

AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES PREVENTION AND CONTROL: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

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In 1990, Congress passed the landmark Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act (P.L. 101-646) and, in so doing, laid the groundwork for management, research and regulatory tools to combat what is now termed "biological pollution." Reauthorized as the National Invasive Species Act of 1996 (NISA), it signaled growing awareness of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) invasions and a commitment to address the risks posed to the ecological integrity, biological diversity and economic health of ecosystems at the regional, national and international levels. As the NISA reauthorization process approaches, Great Lakes-St. Lawrence officials are asking whether these laws—and the various regulations and programs that have followed—are sufficient to meet future needs and challenges. The issue of ballast management, for example, has been both a focal point and lightning rod in recent years. After a decade of experience with the federal legislation, officials are asking "What's the next step?"

Two upcoming events provide ideal opportunities for officials in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region, and beyond, to respond to this question:

- The Great Lakes Commission is embarking on a year-long initiative titled, "Preparing for the Next Decade in ANS Prevention and Control." Funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA) Great Lakes National Program Office, the effort will: 1) recognize innovative policies, programs and measures that have advanced prevention and control over the last decade; and 2) identify gaps and unmet needs with an emphasis on ballast management. A key component will be a special symposium, *Looking Back, Looking Forward: Assessing ANS Prevention and Control*.

The event will be held the afternoon of May 16 and the entire day on May 17 2001, in Ann Arbor, Mich., immediately following the Great Lakes Commission's Semiannual Meeting. The Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species will be meeting on Friday, May 18. Attendance at these events is encouraged. A proceedings document will present outcomes, including views on progress and obstacles over the past decade, and recommendations on new directions in research, detection and monitoring, and regulatory and other management needs. Complementing this will be a methodical assessment of NISA implementation conducted by Panel members and Commission staff.

- The 11th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species (Oct. 1-4, 2001, Alexandria, Va.) will provide an excellent venue for Great Lakes-St. Lawrence officials to present their NISA reauthorization recommendations. This major event will feature science and policy-oriented sessions with a decided emphasis on taking stock of past progress and highlighting prevention and control needs for the future. The Great Lakes Panel membership is exploring plans to facilitate a special symposium at the conference that will harmonize its NISA reauthorization priorities with those of other regions, thereby producing a united front that promises to provide invaluable guidance to Congress.

The Great Lakes Panel had a tremendous influence in shaping NISA in 1996 and, thanks to events such as these, has an excellent opportunity to do the same when NISA is reauthorized. Details on the ANS symposium will be available from the Great Lakes Commission at

www.glc.org; international conference information is available at www.aquatic-invasive-species-conference.org. Both events will also be publicized in upcoming issues of the *ANS Update*.

Great Lakes Panel Update

The Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species convened in Ann Arbor, Mich., on Dec. 12-13, 2000, where several important Panel initiatives were addressed. It was announced that seven of the eight Great Lakes governors have signed the Great Lakes Action Plan to date, and signatures from the remaining governor and two premiers are anticipated soon. This is a significant indication that decisionmakers are focusing their attention on the critical problems caused by biological invasions. Panel members also established a process for adoption of the *Ballast Water Management Policy Statement*. The statement, drafted by a Panel subcommittee, offers guidance to regional policymakers in the development and implementation of measures that are both effective and economically viable. The policy statement will be finalized by the end of the calendar year with incorporation of input offered at the meeting. The Panel's draft *Information/Education Strategy on Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control* was also presented for approval. The strategy's associated implementation plan, providing details on responsible parties, funding sources, proposed budgets and timelines regarding information/education strategic actions, was discussed, with approval expected by February 2001.

Panel members also initiated planning for a spring symposium that will serve as the primary component of a project titled, "Preparing for the Next Decade in ANS Prevention and Control" (see feature story for more information). The symposium, to be held May 16-17, 2001, in Ann Arbor, Mich., will explore the steps needed to advance ANS prevention and control in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence region in light of

the upcoming reauthorization of the National Invasive Species Act. There will be a special focus on ballast water management, along with the other significant vectors of ANS introduction and spread. Funded by U.S. EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office, the project is being conducted by the Great Lakes Commission in cooperation with the Panel. **Contact:** Kathe Glassner-Shwayder, Great Lakes Commission, 734-665-9135, shwayder@glc.org.

Washington Watch

On Oct. 27, the president signed the Veteran's Administration, Housing and Urban Development and Independent Agencies Appropriations Conference Report. Attached to this report is the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Conference, which includes \$400,000 for completion of the ANS dispersal barrier in the Chicago Ship and Sanitary Canal, \$4 million in level funding for control of aquatic nuisance plants, and \$700,000 (a 30 percent cut) for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Facility Research and Development authorized under the National Invasive Species Act (zebra mussel control research). The Transportation Appropriations Conference Report, signed by the president on Oct. 23, includes level funding for the U.S. Coast Guard's Ballast Water Guidelines and Prevention Program (which includes the Ballast Discharge Study and Information Clearinghouse). The Interior appropriations bill, signed by the president on Oct. 11, provides level funding for most of its ANS related activities.

Appropriations for several other federal programs addressing aquatic nuisance species are still pending in the final session of the 106th Congress. The FY2001 Commerce, Justice, State and Judiciary Appropriations Conference Report, approved by the House and the Senate, remains under veto threat. This report includes \$1.65 million in funding for the ANS Task Force and ballast water demonstrations, as well as funding for ANS research by the National Sea Grant College Program and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory. **Contact:** Rochelle Sturtevant, Senate Great Lakes Task Force, Northeast-Midwest Institute, 202-224-1211, rochelle_sturtevant@levin.senate.gov.

Around the Basin

ILLINOIS: The state has received its first ANS Task Force grant through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to implement its comprehensive state management plan. Efforts are currently focused on establishing a contractual position of Aquatic Nuisance Species Coordinator, along with clerical support staff. **Contact:** Mike Conlin, IL DNR, 217-782-6424, mconlin@dnrmail.state.il.us.

INDIANA: The DNR's Division of Fish and Wildlife welcomes Gwen White to the position of Fisheries Program Specialist and ANS Coordinator. Anglers are reporting catches of more large tropical fish (pacu, aruana, piranha) in natural lakes and streams. Grants were provided to 17 lake associations for cost-share on chemical treatment of invasive aquatic plants. A three-year study is underway to test effectiveness of weevils for biological control of Eurasian watermilfoil. **Contact:** Gwen White, IN DNR, 317-232-4093, gwhite@dnr.state.in.us.

MINNESOTA: The infestation of zebra mussels in Duluth-Superior harbor is growing and expanding. Divers report that nearly all hard-bottom surfaces in the lower harbor, including native mussels, are covered with zebra mussels. Marinas report that recreational boats removed for the season are also heavily fouled. Despite new sightings and expansions, boater and angler education continues to be effective in preventing and slowing the spread of aquatic nuisance species. ANS news releases have resulted in significant coverage on major television and radio stations and in newspapers. **Contacts:** Doug Jensen, MN Sea Grant, 218-726-8712, djensen1@d.umn.edu; Jay Rendall, MN DNR, 651-297-1464, jay.rendall@dnr.state.mn.us.

NEW YORK: Federal ANS funding was received by the state this fall to support the following programs: 1) Finger Lakes Zebra Mussel Monitoring and Ecological Assessment Program (FLZMMEAP) and 2) Purple Loosestrife Control in the Lower Hudson Valley. The FLZMMEAP will continue an ongoing study to monitor water chemistry and ecological parameters in nine morphologically similar lakes, some of which have been colonized by zebra mussels since 1995. The purple loosestrife project will focus efforts on the release of a large number of herbivorous insects for control of purple loosestrife stands in the Lower Hudson Valley that will be monitored over the next year. **Contact:** Timothy Sinnott, NYSDEC, txsinnot@gw.dec.state.ny.us.

WISCONSIN: *Attack Packs* which are used as a teaching kit for exotic species, continue to gain popularity. More than 30 *Attack Packs*, prepared by Wisconsin Sea Grant, have been distributed to high schools around the state. The teaching kit is available from Phil Moy of Wisconsin Sea Grant, who can be contacted by email: pmoy@uwc.edu or phone: 920-683-4697. The state has established an ad hoc committee to develop a permitting policy for nonindigenous species used in aquaculture activities. **Contact:** Ron Martin, WI DNR, 608-266-9270, martir@dnr.state.wi.us.

National ANS Task Force

The ANS Task Force convened Nov. 28-29, 2000, in Arlington, Va. A major focus of the meeting was to look at the relationship between the regional

panels and the ANS Task Force to determine how to improve the integration process. The ANS Task Force members also discussed recent activities relative to their ballast water program, including recommendations on development of ballast water standards and research activities. The executive director of the Invasive Species Council provided an overview of the development of the National Management Plan, as well as ways that the Task Force and Council could work together to address invasive species issues. The Task Force recognized Sally Yozell, former Task Force co-chair representing NOAA, for her years of work and dedication in support of the Task Force. Several committees provided updates and recommendations, including the Communication, Education and Outreach Committee and the Risk Assessment and Management Committee. **Contact:** Sharon Gross, Executive Secretary, 703-358-2308, Sharon_Gross@fws.gov.

Upcoming Events

- *Symposium: Looking Back, Looking Forward: Assessing ANS Prevention and Control.* May 16-17, 2001, Ann Arbor, Mich. **Contact:** Michael J. Donahue, Great Lakes Commission, 734-665-9135.
- Meeting of the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species. May 18, 2001, Ann Arbor, Mich. **Contact:** Kathe Glassner-Shwayder, Great Lakes Commission, 734-665-9135.
- *11th International Conference on Aquatic Invasive Species* (formerly known as the Zebra Mussel Conference). Oct. 1-4, 2001, Alexandria, Va. **Contact:** Elizabeth Muckle-Jeffs, 800-868-8776.

On the Bookshelf

- *2001 Calendar - Exotic Invasive Species of Illinois.* Includes color pictures and species descriptions. **Contact:** Illinois Natural History Survey Publications Office, 217-333-6880, or rjohnson@mail.inhs.uiuc.edu.
- *Exotic Species Compendium of Activities to Protect the Ecosystem (ESCAPE).* 2000. **Contact:** Robin Goettel, IL-IN Sea Grant, 217-333-9448, goettel@uiuc.edu.
- *Managing Aquatic Plants in Indiana Lakes.* **Contact:** Division of Soil Conservation, IDNR, 317-233-3870, jhoffmann@dnr.state.in.us. For a courtesy copy, contact above or download from www.ai.org/dnr/soilcons/lare/plantcon.htm.
- *National Ballast Survey 1st Annual Report.* 2000. National Ballast Water Information Clearinghouse. Download from invasions.si.edu/NABS1stAnnualReport.pdf.
- *Purple Loosestrife WATCH* ID cards. 2000. **Contact:** Mike Klepinger, MI Sea Grant, 517-353-5508, klep@pilot.msu.edu.