

Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species: Working Together to Stop Invasive Species



More than 180 non-native species are established in the Great Lakes, many of which are invasive and causing significant harm. Collectively, these aquatic invasive species (AIS) are recognized as one of the most significant threats to the ecological and economic health of the region. However, because of the tapestry of federal agencies, state, provinces, local, and non-governmental entities working on combatting new AIS and managing existing AIS populations, effective collaboration is essential.

In 1990, the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species was created to coordinate AIS efforts in the Great Lakes region. Panel membership is drawn from U.S. and Canadian federal agencies, the eight Great Lakes states and the provinces of Ontario and Québec, regional agencies, user groups, local communities, tribal authorities, commercial interests, and the university/research community. The Great Lakes Panel is one of six regional panels that report to the federal Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, which coordinates AIS efforts on a federal level.

The Panel meets twice a year and focuses its efforts in three broad program areas – information/education, research coordination, and policy coordination. Specifically, the panel is legislatively mandated to perform operations that aim to identify AIS priorities for the Great Lakes region; assist and make recommendations to the federal Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force; coordinate AIS program activities in the region; and advice public and private interests on prevention and control efforts. The Great Lakes Commission has served as administrator and has provided staff support to the Great Lakes Panel since its founding.