

Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species

Recommendation to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force: State Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Plans

Submitted to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force on November 7, 2007

Recommendation: The Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species recommends that the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, through their leadership, work to increase federal support and improve guidance for development and implementation of state management plans for aquatic nuisance species prevention and control.

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

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

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

- Revise Task Force SMP guidelines to better reflect the needs of the states, including elimination of guidelines that are no longer applicable or are restricting (e.g. allow for the submission of comprehensive aquatic and terrestrial plans, even though only the aquatic portion is eligible for Task Force funding);
- Streamline the reporting process for funding;
- Create a timeframe for distribution of federal funds;
- Provide incentives to the states for acquiring other funding; and
- Maintain an equal level of funding among the states.

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