taskforce/glpanel.html).

**Voting eligibility:** Those members holding voting status on the Panel include regular and at-large members and those alternate members acting on behalf of respective regular members and/or serving as a Committee Chair. In cases where both the regular member and respective alternate member are not available to vote in a Panel election, a formal letter may be submitted to authorize a proxy to vote on behalf of the agency/entity being represented.

**Re-nominations:** Current officers and at-large members may be re-nominated.

### **Elections**

The election of Panel officers and at-large members, following the nomination period, are to be conducted electronically by the Panel administrator which will occur in even years prior to the spring Panel meeting. New officers will assume their positions at the start of the spring meeting. Panel officers and at-large members serve for a two year term with no term limits. Election to Panel positions is based on a simple majority of votes cast by Panel membership, meeting the Panel quorum. In the event of a vacancy in the chair position, the Vice Chair will move to the chair position and a special election will be held for the Vice Chair. As mentioned above (in the section on positions open for elections), in the event that the Vice Chair cannot assume the Chair position, nominees will be accepted for Chair and placed accordingly on the election ballot. In the case of other officer vacancies, a special election will be held.

## **G. Panel Committees**

### **Executive Committee**

An Executive Committee has been established to provide administrative and executive functions for the Panel to operate in the same manner as the full Panel in all aspects of decision-making and procedures. The Executive Committee will be comprised of the Panel Chair, Vice Chair, and the Chairs of the Panel's three standing committees Information and Education, Research Coordination, and Policy Coordination (see detailed discussion below). The Executive Committee, led by the Panel Chair, will be staffed by the Panel administrator from the Great Lakes Commission. The main functions of the Executive Committee will be to work with the Panel administrator and other staff as appropriate, in the following areas: plan Panel meetings, develop meeting agendas, identify important items to be discussed by the Panel during meetings or in other forums, assist staff in the pursuit of supplemental funding opportunities for Panel operation, and handle other administrative items as necessary. The Executive Committee will also provide final approval for recommended actions of the Great Lakes Panel to be communicated to the ANS Task Force.

### **Standing Committees**

The standing committees operate under the auspices of the Great Lakes Panel to accomplish the Panel's mission and to advance AIS priorities in discrete areas as identified by the Panel and/or by individual committees. Standing committees of the Panel include:

- Information/Education
- Research Coordination
- Policy Coordination

The standing committees listed below function in the same manner as the full Panel in all aspects of decision-making and procedures. Membership of the standing committees is open to all members of the Great Lakes Panel, including regular, alternates, and at-large members. As part of their membership responsibilities, the regular and at-large Panel members will be asked to serve on one of the standing committees. Each standing committee is required to have five base members. In the event that a committee has fewer than five members, the Panel Chair, in consultation with the three committee chairs, will assign one or more members to serve on that particular committee needing members to meet the size requirement. Interested parties/observers are encouraged to participate in committee meetings and related discussions, whenever possible.

Under the leadership of the committee chairs, each standing committee will be responsible for:

- Establishing and/or abiding by a mission statement, including goals, objectives, and an annual work plan supported by staff to the extent that is consistent with funding provided by the ANS Task Force;
- Developing and/or maintaining a committee priorities document to be used as a guide for generating ideas for funding proposals for projects to be conducted under the auspices of the Great Lakes Panel and/or the respective standing committee, as appropriate;
- Recruiting five base (e.g., regular, alternate and at-large) Panel members to sit on the committee;

- Recruiting any additional members and interested parties/observers who may provide expertise and advise; and
- Submitting committee recommendations to the Panel for approval/endorsement before submission to the ANS Task Force Executive Secretary for approval.

New standing committees may be instituted by consensus of the Great Lakes Panel with the approval of the ANS Task Force.

### **Ad Hoc Committees**

The Panel may, from time to time, establish ad hoc committees to address specific issues that emerge or assume tasks not covered by the standing committees. Ad hoc committees are established for a specific purpose (e.g., ballast water management policy, funding strategies for Panel operations, nomination of Panel officers) and for a specific period of time. Once the purpose for which the committee was formed has been accomplished, the committee will be disbanded. Ad hoc committees can be instituted by consensus of the Panel. Ad hoc committee membership will be recommended by the Panel and approved by the Panel Chair in consultation with the Executive Committee, and may include non-Panel members with specific expertise who are willing and able to serve. Invitations to serve will be made in writing by the Panel administrator. All other provisions pertaining to standing committees are applicable to ad hoc committees.

## **H. Staff Support**

As indicated under Section 1203 of NANPCA, the Great Lakes Commission (an interstate compact agency serving the Great Lakes states and provinces) is responsible for providing staff support to the Great Lakes Panel. Base funding to support Panel operations is provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Executive Director of the Great Lakes Commission will designate a Panel administrator from the Commission staff to oversee Panel operations and assign personnel to provide staff support for operation of the Panel and its committees to specifically address the Panel's mission, as stipulated under NANPCA, Section 1203. To advance the mission of the Great Lakes Panel, the Panel administrator, with assistance from Panel staff, will provide the following support services, pursuant to the availability of funding for Panel operation:

**Communication Network:** The following communication mechanisms will be maintained on a regional basis to facilitate ongoing, effective communication among Panel members and observers/interested parties:

- Great Lakes Panel website, [www.glc.org/ans/panel.html](http://www.glc.org/ans/panel.html), hosted on the Great Lakes Commission website, presenting Panel initiatives and related projects and activities to AIS prevention and control occurring primarily in the Great Lakes region
- ANS Panel Listserv
- Ongoing correspondence on Panel business conducted both by electronic and traditional mail

**Conduct of Panel Meetings:** Logistical support for Panel meetings will be provided by Panel staff, including arrangements for meeting facility/accommodations and all related communication with the Panel members and interested parties. Support for meeting facilitation will be provided for both plenary and committee break-out sessions. A summary of the meeting will be developed to include a list of action items and/or recommendations that are submitted to the ANS Task Force. A summary of each Panel meeting will also be posted on the Great Lakes Panel website ([www.glc.org/ans/panel.html](http://www.glc.org/ans/panel.html)) and distributed electronically to Panel membership and interested parties/observers. Refer to Section I for further details on Panel meetings.

**ANS Task Force Meetings:** Arrangements will be made by the Panel administrator for Great Lakes Panel representation at the fall and spring meetings of the ANS Task Force. In the event that the Panel Chair or Vice Chair is not able to attend, the Panel administrator or another appropriate Great Lakes Commission project staff member will act in this role. Preparation for the ANSTF meetings is also the responsibility of staff to include briefing book summaries and meeting presentations serving to update ANS Task Force members on Panel initiatives, policy developments, recommendations and actions regarding Great Lakes AIS prevention and control.

**Standing Committees:** Responsibility for the operation and related activities of the Panel standing committees will be assigned to individual Panel staff which may change as staff expertise varies. This includes staff support for committee sessions both during and between Panel meetings.

**Administrative Duties:** Staff will provide administrative support in the following areas: annual proposals to secure financial support for ongoing operation of the Panel; annual reporting on the Panel accomplishments and recommendations; meeting summaries; development of a Panel work plan based on funding availability, policy developments and recommended actions. These administrative materials will be submitted to the Executive Secretary of the ANS Task Force.

## **I. Meetings**

### **Frequency of Meetings**

Pursuant to funding, meetings of the Great Lakes Panel will be scheduled at least once a year, with the intent to hold two meetings per year as funding permits. These meetings will normally be held within the timeframes of November and May. Locations for these meetings may vary, with the fall meeting normally held in Ann Arbor, Mich. At the close of each Panel meeting, the dates and location of the next Panel meeting will be announced, as recommended by the Panel Chair and Executive Committee with input from the Panel administrator.

### **Requirements for Meeting Notice and Public Comment**

All meetings are open to the public and should be announced at least 30 days prior to the meeting. To make the notice of the meeting more widely available to the general public in advance of the meeting, the Panel administrator will submit the meeting information to the

Executive Secretary of the ANS Task Force for posting on the ANSTF website ([www.anstaskforce.gov/default.php](http://www.anstaskforce.gov/default.php)). All Great Lakes Panel meetings will provide an opportunity for public comment.

## **Meeting Agenda**

The following guidance is used in developing the agenda for Panel meetings:

- Membership roll call to determine a quorum (see section below on Meeting and Decision-making Procedures);
- Introduction of meeting participants;
- Panel Member Progress Reports: Programmatic updates on AIS activities from Panel Members (regular, alternates, at-large), interested parties and observers will be shared in writing as part of meeting materials and also included in meeting summary. (If possible, these updates are to be submitted in writing in advance of the meeting; if not, within two weeks following the meeting.);
- Regional/Federal Update Presentations (e.g., Great Lakes Panel; ANS Task Force, Federal legislative developments, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. EPA);
- Regional Initiatives;
- Old Business: Status of actions from prior Panel meeting and committee work;
- Committee Sessions;
- New Business: Solicitation of ideas to be addressed by the Panel; and
- General Public Comment.

As appropriate, staff will also work to feature a theme for each Panel meeting to address priority and/or emerging AIS issues (e.g., early detection, rapid response and state management planning). The theme of each meeting will be integrated in the plenary session as well as committee work. To the extent possible, the agenda will be arranged such that those items requiring a Panel decision will be placed on the first day of the meeting to ensure a quorum to make decisions.

## **Meeting Conduct and Decision-making Procedures**

As a guiding principle, the Great Lakes Panel will strive for consensus in the decision-making process especially regarding positions to be developed, policies to be adopted or recommendations to be transmitted to the national ANS Task Force. Consensus for these purposes is defined as general agreement of the group with a high degree of group solidarity. Consensus does not assume absolute unanimity.

**Robert's Rules of Order:** The actual conduct of Panel meetings and the administration of most decisions shall be done according to Robert's Rules of Order. Robert's Rules is a majority-based decision-making tool that works well for simple procedural decisions such as the approval of minutes and agendas, establishment of ad hoc committees and the receipt of common reports.

Under Robert's Rules of Order, items of business brought before the Panel must be made in the form of a motion and seconded. In the case of simple, non-debatable motions, the Panel Chair (or other individual presiding over the meeting) will call the question as follows: "All those in favor of the motion say aye" and, after the affirmative voice is

expressed, “All those opposed say nay.” The Panel Chair (or other individuals presiding over the meeting) will announce the results of the vote in an unambiguous manner such as “the ayes (nays) have it,” “the motion passes (fails)” or “the resolution is adopted (defeated).”

**Membership Roll Call and Introduction of Visitors/Guests:** A formal roll call of members will occur at the beginning of each Panel meeting to record attendance and determine a quorum. The Chair/Vice Chair will ask visitors and guests to introduce themselves after the roll call is conducted.

**Quorum for Panel Meetings/Conference Calls:** The number of Panel members required to be present for Panel meetings and conference calls to allow business to be conducted is fifteen (15), to include regular members, alternate members (when the regular member is absent) and at-large members. Of the 15, at least five must be members representing state/provincial government. A quorum will be identified by the Panel Chair (or Vice-Chair in the absence of the Chair) at the beginning of each meeting/conference call after the roll is taken. If a quorum is not met, a meeting can still proceed, but no official business can be transacted and no Panel actions can be taken as delineated by Robert’s Rules.

**Quorum for Committee Meetings/Conference Calls:** Quorum for meetings or conference calls of standing, special and ad-hoc committees shall be four to include the committee chair or, if absent, his/her designee, plus any combination of regular, alternate and at-large members of the particular committee.

**Dispute Resolution:** When a decision is not unanimous (there are nay votes) or when concern is expressed by an individual over a decision reached by the Panel, the Chair/Vice Chair has the right to extend discussion in order to try to reach consensus. He/She will first ask the voting Panel member(s) expressing concern whether they can “live with the decision.” If the answer is no, the Chair/Vice Chair will either extend discussion to try to address the member(s) concerns or call for a formal vote (show of hands) to determine the level of consensus among the members present. Minority or dissenting opinions are considered important in the decision-making process and will be documented when there is less than full consensus on a decision or recommendation.

Dissenting opinions, abstentions or recusals shall also be recorded in the Panel meeting summary when reporting on the result of the vote.

**Public Participation:** All meetings of the Panel will be open to the public. Members of the public attending Panel meetings will be given an opportunity to address the Panel regarding issues pertinent to AIS in a manner as follows:

- Public comment on any agenda item shall be solicited at the time of Panel discussion on the item but before any decisions are made on the item. Comments by any member of the public shall be limited to a maximum of three minutes on any agenda item.

- Public comment on issues not on the agenda shall occur during the general public comment period. Comments by any member of the public during the general public comment period shall be limited to a time limit as determined by the Chair. Comments requesting Panel action or involvement on a particular matter will be evaluated by the Chair in consultation with the Executive Committee and a report will be given to the Panel at the next meeting regarding recommended actions (if any). If the request is obviously inappropriate for Panel involvement, the Chair can make the determination at the time the comment is made and inform the commenting party of the rationale for the decision.
- Members of the public not able to attend meetings of the Panel are allowed to provide the Panel with testimony in writing prior to any officially called meeting of the Panel. Any such written correspondence will be read into the official record of the meeting. Lengthy documents will be referenced in the record and not read.

### **Meeting Documentation**

The Panel administrator is responsible for preparing documentation of each Panel meeting to include:

- A list of action items, recommendations and other relevant policy developments discussed at the meeting to be transmitted to the Panel members and interested parties within 30 days.
- Meeting summaries (serving the function of minutes) will provide a record of discussion and actions from each Panel meeting and will be prepared within 45 days of each meeting. Meeting summaries will be transmitted to the Panel members and interested parties along with the aforementioned list of action items, recommendations and policy developments. Meeting summaries will present a general accounting of the meeting discussion and public comment, including references to all studies and reports received, issued and/or approved for distribution to the full membership, interested parties and others upon request. The meeting summary, following Panel review, will be made available online on the Great Lakes Panel website at [www.glc.org/ans/panel.html](http://www.glc.org/ans/panel.html). Panel administrator should formally submit the meeting summary to the ANS Task Force Executive Secretary. It should be noted that meeting summaries submitted to the ANS Task Force are archived in the ANSTF office in Arlington, Va., for public inspection.

### **Panel Decision-making between Meetings**

From time to time, the Great Lakes Panel will need to take action on items during periods of the year between regularly scheduled meetings. The Panel Chair may, at his/her discretion, convene conference calls of the Panel to discuss proposed actions or may communicate in writing or via email requests for Panel consideration of a particular policy or action item. In such cases, Panel members will be encouraged to provide input and participate in any conference call discussions that may be arranged between meetings. Any proposed actions or communications that occur as a result of conference call discussions or written or email requests will move forward only if consensus exists among those Panel members providing comments. When a proposed policy, action or communication is developed, ample time (at least two weeks (e.g., 10 business days)) will be given for Panel members to review and comment on the proposed action or communication. When Panel members choose not to respond during a specified review period, it

will be assumed by the Chair that there are no objections to the proposed action moving forward. In other words, silence will be construed to mean agreement (i.e., support for proposed action).

Request for Panel action or deliberation between meetings can be initiated by any Panel member through communication to the Chair or the Panel administrator. Requests for these actions should be made in writing or via email to either the Panel Chair or Panel administrator. The Panel Chair, in consultation with the Executive Committee, will decide whether a request is urgent enough to be brought before the Panel between meetings or whether it can be postponed and discussed at the next in-person meeting. The process for Panel decision-making between meetings also applies on the level of the standing committees.

## **J. Making Recommendations to the National ANS Task Force and Guidelines on Advocacy**

### **Making Recommendations**

One of the main responsibilities of the Great Lakes Panel under Section 1203 of NANPCA is to provide recommendations to the ANS Task Force to address issues related to the introduction and spread of aquatic invasive species in the Great Lakes, the need to monitor, control and study such species and opportunities to disseminate information on AIS related issues. The Great Lakes Panel is also charged with recommending priorities for the Great Lakes region with respect to aquatic invasive species as well as providing input and advice concerning methods of AIS prevention and control in the Great Lakes. If the Panel or one of its standing committees have identified and evaluated options or alternatives on an AIS issue, the rationale as to why a particular option or alternative was selected should also be presented as part of the recommendation to the ANS Task Force. In addition, matters of importance presented at regularly scheduled Panel meetings by individual members, interested parties or the general public, duly considered and agreed upon by the Panel members present, may be presented to the ANS Task Force in the form of a recommendation.

The following information provides guidance to the Panel administrator in preparation of recommendations for submission to the Task Force:

- Within 45 days after a Panel meeting, the Panel administrator will forward a meeting summary complete with a separate list of action items, recommendations and other relevant policy developments to highlight the key results and/or recommendations from the Great Lakes Panel. Sufficient background information should be provided to clarify the issues or recommendations being conveyed. A cover letter will accompany the meeting summary with a request for a response from the Task Force within sixty to ninety days, as appropriate.
- Issues that are time-critical and require an immediate communication will be conveyed to the Task Force as soon as practicable along with a suggested process for review and a requested timeframe for an action or response.

- Recommendations of the Panel, reports of the Panel and other Panel products will first be transmitted to the ANS Task Force before being disseminated to other agencies, entities or the general public. Panel recommendations calling for Task Force action will not be officially communicated by the Panel to other agencies, entities or the general public until a response is received by the Task Force.

Any responses from the Task Force will be relayed to the Panel at the next regular meeting or as appropriate depending on the immediacy of the information.

### **Guidelines on Advocacy**

The Great Lakes Panel was created as a representative body of Great Lakes interests to make recommendations to the national ANS Task Force regarding programs needed to carry out provisions of Section 1202 of NANPCA of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Program. In doing this, the Great Lakes Panel plays an important role in shaping, communicating and advancing regional AIS priorities. The Panel's mandate is to widely disseminate information and educate individuals and private and public entities about the importance of AIS prevention and control in the Great Lakes with a particular focus in areas of outreach, research coordination and policy coordination. While, the Panel is mainly an advisory body to the ANS Task Force it also serves as an important resource for regional expertise on the issues and solutions related to AIS problems in the Great Lakes region. For instance, the Act calls for the Great Lakes Panel to coordinate, where possible, program activities in the Great Lakes that are not conducted pursuant to the Act and to provide advice to public and private entities concerning methods of AIS prevention and control. The Great Lakes Panel and standing committees do not directly represent the national ANS Task Force in any matters relating to national, international or regional policy, legislation or regulations, and do not directly advise the federal government on such matters. Individual Panel members (including federal agency representatives) do have the responsibility to report back to their own agency or organization on Panel discussions, activities and recommendations made to the ANS Task Force.

### **K. Funding**

Consistent with Section 1301 (b) (6) of NANPCA, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide financial support to the administrative entities to fund the regional ANS panels. In the case of the Great Lakes Panel, the administrative entity is the Great Lakes Commission, an interstate compact agency serving the Great Lakes states and provinces. The Commission is founded in state and U.S. federal law.

Base funding provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be allocated to support the general operation of the Great Lakes Panel as discussed in Section H covering staff support. Additional funding for Great Lakes Panel activities will be dependent on the priorities of the annual work plan and the ability of the Great Lakes Commission, with guidance from the Executive Committee and the standing committees to secure funding from other sources to support Panel operation and/or appropriate special projects.

## **L. Annual Work Plan**

The Great Lakes Panel will provide an annual work plan for its activities at the spring meeting, based on the individual work plans developed by the Panel standing committees. The Panel work plan shall include proposed work items as prioritized by the committees and other details as appropriate, based on availability of funds.

## **M. Annual Report**

The Great Lakes Panel Annual Report will be developed as an integral part of the ANS Task Force Annual Report to Congress. The primary goal of this report is to raise the AIS issue as a priority issue of both regional and national importance to the U.S. Congress. The report will feature accomplishments of the Task Force, including work of associated committees and all the regional ANS panels. The Great Lakes Panel report is to cover Panel business that transpired during the previous year in the following areas:

- **Summary:** Summarize regional panel ANS/AIS program focus areas and key strategies. Committee work group reports are to be included as attachments;
- **Major accomplishments:** Describe (bullets/short paragraphs) major accomplishments or developments from the panel (not state) perspective and highlight any innovations. Each accomplishment will be assigned a broad category (i.e. Prevention (P), Detection and Monitoring (DM) Control and Management (CM), Education and Public Awareness (EPA), Research (R));
- **Recommendations to the ANS Task Force:** Key outstanding regional ANS/AIS issues and recommended course of action by ANS Task Force to address these.

The submission of this report will fulfill the funding agreement that is required to be met by each of the regional ANS Panels regarding annual reporting to include activities, decisions and recommendations to the ANS Task Force. The proposed annual work plan will be part of the annual scope of work submitted with the funding request and will not be included as part of the annual report. Also included in the Great Lakes Panel annual report will be contributions requested from Panel officers, based on their respective responsibilities in serving the Panel. As a supplement to the Great Lakes Panel Annual Report, electronic copies of Panel meeting summaries and associated action items will be available on the Great Lakes Panel website at: <http://www.glc.org/ans/panel.html>. This meeting documentation will also be archived in the ANSTF office in Arlington, Va. for record keeping purposes.

## **N. Amending the Operational Guidance Document**

Any amendments or changes to the approved operational guidance document will require consensus of the Panel, as defined in Section I, at an officially called Great Lakes Panel meeting. When amendments are made, the revised document will be submitted to the ANS Task Force.

## **Appendices: Definitions and Committee Operational Guidance**

### **Appendix 1: Definitions**

#### *General*

**Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA):** The operations of the Panel are influenced by its role as an advisory body to the ANS Task Force, which is governed by the requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). While the Panel itself is a separate entity and does not require a FACA charter, the activities of the Panel are covered under the FACA charter for the ANS Task Force. Under that charter, the Panel is treated as a committee and reports its recommendations to the Task Force

**Panel Administrator:** As indicated under Section 1203 of NANPCA, the Great Lakes Commission is responsible for providing staff support to the Great Lakes Panel. The Executive Director of the Great Lakes Commission will designate a Panel administrator from Commission staff to oversee Panel operations.

**Great Lakes Commission:** Created by the Great Lakes states, the Great Lakes Commission is a binational public agency dedicated to the use, management and protection of the water, land and other natural resources of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence system. Originally established in 1955 under the Great Lakes Basin Compact, the Commission is founded in state and U.S. federal law. The Commission provides a vehicle for the coordinated management of the waters and related natural resources of the Great Lakes basin among the eight Great Lakes states and the provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

#### *Panel Membership*

**Regular Member:** The regular membership arrangement for the Great Lakes Panel will be drawn from the key agencies/organizations pursuant to the “categories of interest” identified in Section 1203 of NANPCA, which include U.S. Federal, Canadian Federal, state, provincial, regional/binational, tribal, local, citizen/user groups, private/commercial, and university/research.

**Alternate Member:** Alternate members are designated to serve on the Panel on behalf of designated regular members when that member is unavailable to participate in Panel meetings and other relevant Panel initiatives. As with regular members, alternate members are selected by the agency/organization pursuant to the NANPCA categories of interest. Alternate members serve for a period of time as determined by the appointing entity. The appointment is to be renewed or changed as appropriate. Normally alternates are not eligible to vote except when the regular member is absent from the meeting or not participating in the relevant Panel initiative and/or when the alternate is serving as a chair of a Panel committee.

**At-Large Member:** Representatives elected by the Panel for the purpose of allowing individuals to contribute to the mission of the Panel based on special expertise, interest, or advisory capability regarding AIS issues or priorities. Generally speaking, the at-large members represent certain constituencies or areas of expertise that were not identified in the original list of Panel membership under the categories of interest when NANPCA was first passed. At-large members of the Panel hold full voting privileges and may also serve as a chair of Panel committees.

**Interested Parties/Observers:** Those individuals, agencies, or organizations not formally affiliated with the Great Lakes Panel, demonstrating an interest in participating in Panel meetings or other Panel functions or initiatives. NANPCA does not provide for direct membership if the category of interests is already adequately represented on the Panel or their role in AIS issues is relatively limited. Interested parties/observers do not hold voting privileges but are invited to attend all Great Lakes Panel meetings, participate on Panel committees and engage in Panel discussions.

**Members in good standing:** To be in good standing, members should make a good faith effort to attend Panel meetings whenever possible. Membership status of good standing may be in jeopardy when a member is chronically absent from Panel meetings (three or more consecutive meetings), committee meetings and other Panel initiatives without communicating a reasonable cause to the Panel Chair.

**Voting members:** Voting members are regular and at-large members. Alternates are also considered voting members if their regular member is absent or he/she is serving as a Panel committee chair. In cases where both the regular member and respective alternate member are not available to participate in the Panel forum and/or vote on Panel related issues, a formal letter may be submitted to authorize a proxy to vote on behalf of the agency, entity or individual being represented.

### Decision-making Terminology

**Quorum:** The number of Panel members required to be present for Panel meetings and conference calls to allow business to be conducted fifteen is (15), to include regular members, alternate members (when the regular member is absent) and at-large members. Of the 15, at least five must be members representing state/provincial government. A quorum will be identified by the Panel Chair (or Vice-Chair in the absence of the Chair) at the beginning of each meeting/conference call after the roll is taken. If a quorum is not met, a meeting can still proceed, but no official business can be transacted and no Panel actions can be taken

**Robert's Rules of Order:** Panel meetings shall be conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order, except as modified by these guidelines. Procedural decisions such as the approval of minutes and agendas, establishment of ad hoc committees and others will be made under the majority voting process of Robert's Rules of Order. Under Robert's Rules of Order, any item of business brought before the Panel must be made in the form of a motion and seconded. In the case of simple, non-debatable motions, the Panel Chair (or other individual presiding over the

meeting) will call the question as follows: “All those in favor of the motion say aye” and after the affirmative voice is expressed, “All those opposed say nay.” The Panel Chair (or other individuals presiding over the meeting) will announce the results of the vote in an unambiguous manner such as “the ayes (nays) have it,” “the motion passes (fails)” or “the resolution is adopted (defeated).” Minority votes and any abstentions or recusals shall also be recorded in the Panel meeting summary, in addition to the result of the vote. If the decision is not unanimous (nay votes) the Panel Chair has the ability to take a member poll and allow for additional discussion and/or dispute resolution. If there is still a minority dissent to a vote it will be noted but will not affect the outcome of the process.

**Consensus Based Decision-making:** As a guiding principle, the Panel will strive for consensus in the decision-making process especially regarding positions to be developed, policies to be adopted or recommendations to be transmitted to the national ANS Task Force. Consensus for these purposes is defined as general agreement of the group with a high degree of group solidarity. Consensus does not assume absolute unanimity.

**Dispute Resolution:** If concern is expressed by an individual over a decision, the Chair/Vice Chair will ask the voting Panel member(s) expressing concern whether they can “live with the decision.” If the answer is no, the Chair/Vice Chair will either extend discussion to try to address the member(s) concerns or call for a formal vote, using Robert’s Rules of Order, to determine the level of consensus among the members present. Minority or dissenting opinions are considered important in the decision-making process and will be documented when there is less than full consensus on a decision or recommendation.

## **Appendix 2: Committee Operational Guidance**

Panel Committee Operational Guidance *(to be completed under the auspices of each Panel committee: Information/Education, Research Coordination, and Policy Coordination)*