

Meeting of the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species

May 7-8, 2013
Duluth, Minnesota

Meeting Summary

Tuesday, May 7, 2013

Welcoming Remarks and Call to Order

Luke Skinner, Great Lakes Panel (GLP) Chair, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Skinner welcomed all attendees to Minnesota, noting that it had been 13 years since the GLP last met in Duluth. After confirming that a quorum was present, Skinner asked attendees to introduce themselves and their affiliations. He also reviewed the agenda, which was approved with no changes.

Great Lakes Panel Business

Luke Skinner, GLP Chair

Erika Jensen, GLP Coordinator, Great Lakes Commission

Skinner presented the draft meeting summary from the December 2012 meeting. The meeting summary was approved with no changes. Jensen reported on action items from the December meeting, including ongoing work and a brief overview of the committee action items. She expressed regrets that the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force was not able to join the GLP for this meeting due to travel restrictions and budgetary concerns. Two action items from the last meeting have yet to be addressed by the Executive Committee (ExCom) due to time constraints: further consideration is needed to decide whether and how to move forward in coordinating the three committee priorities documents; and developing a format for committee work plans based on the committee priorities documents. The Information/Education Committee will be considering draft comments on the recreational activities, water garden and classroom guidelines, and working with staff on moving forward with a second edition of the Great Lakes Aquatic Invasions (GLAI) booklet. GLP members interested in being involved in the GLAI booklet effort should contact staff. The Research Coordination Committee is working on finalizing an update of the research priorities document and coordinating with the Policy Coordination Committee on reducing redundancies between their respective priorities documents. The research committee also completed an update to its priority species list and convened a subgroup of committee members to identify research priorities associated with grass carp. The Policy Coordination Committee will be considering a final draft of the policy priorities document for approval and is working on grass carp recommendations in coordination with the research committee. The Great Lakes regulated species list has been updated and is posted online. Regarding planning for the fall 2013 GLP meeting, Skinner requested that GLP members contact staff with dates to avoid such as the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference.

Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) Report

Mike Hoff, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Hoff expressed his regrets that the ANSTF was unable to join this meeting and thanked the ExCom and staff for pulling together a wonderful meeting. He gave a quick report on the status and upcoming events of the ANSTF:

- June 17, 2013: A webinar will be held that will take the place of the spring meeting of the ANS Task Force. Susan Mangin, ANSTF Executive Secretary, will have a draft agenda in the near future.
- Nov 5-7, 2013: The fall meeting of the ANSTF will be held in Silver Spring, MD. The meeting will include a session on eDNA monitoring and the snakehead management plan.
- The Prevention Committee is working on developing guidance for pathway management plans.
- Work is ongoing with the National Invasive Species Council to look at Federal responsibility and regulations for the management of *Dreissenid* mussels.

- A review of the 40 recommendations on Asian carp from the national management plan has been completed and an update on this work will be provided on the June webinar.
- Two species risk assessment tools are undergoing peer review and it is likely that the USFWS through the Lacey Act will begin to make use of these tools.

Susan Mangin, participating via phone, recognized the GLP members and staff for their leadership and planning efforts associated with this meeting and also expressed regrets at not being able to attend.

Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement (GLWQA) – Annex 6 Subcommittee Update

Gavin Christie, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, GLWQA Annex 6 subcommittee Co-Chair

Todd Turner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, GLWQA Annex 6 Subcommittee Co-Chair

Christie, with input from Turner, gave a brief update on the GLWQA – Annex 6 Subcommittee. He started with an overview of the GLWQA followed by more in-depth information about Annex 6, the Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Annex. The subcommittee has made commitments to address key AIS issues, some of which are more broadly based and have yet to be fully defined, and others which have specific tasks and timelines associated with them. More broadly, the subcommittee will be assessing species and pathway risks and helping to develop risk management approaches; looking at education and outreach efforts across the basin; and considering barriers to prevent AIS spread, including ensuring inter-basin transfer of water, takes into account the risk of AIS transfer. In the near-term the subcommittee is committed to developing and implementing an early detection and rapid response initiative within two years. A number of program components have been identified for this effort and they are working with the International Joint Commission on this Initiative.

Next steps identified for the subcommittee include, finalizing structure and populating the subcommittee; forming three task teams for early detection and rapid response, outreach and education, and pathway management; and focusing on activities pertaining to early detection and rapid response. The GLP Chair and Vice Chair will be asked to be members of the subcommittee.

Christie indicated he'd like the GLP to assist with the outreach and education tasks, as well as their commitment to public consultation. Under the subcommittee's outreach and education task team, the GLP could be asked evaluate ongoing outreach and education efforts in Great Lakes basin jurisdictions and submit a report to the subcommittee that includes a summary of redundancies, unmet programmatic needs and resources needed to address unmet needs. The GLP is also ideally positioned to provide valuable feedback on plans and activities surrounding the public consultation commitment through coordination and consultation with an extensive network of regional AIS professionals.

- *Questions and Discussion*

Regarding the outreach tasks, Doug Jensen suggested that the subcommittee focus on assessing existing efforts by pathways and their associated campaigns, instead of creating a list of activities related to AIS. Regarding subcommittee membership, Christie said that the process of identifying subcommittee members will be adaptive, in the chairs will work to be flexible and open to working with the most qualified potential members. They also want to ensure strong First Nation representation and involvement.

When asked about the subcommittee's role in rapid response, Christie said the while subcommittee would not be the one taking action; it will have laid the framework for taking action and designating responsible parties in the case of a new, harmful species detection. It was noted that interjurisdictional rapid response is very

complicated and that it would very useful to have a product that delineated roles and responsibilities of each party for interstate/interjurisdictional areas. It would also be helpful to assess to what extent each state has addressed interjurisdictional issues in their state rapid response plans that have been developed under the GLRI.

There was discussion about the role of the Great Lakes Commission and the GLP in relation to the subcommittees. One suggestion was to hold subcommittee meetings in conjunction with GLP meetings to allow for shared sessions. Efforts will be made to take advantage of existing knowledge and work to avoid redundancies. Another suggestion was to provide the GLP and the subcommittee to provide updates to each other to facilitate information flow in both directions. There are other existing groups working on specific pathways, such as the Ballast Water Working Group, Green Marine and Highway H2O, whose resources and expertise could also be leveraged. One member commented that the subcommittee should identify a specific niche so as not to duplicate other efforts; this could be the early detection and rapid response work.

Christie and Turner were also asked about how they would know when the subcommittee had succeeded. One measure of success would be the products that are created, such as a rapid response framework. Overall, the work of the subcommittee should be preventing AIS introduction and spread and setting up frameworks for the “right” decisions to be made regarding AIS. Regarding resources to put the subcommittee structure into place and do the work; Christie said there were no formal resources and this would need to be addressed with the Great Lakes Executive Committee (GLEC). In addition, the GLEC will need to approve the subcommittee structure and membership.

Following this discussion, the meeting was adjourned for lunch and meeting attendees spent the afternoon on a field trip. The field trip included visits to the Great Ships Initiative and Erie Pier, as well as a demonstration of the Minnesota watercraft inspection and decontamination program.

Wednesday, May 3, 2013

Agenda Review

Luke Skinner, GLP Chair

Skinner welcomed participants to the second day of the GLP meeting and introduced the guest speakers, Minnesota Lt. Governor Yvonne Prettner Solon and Minnesota DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr.

Keynote Remarks

- *Minnesota Lieutenant Governor Yvonne Prettner Solon*

Lt. Governor Prettner Solon gave a warm welcome to her home town of Duluth and discussed the importance of Lake Superior as a national treasure and a recreational resource. She noted that the Port of Duluth is the world’s largest inland port and sees \$33 billion in business revenue each year. The lake and the people that love and depend on the resource count on the state to protect the system from damage from AIS. She and the Governor consider AIS to be one of the most critical threats facing Minnesota and Lake Superior. AIS prevention and control is the number one priority for the Governor. As the new chair of the Midwest Governor’s Association, Minnesota’s Governor will be convening the Midwest states for a summit to assess the threat AIS pose to our waterways, the progress made to date, and what can be done to protect these resources for future generations.

She said that she is proud that that this administration is working aggressively to curb the spread of AIS in Minnesota and the region. In 2011, the Governor hosted three Asian carp summits. Discussions at these summits led to the creation of a state Asian carp action plan to be implemented by the state DNR. In 2012, the administration worked with the state legislature to strengthen protections by passing new AIS laws. Every effort we make is part of a larger regional strategy to protect and prevent against AIS. Through the power of regional collaboration, the Lt. Governor said she is confident that we can pass on a better system.

- *Commissioner Tom Landwehr, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources*

Commissioner Landwehr started by recognizing the Governor and Lt. Governor for their emphasis on AIS. They have made sure that the DNR is doing everything it can be doing to address the issue. He continued by demonstrating how Minnesotans love their water, with 13,000 fishable lakes and 1.5 million fishing licenses sold each year. This love and active use of the resource highlights two main issues. First, the likelihood that species will be transported or moved, and second, concern over investments in water related activities. The Commissioner noted the conflict created between restricting accesses to protected areas and allowing the areas to be open for public use.

AIS are one of the five big issues at the DNR. The DNR has two major programs related to zebra mussels and Asian carp. Asian carp are a major concern because they are present on all three sides of Minnesota. The DNR is working diligently with the US Army Corps of Engineers and surrounding states to find solutions for preventing the spread of this aggressive invader. Fortunately, there is funding from the Outdoor Heritage Fund as well as bonding money to support these activities.

The zebra mussel problem is less tangible due to the number of boaters, the movement of boats and the movement of water infrastructure. The DNR has very large education and accountability programs, which utilize four tools to confront the issue. These tools include: public education, statutory framework to provide incentives/enforcement, a decontamination program, and inspection. This program has a workgroup of 30 members that advise on program implementation, and is supported by money from a boat fee and the DNR's general revenue fund. The Commissioner said that judging by the large potential for infestation compared to the modest rate of spread, the DNR is being effective in its efforts.

The Commissioner wrapped up by stating that the Minnesota DNR is fortunate to have a broad array of funding sources; to be promoted and supported by Governor's office; and to be supported and demanded of by the public. He also announced the recent approval of funding to start an AIS research institute that will focus on applied work. The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) is an effort spearheaded by Dr. Peter Sorensen and is located on the St. Paul campus of the University of Minnesota. There was a huge investment of capital to update the facility; initial funding is coming from the state sales tax, the Outdoor Heritage Fund, and the Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund. It is likely that the Institute will require other types of funding for long-term support. The Institute's advisory board has members from the state DNR, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota Sea Grant and others. This program shows the commitment that is required to have an effective/aggressive AIS program. Without the support of state citizens, there would not be this level of funding available.

Funding for Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Programs

Moderator: Luke Skinner, GLP Chair

This session was developed in response to the interest expressed by the GLP at the fall 2012 meeting in looking at long-term funding mechanisms for AIS programs and what happens if the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) is no longer available to help fund AIS work. The session is intended to demonstrate what the Great Lakes states have been able to accomplish with additional funding from the GLRI, review what other funding sources and models are being used by states and others to fund AIS programs, recognizing that the GLRI is not a long-term funding source, and explore the role of the federal government in funding for both present and future funding. Skinner moderated the session which included remarks from four speakers and follow-up questions and discussion. Skinner began the session by asking attendees to think about funding initiatives and what we can do as a Panel.

- *Bob Wakeman, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources*

The majority of Wisconsin state funding for the AIS program comes from the state gasoline tax. A lot of gas is burned in boats, so therefore some of the gas tax money is returned to the DNR lakes program. About \$12-13 million goes to the water resource account. That money is used to support a wide variety of things, with about \$4.5 million going to support the AIS program. The funding source is close to what the funding is used for and this is a very reliable, stable source of funding. Originally, the Wisconsin Department of Transportation (DOT) was very resistant to reallocation of the \$13 million from the DOT to the lakes program. However, there are few threats to continuing the program. While stability is key, it is also very important to show success and do good things with the funding you have. Additional funding comes from federal support and donations.

Wakeman was asked about the political strength of Wisconsin lake associations and about other groups that carried weight on this issue. He said that they needed to work on getting more support and that lake associations often ask the state to close public boat launches and pay for milfoil control. This negative feedback needs to be turned into support for securing funding and improving programs.

- *Sarah LeSage, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality*

LeSage explained that the state of Michigan does not have a consolidated AIS effort, meaning that there are people in many different departments working on AIS. Most of the AIS duties are integrated into more broad staff positions. Currently, she is the only dedicated staff person for AIS. The downside to this situation is that they rely heavily on federal funding. Since federal funding can be sporadic, the state hasn't been able to pull together a core AIS team until recently. For these same issues, they have struggled to build a consistent program. The GLRI has really helped pull together state efforts. Due to concerns about ballast water, 401 certification, and beach grooming, the Michigan legislature recently created a new AIS Advisory Council. The Council has 19 voting members. Although the Council did not come with funding or staff support, it has been able to get things done.

- *John Navarro, Ohio Department of Natural Resources*

Similar to Michigan, Ohio relies solely on federal support for AIS programs. The Division of Wildlife receives no funds from the DNR's General Revenue, but in some ways this is positive because it gives them more freedom. There is a gas tax that provides \$2 million a year to the division; however this can only be used for construction and maintenance of boat launches. Consideration is being given to charging boat fees as it has been shown to be

a good model that could generate funding. The GLRI has been a significant of funding; however, the division does not want to add staff because given that the future of this funding is uncertain. Currently, Navarro does a majority of the work on AIS.

- *Mike Hoff, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

Hoff gave a brief overview of federal funding for AIS programs and reviewed some potential alternative sources. Alternatives included reauthorizing NANPCA; utilizing revenue from Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration excise tax; or other new funding sources. Hoff discussed the draft National Action Plan for AIS, which was provided to participants in their meeting folders. This Action Plan could be used, in whole or in part, to recommend a new paradigm for AIS programs and associated funding. He also suggested a few options for actions, such as making a recommendation to the ANSTF to evaluate agency opportunities for working (through the Administration) with Congress toward NANPCA reauthorization. He noted the value of interstate management plans which are also funded in a limited way under NANPCA. The value of interstate plans is that they help demonstrate the need for regional funding. Hoff reminded the GLP that its role is to make recommendations to the ANSTF and to remind the ANSTF of GLP priorities on a continual basis because of turnover at the ANSTF level.

- *Discussion*

Representatives from Indiana, Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Canadian agencies started the discussion by sharing information on their jurisdiction's AIS programs. **Indiana's** program is supported by state funding from a lake and river enhancement boat fee. The fee is scaled by the value of the boat and ranges from \$5 to \$25. This funding supports many activities, so AIS efforts don't receive a lot. Overall, Indiana's program is split half and half between state and federal funding. The GLRI funding is essentially doubling what they can accomplish. In Illinois, the state program was an "army of one" until recent Asian carp prevention and control issues. Now, with a large focus on carp; the state AIS program is well funded through the USFWS and the GLRI. **Illinois** is beginning to consider what is next; they do not want to increase fees but will be looking for new and novel ways to support the important infrastructure that's built up as a result of Asian carp. **Pennsylvania** has limited state resources for AIS and is similar to Michigan and Indiana. At the federal level in **Canada**, resources are direct to an Invasive Species Centre; there is an allocation specific to an Asian carp program which is \$2 million a year for five years.

Participants were asked to focus on two goals during the discussion, first, to focus on how the GLP can help provide information to organizations and make the case for future funding, and second, how the GLP can support an increase federal funding. Suggestions included evaluating the success of efforts and communicating those successes; synthesizing how the next iteration of the GLRI Action Plan could be improved to help the states and the GLP with AIS; improved communication with the ANSTF including presentations on what the GLRI has done and what it could do in the future; and to work diligently to get key federal programs reauthorized. Actions that were proposed in support of these suggestions included providing comments on the creation of the next GLRI action plan at public forums, including providing input on what has worked, what hasn't worked, and what should be de-emphasized.

The next part of the discussion centered on identifying impediments to increased state funding. It was noted that the timing is right to make the case for continued or increased funding for states but that we need to figure out how to market what we've done and accomplished with the funding we've received. We need to figure out how to show that we need to continue this level of support. In addition, we need to develop communication materials. One suggestion was to get NGOs and the business sector engaged to help mobilize communities

around generating funds for AIS work. Another need is to figure out what the potential avenues are for state funding. Now that there is a focus on AIS and we've done good work, we need to find that state funding support. One idea was to use examples from other states that have had high levels of state funding and have been successful in using those funds to help make the case for state funding. Other ideas included creating a clear business plan which identifies needs and costs, coordinating with Lakewide Management Plans (LaMPs), and working with the Great Lakes Governors to help facilitate communication with DOI Secretary Salazar and other key federal representatives.

Committee Reports

- Information/Education Committee
Doug Jensen, Minnesota Sea Grant

The committee received updates on two key outreach campaigns: *Habitattitude™* and *Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers!™* (SAH). Efforts are underway to revitalize and “kick-start” implementation of the *Habitattitude™* campaign, a partnership between the USFWS, Pet Industry Joint Advisory Council and NOAA-Sea Grant, led by Minnesota. A draft work plan for the campaign is being developed and it is expected that committee members will have an opportunity to provide comments. Wildlife Forever has taken the lead on managing the SAH campaign. Near-term work is focused on the website and producing campaign materials that can be adapted and used for a wide range of groups. There was discussion about the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Strategy recommendation on developing outreach campaign for the maritime community and suggestions included integrating AIS information into existing educational/training processes which are in place for different sectors of the community. The committee also discussed the recreational activities, water garden and classroom guidelines. The recreational activities and water garden guidelines have been approved by the ANSTF and will be published in the Federal Register for public comment. The ANSTF is doing additional work on the classroom guidelines and will be considering them again at a future meeting. The committee has reviewed the water garden and classroom guidelines and prepared comments that they would like to submit to the ANSTF. The GLP agreed to allow the ExCom to review and approve comments for submission to the ANSTF without having to go through the full GLP approval process. The comments will be submitted once the guidelines are posted in the Federal Register and prior to the next meeting of the ANSTF.

- Research Coordination Committee
Lindsay Chadderton, The Nature Conservancy

The committee has been working on determining research needs for grass carp and the committee's priority species document. Chadderton described some of the concerns related to grass carp, including that there have been 41 grass carp captured within the basin less than 50 percent of those caught are diploid which is evidence of possible recruitment or contamination in the supposed triploid stock. The primary needs include, understanding the status of the grass carp in the basin (recruitment, spatial assessment of vulnerability, potential spawning locations); locations of thermal refugia; greater understanding of the pathways of introduction; and the levels of contamination within triploid stocks. The committee also sees a need to bring together state efforts (data) on ploidy testing and to develop criteria and recommendations on management of caught fish. Committee work on the priority species document currently focuses on identifying the most pressing research needs for a small number of species; it is not a watch list. Priority species are being ranked using a tier system: tier one are imminent threat species, tier two are recent invaders that have relatively localized populations, and tier three are well-established species. The end goal is to take these recommendations to research and funding institutions. There is potential to make this a more formal process

that would involve annual reporting to agencies to get their input on priorities. A primary action item is to finalize the grass carp recommendations for communication to ANSTF before their fall meeting.

- Policy Coordination Committee
Bob Wakeman, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The committee had some discussion on the grass carp briefing paper and next steps. The committee struggled with this and wanted more background and context in order to move forward. It was decided that Wakeman, as committee chair, would convene with the Research Coordination Committee Chair to better understand what the committees need to do and report back. The policy priorities document has been completed and will be submitted to the full GLP for review. Once the GLP review is complete, it will be transmitted to the ANSTF. Thanks should be given to Mike Murray, immediate past committee chair for his efforts on this document. This will be a living document; the committee we will consider amendments and recommendations from other committees. In the future the committee will be working to develop a work plan from the action items identified in the priorities document.

Public comment, emerging issues and other announcements

The floor was opened for public comment and other announcements however, none were received. Action items from the meeting will be summarized and distributed to the GLP membership following the meeting. The meeting was then adjourned.