

## 2025-2028 Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species Work Plan

*Finalized: January 12, 2026*

### Summary

Per Section 1203 of the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act (NANPCA) as amended by NISA, pursuant to appropriations, the Great Lakes Panel (GLP) is mandated to:

- Identify priorities for the Great Lakes with respect to aquatic nuisance species
- Make recommendations to the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force regarding ANS programs
- Assist the Task Force in coordinating Federal ANS program activities in the Great Lakes
- Coordinate ANS program activities in the Great Lakes
- Provide advice to public and private individuals and entities on methods of controlling ANS

To facilitate the fulfillment of this mandate, the GLP will enact a four-year work plan outlining a set of priority issues, activities and deliverables for a four-year period. In development of a work plan, the GLP will consider both its legislative mandate (above) and the unique role the GLP can play in identifying and addressing ANS issues:

- **Identify ANS issues needing discussion or action:** GLP members are in a unique position to bring issues from our constituents to the GLP for further discussion or action.
- **Determine the appropriate mode for discussion or action on an issue:** Depending on the particular discussion or decision points of an issue, the GLP can determine a mode for discussion or action, such as a GLP meeting discussion or separate symposium or conference.
- **Identify relevant parties:** GLP members may not always be the appropriate individuals to discuss or take action on an issue. GLP members can identify and convene the relevant individuals (including others from their agency), organizations, etc., for a particular issue.
- **Determine urgency:** The GLP can determine a level of urgency for a particular issue that will influence the mode of discussion or action.
- **Determine magnitude:** The GLP can determine whether an issue is local, regional, national or international, and that will influence the identification of relevant parties, the urgency and the mode of discussion or action.

This work plan does not preclude the GLP from responding to or taking action on other issues that may arise during the four-year period. Emerging issues will be addressed as described above and through mechanisms deemed appropriate by the GLP Chair, Executive Committee and/or the GLP membership. Additional detail on GLP operations and functions is also provided in the [GLP Guidance for Operations document](#) and the work plan will be implemented within the context of that document.

## **Regional Coordination**

The network of collaborative efforts working to advance effective and coordinated approaches to ANS prevention and control in the Great Lakes region is extensive. The GLP is positioned at the intersection of many of these groups, with members that are engaged across multiple collaborative forums. Over the next two years, the GLP will proactively work to identify, support and advance ANS priorities that are common across these groups through its normal operations (e.g., meetings and committees). This will include coordination with the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement Annex 6 Subcommittee, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Governors and Premiers ANS Task Force, the Great Lakes Commission, Great Lakes Fishery Commission, the International Joint Commission, and the Interstate ANS Prevention, Early Detection and Response Core Team, among others.

## **Meetings**

The primary operational mechanism for the GLP to address its goals and objectives is through the conduct of in-person meetings. The GLP will meet twice annually, normally within the timeframes of November and May. The fall meeting will be held in Ann Arbor, Mich., and spring meeting locations will vary. At the close of each GLP meeting, the dates and location of the next meeting will be announced, as recommended by the GLP Chair and Executive Committee.

Meeting agendas will be developed by the GLP Executive Committee with the input of the GLP coordinator. All GLP meetings will include the following agenda items:

- Membership roll call to determine a quorum
- Introduction of meeting participants
- GLP Business (including action and decision items, recommendations to the ANSTF meeting, plans for future meetings and other administrative GLP business)
- Opportunity to provide feedback and input on regional initiatives, e.g., NOAA GLANSIS
- Programmatic updates from regional initiatives, e.g., FWS interjurisdictional projects
- Emerging issues and announcements
- Public comment

A combination of plenary updates and ad hoc committee sessions will be organized for each meeting. A general breakdown (in one-hour time blocks) of a GLP meeting for this work-plan period is proposed on the next page.

Deliverables:

- Meeting summaries, including action items, and meeting presentations posted on the GLP website
- Recommendations to the ANSTF

## Basic Meeting Agenda Outline

To be modified each meeting in accordance with need.

<u>Hour</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Outputs/Outcomes</u>	Potential Topics (TBD)			
				Spring 2026 (virtual)	Fall 2026	Spring 2027	Fall 2027
1	<b>GLP Business</b>	Operational items, action items, recommendations to the ANSTF;	GLP decision-making, GLP recommendations, reports on GLP operational and action items, etc.	-finalize work plan			-Install officers -Next work plan
2							
3							
4	<b>Committee reports</b>	Progress reports and updates from Ad-hoc / standing committees	Information-sharing				
5	<b>TBD Updates</b>	Updates on ongoing or new initiatives, programs, research of interest to the GLP (will vary from meeting)	Information-sharing; coordination and collaboration; identification of needs	-genetic biocontrol updates			
6							
7							
8							
9	<b>Breaks</b>	Three 20 minutes breaks	Networking				
10							

## **Committees**

The GLP will conduct much of its work through its committee structure. This includes the Executive Committee, three standing committees, and ad hoc committees (as needed). Additional detail on committee roles, function and structure is provide in the [GLP Guidance for Operations](#) document.

### Executive Committee

The GLP Executive Committee will convene monthly via conference call to plan GLP meetings, develop meeting agendas, identify important items to be discussed during GLP meetings or in other forums, and handle other administrative items as necessary. The Executive Committee will also provide final approval for GLP recommendations to be communicated to the ANS Task Force.

Deliverables:

- Monthly Executive Committee calls
- Meeting agendas
- Recommendations to the ANS Task Force

### Standing Committees (Outreach Coordination, Management Coordination and Research Coordination)

Standing committees will be responsible for updating, maintaining and tracking progress on ANS priorities and identifying priority issues for GLP discussion and action. Each of the GLP standing committees will hold a meeting 6 months prior to the end of this work plan/ end of their current approved charge to review and update committee priorities. Staff will work with Committee Chairs to develop a priority tracking matrix to document progress. Updated priorities documents and tracking matrices will be distributed to the GLP membership. The committees will also identify and propose priorities for GLP discussion and action that might be incorporated into meeting agendas.

Deliverables:

- Committee priority setting meeting
- Updated priorities for ANS prevention and control with tracking matrices
- Identification of priorities for GLP discussion and action should be addressed at meetings
- Summaries of relevant regional data, research, policy, and/or outreach to facilitate information sharing, and inform priority setting and development of recommendations to the ANSTF

## **Priority Issues**

The GLP will focus its efforts, including time and resources, both at meetings and between meetings, to address the following issues that were identified as priorities by the GLP over the previous year: genetic biocontrol, recreational activities pathway, organisms in trade pathway, species regulatory harmonization, and restoration as a tool for management. At the end of the four-year period, the GLP will evaluate whether these are still priority issues and what additional discussion or action may be

needed; whether ad hoc committees should be continued (more work is needed) or disbanded; and what issues the GLP will take on over the next four-year period.

### Genetic Biocontrol

A number of research efforts are ongoing to develop genetic biocontrol tools for established Great Lakes ANS (e.g., dreissenid mussels, common carp, *Phragmites*), highlighting the need to ensure that the appropriate regulatory framework and level of social acceptance for gene editing are in place prior to deployment of any genetic biocontrol tools in the Great Lakes. As part of the GLP's mandate under NANPCA, particularly the authority to "[p]rovide advice to public and private individuals and entities on methods of controlling ANS," it is a priority of the GLP to provide a forum for regular updates on the progress of research efforts into genetic biocontrol and to lay the framework for management and social acceptance of developed tools. Panel members have reaffirmed that genetic biocontrol remains a high priority issue and identified the need for continued leadership by the GLP in both the scientific and policy arenas. Efforts will focus on examining the characteristics that define practical and responsible genetic biocontrol applications (e.g., practicality, ecological safety, and ethical considerations) and promoting discussion of these concepts among managers and decision makers across the basin. The GLP will also explore existing policy frameworks within state, provincial, federal, and international contexts, identifying opportunities for harmonization and guidance to inform future governance of genetic biocontrol tools in the Great Lakes. In addition, the Panel will consider its role in supporting education and outreach to inform and prepare the public for emerging technologies, ensuring that accurate information and open communication guide understanding and acceptance. These efforts will position the GLP and its members to proactively address management, policy, and social considerations surrounding the use of genetic biocontrol in the region.

#### Deliverables:

- Plenary sessions and updates on research and policy developments related to genetic biocontrol tools for the Great Lakes
- Summary of scientific, ethical, and ecological considerations for responsible genetic biocontrol implementation
- Analysis and recommendations for harmonizing genetic biocontrol policy frameworks across jurisdictions
- Work with communications specialists and biocontrol researchers to co-develop educational and outreach materials to inform stakeholders and the public about genetic biocontrol concepts and benefits

### Recreational Activities

GLP members determined that recreation activities remains a priority pathway that should be maintained as priority issue in the GLP work plan. At the May 2025 GLP meeting, a plenary session was held on this topic, focused on current efforts across the region. In discussion following the plenary session, members suggested that the GLP can add regional value by clarifying which types of recreators are included in the pathways and synthesizing existing work to identify audience-specific outreach

needs. Members emphasized categorizing user groups by educational needs, establishing a unified voice in outreach materials, and documenting ongoing work across the basin. Specific attention was given to the waterfowl hunting pathway, noting licensing differences, movement risks, and the role of local game wardens. Digital tools, including angler apps and marketing campaigns, were identified as opportunities for outreach. Building on this, the GLP will continue to dedicate a portion of meeting time over the duration of the work plan to share information on pathway prevention and management efforts across the basin.

#### Deliverables:

- Regular updates on the Great Lakes AIS Landing Blitz during GLP meetings
- Scoping of a workshop to classify recreational user groups and identify opportunities for targeted outreach
- Development of regional outreach strategies
- Identify what research has been done, and by who, regarding waterfowl hunting as a pathway for ANS.
- Index the current outreach products aimed at waterfowl hunters and identify partners who are a good fit to distribute products
- Promote and facilitate ecological and social science research into understanding the risk of spread of ANS through novel recreational pathways (i.e., waterfowl hunting pathway, trapping, off-road vehicles) and to identify effective strategies to modify behaviors and prevent ANS introductions
- Compilation of best practices and lessons learned for recreational pathway prevention and management
- Updates on priority recreational activity initiatives during GLP meetings

#### Organisms in Trade [Ad Hoc Committee]

The GLP provides a venue to bring key agencies, groups, and experts together to advance work to prevent ANS introduction and release via the organisms in trade (OIT) pathway in the Great Lakes region. OIT was identified as an enduring regional priority for the GLP to address through the continued facilitation of the OIT Ad Hoc Committee. The purpose of the committee is to coordinate regional OIT initiatives with partners and advance near-term actions to address the OIT pathway. The Ad Hoc Committee will meet periodically via conference call and in-person under the auspices of the GLP. Key activities of the committee will include:

- Serving as the project team for the *Regional coordination of outreach and engagement with the bait industry* interjurisdictional project (see GLP Projects)
- Serving on the project team for the *Great Lakes Detector of Invasive Aquatics in Trade (GLDIATR)* and the *Organisms in trade state/Tribal prevention program assessment* interjurisdictional projects
- Identifying opportunities to reduce ANS risk in the water garden/ aquarium pathway

- Coordinating with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission Law Enforcement Committee to identify opportunities to increase awareness of ANS among enforcement personnel and support knowledge sharing between enforcement and regulatory staff
- Establish a forum to share OIT programs and resources across jurisdictions
- Providing input on OIT related initiatives led by the ANSTF under implementation of the ANSTF Strategic Plan
- Identify opportunities for national and/or regional coordination with national pet and aquarium retailers

Deliverables:

- Recommendations for addressing the water garden/aquarium pathway
- Forum to share OIT program and resources
- Report progress on the status of GLP OIT priorities
- Work with OCC to develop an index of available water garden and aquarium outreach products

Species regulatory harmonization

The GLP recognizes that management of the many risk pathways associated with ANS can be complicated by inconsistent regulations across the 8 Great Lakes States, two Provinces and many Tribal Territories throughout the basin. These differing regulations can create a “weakest link” problem where less protective regulations in a neighboring jurisdiction or connected waters increase the potential for a novel introduction. In recognizing these differences in basin wide regulations, the GLP members support efforts to harmonize regulations that aim to prevent the potential spread and introduction of ANS throughout the basin. This effort aims to make regulated species lists more complementary. Efforts to harmonize regulations also further strengthen the ability to implement enforcement actions and support the underlying premise of the GLP which is to prevent or slow the introduction and spread of ANS throughout the basin.

Deliverables:

- Solicit from the GLP membership recommendations on priority regulations of species that further enhance and strengthen efforts to prevent the transportation and release of ANS, e.g., prohibition, possession, transport of watchlist species, established species, OIT, etc.
- Maintain an up-to-date list and spreadsheet of all regulated ANS species for each Great Lakes state and province. Maintain and update regulatory recommendations for regulations across each jurisdiction that have greatest potential to improve complementarity of jurisdictional regulated species lists. Review list annually alongside data from relevant horizon scans and updates to the GLANSIS watchlist to identify additional species in active pathways of introduction that warrant consideration for inclusion in state and provincial regulated species lists
- Utilize relevant agency data to initiate the development of a shareable matrix of prioritized regulations and regulated species that can illustrate gaps or lack of harmonization in regional

regulations and document suggestions to increase harmonization. Provide the matrix-based report to the membership and provide opportunities to discuss key findings and recommendations on regulated species or regulatory mechanisms that improve the complementarity of species regulations across basin states and provinces

### Invasive Aquatic Plant Management: Research and Restoration

Aquatic plant management remains a priority issue for the GLP and members agree that current management strategies remain insufficient. Under the 2021-2024 work plan GLP members, led by the Research Coordination Committee, established a comprehensive, baseline understanding of invasive aquatic plant (IAP) research and management activities and associated gaps in knowledge. This understanding was documented and formalized in 2024 through the creation of an [Invasive Aquatic Plant Control Needs Research Agenda](#). GLP members continue to view the control of priority IAP as a high regional priority and, therefore, expressed interest in the continued promotion and implementation of the Research Agenda.

Across the Great Lakes region, invasive aquatic plant management is increasingly intertwined with the need for effective and coordinated site restoration. Through discussions at the 2025 Binational Great Lakes Aquatic Invasive Species Forum, the GLP identified the transition from ANS management to site- and species-level restoration as an emerging priority that warrants regional coordination. While restoration is traditionally viewed as the final step following invasive species removal, partners throughout the basin emphasized that restoration can also function as an active ANS management tool, helping both suppress established ANS, and prevent their reinvasion by stabilizing habitats and improving ecological resilience.

State, provincial, Tribal, federal, and academic partners have been independently experimenting with novel restoration methods, ranging from small-scale transplant techniques to large-scale propagation and seeding programs. Recent discussions underscored the need for coordinated regional leadership to connect these efforts, compile and disseminate best practices, and support jurisdictions as they integrate active restoration into ANS management. The GLP is well positioned to help advance a more unified approach by fostering collaboration, improving information exchange, and elevating restoration as a strategic tool for long-term control and ecological recovery across the Great Lakes.

#### Deliverables:

- Solicit, compile, and publish previously unpublished restoration studies, protocols, and lessons learned where:
  - restoration of native plant communities was explicitly used to try and prevent reinvasion
  - restoration of native plant communities was used to suppress an established ANS
  - Mitigation strategies used to prevent ANS impeding or preventing successful site rehabilitation

- Identify outstanding questions, unanswered restoration problems, or opportunities to test novel solutions where ANS are either an impediment to rehabilitation or where successful restoration could be used to control an established Ans or prevent their reinvasion.
- Provide relevant updates on the above deliverables during GLP meetings to improve accessibility to existing methods and foster adoption across the region

## **GLP Projects**

### Regional coordination of outreach and engagement with the bait industry

The GLP has received funding for an interjurisdictional project to advance and enhance a current initiative to address ANS introduction risk in the bait pathway. This project will seek to increase coordination of outreach and engagement with the bait industry and state/provincial/Tribal agencies in the Great Lakes basin by reviewing existing bait analyses, conducting in-person interviews with bait industry representatives (wholesalers and retailers), evaluating existing bait resources, and developing or adapting existing resources for regional use. The GLP will serve as the primary project team, and the Organisms in Trade Ad Hoc Committee will oversee the project. This project will address the following objectives:

1. Produce and distribute a regional bait identification guide
2. Enhance engagement with bait industry producers and retailers

### Deliverables:

- Develop a regional bait identification guide informed by existing resources
- Release a content analysis that summarizes the evaluation of evaluated bait guides
- Printed and bound copies of the regional bait guide that are made available to bait industry leaders and retailers
- Distribution of printed copies of the regional bait guide and publication of a digital copy on the GLP website
- Development of an IRB reviewed bait industry survey
- In-person interviews with bait industry representatives
- Interview summaries from in-person interviews of bait industry leaders developed into a shareable report
- Presentation of results to the Great Lakes LAW Enforcement Committee and GLP membership

### Evaluating Control of Priority Established Species: Species- and site-based analysis of control efforts in the Great Lakes region

The GLP has received funding for an interjurisdictional project to refine and finalize a regional list of priority established aquatic invasive animals that emphasizes the ecological and cultural impacts of

value to Tribal and natural resource management agencies. The lists of priority ANS and site/habitat management needs will inform the development of a decision tree. This process will use published criteria that are associated with successful management of ANS and trait-based data to identify the management approaches with the highest probability of enabling control at local sites and at regional scales. This analysis will be used to develop a species-specific research and management agenda for priority established ANS.

The goal of this project is to identify best management practices for priority aquatic invasive species and provide Great Lakes ANS managers with a decision-making framework for addressing the threat of established ANS. It will address the following objectives:

1. Identify priority established invasive animals and status of associated species control tools
2. Assess site-based control efforts to date
3. Integrate species and site-based assessments to identify species-specific management needs and develop decision support tools

#### Deliverables

- A finalized list of priority established aquatic invasive animals for control in the Great Lakes
- Species-specific reviews of existing management tools and their efficacy
- State-specific species regulatory summaries, including identification of regulatory gaps
- Map of control-focused GLRI projects (both animals and plants) from 2012-2021 by location and associated metadata, including: habitat type, species controlled, control methods utilized, project goal, and priority species present at the site
- List of restoration goals and management/conservation priorities for site-based management as identified in Great Lakes state, tribal, and regional management plans
- Decision tree tool to identify suppression methods that have the highest probability of success for each priority aquatic invasive animal according to species traits, impacted habitats, and desired management scale
- Research agenda that identifies species-, site- and habitat-specific research and management gaps and opportunities
- Scientific manuscript(s) that report(s) broad patterns of GLRI ANS funding expenditure, outcome of species and site-based analyses, and control criteria
- Presentations to the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species (GLP) meeting and regionally relevant conferences
- Web based materials hosted on GLP's website and GLC Blue Accounting to facilitate communications to management agencies, stakeholders, and research community

#### Member Updates

Programmatic updates on ANS activities from GLP members (regular, alternates, at-large) will be requested as part of each semiannual meeting. Members will be able to provide updates in two formats: verbal updates during the meeting (preferred) and/or written updates prior to meetings. GLP members who wish to provide verbal updates will identify themselves to the GLP coordinator prior to meetings.

Members will be given up to 5 minutes to provide jurisdictional updates that are relevant to the current GLP work plan priority issues and projects. GLP members may also provide written updates submitted at least one week prior to semiannual meeting. Written updates will be shared in writing as part of meeting materials and included in the meeting summary.

Deliverables:

- Verbal updates documented in meeting summaries
- Semiannual (twice per year) GLP member update summaries posted on the GLP website