

WRP Executive Committee

Draft Minutes

Thursday, December 20, 2007

Members Present: Andy Burgess, Karen McDowell, Eileen Ryce, John Wullsleger, Kevin Anderson, Tina Proctor

Members Absent: Billie Kerans, Jason Goeckler, Amy Ferriter, Lynn Schlueter

1) ANSTF Meeting, Arlington, VA, November 5-8

Eileen reported on the ANSTF meeting. Karen and Tina also attended. Eileen and Tina attended the Panel Principals meeting the day before the TF meeting. There was a long discussion on how the Panels spend the \$50,000 which is provided through the FWS and how the panels are organized.

The Northeast ANS Panel uses half of the money to pay the consultant who coordinates their panel. The NEANS Council has applied for 501c3 status and is the fiscal agent for the Panel. There are 4 working committees which submit work plans with 1 or more activities to be funded. \$20,000 is used to fund the activities. The steering committee decides which activities will be funded.

The \$50,000 for the Great Lakes Panel goes to the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission which pays for personnel, meetings, travel. There is staff support for 3 committees: education, policy and research. Staff raises funds when needed. There is a robust relationship with the Great Lakes Commission which gives technical support and can do advocacy work. They finished their operational guidance in 2007 and will work on a strategic plan in 2008.

Similarly, the \$50,000 for the Gulf of Mexico Panel goes to the Gulf States Fisheries Commission with a large portion for salaries and administrative costs. There are 3 active work groups: education and outreach; marine ornamentals; and research. The Panel has a strategic plan.

Half of the \$50,000 goes to the Mid-Atlantic Panel coordinator's salary (FWS employee). \$25,000 will be for projects next year. They don't pay for travel for members to go to meetings.

The Mississippi River Basin Panel is part of the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association which receives the \$50,000. There are three co-chairs. The three standing committees create the annual work plan every year and fund projects for \$20,000 through the committees.

The Panels decided that there needs to be more collaboration and sharing of information and products. We decided to develop a matrix of what is available. Scott suggested pertinent information could be posted on the TF website as a Regional Panel Resource

Page. The Panel Principals will have a conference call before the next TF meeting in May.

Issues presented by the WRP at the TF meeting:

- VHS was recognized by the Task Force as an invasive species. The Mississippi River Basin Panel joined the WRP in requesting this recognition. The opposition was from a representative from APHIS, who expressed the opinion that pathogens should not be recognized as ANS because they don't cause ecosystem impacts. Eileen argued that the pathways and vectors are the same for ANS and for pathogens. Having VHS recognized will encourage states to incorporate it into their management plans.
- The Task Force agreed that they would send a letter to their member agencies (Eileen will work with Scott Newsham to write the letter) to request information on the recommendations they use for cleaning equipment. The letter will also ask how these recommendations are distributed to the field offices. This information will be compiled into a report. After the report is completed, the Task Force can decide, with Panel input, on whether there are gaps and what recommendations should be made to member agencies.
- Idaho's ANS plan was approved. Amy presented the plan by phone. California's ANS plan was given conditional approval pending the governor's signature.
- There was a morning of presentations on Climate Change and then three breakout sessions focused on specific questions: prediction and mapping, management strategies and research needs.

2) **100th Meridian Meeting, Las Vegas NV, November 27-28**

Because there were 70 people attending rather than the usual 20 who can sit around a table, this annual 100th Meridian meeting was very different. There were many new people who had not attended before. The River Basin Teams, Columbia, Missouri, Colorado, Arkansas and a new team, Lake Tahoe, presented what they are working on currently. Tina updated the group on the Offutt Air Force Base zebra mussel invasion. There are no set guidelines how each team operates but they have each evolved based on what members need and what they can accomplish together.

There were also presentations about the Lake Mead invasion and later break-outs on what worked and what didn't work about the response.

Presentations of interest include: update of state laws by a graduate student at U. Texas Arlington which will be put on the 100th Meridian website; law enforcement and how states and federal agencies need to work together, watercraft inspection and decontamination training and boater surveys at Lake Mead. The minutes will be on the website in January.

3) Proposals for 2008

Tina will write a letter to Scott Newsham requesting the \$50,000, now that Congress has passed the omnibus spending legislation. She will also contact Peter Rice of Montana State University about the WRP decision to fund the flowering rush proposal. Contracts will be written over the next four weeks.

4) Western States Water Council

Tina gave a presentation to the Western States Water Council (governor appointed representatives of 18 western states). The Council works closely with the Western Governors' Association on water policy issues of concern to the governors. Tina talked about the WRP, the 100th Meridian and the quagga mussel invasion in the Southwest.

Following that meeting (but not necessarily a result of), the FWS regional directors in Sacramento, Denver and Albuquerque received a letter from the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (which delivers water to 1 out of every 16 Americans) asking that the FWS join a coalition of select intergovernmental agencies and Lower Colorado River users within the states of Arizona, California, Nevada and Utah to create a comprehensive management plan that would reduce the negative impacts caused by the mussels. Tina will update the committee as this coalition progresses.

5) Updates

Utah will be creating a state ANS Management Plan starting with a meeting on January 16 in Salt Lake City. Tina has been invited to participate. Andy reported that South Dakota held their first organizational meeting – Jason attended and helped facilitate. The next meeting is January 15th. On January 3rd the commercial bait folks will meet to talk about bait rules and regs in SD. On January 4th the MN Sea Grant staff will provide HACCP training. Many SD staff and the commercial bait folks will attend.

Tina reported a zebra or quaggas have been found in Pueblo Reservoir, a popular water body 90 minutes south of Denver. Genetic testing is being done to determine the species because the PCR results were uncertain. A press release will go out today or tomorrow from the Colorado Division of Wildlife. A state fish hatchery at the Reservoir will be quarantined.

Kevin reported that his agency, the Puget Sound Partnership, is preparing recommendations to the legislature to request funding for: 1) Columbia River Basin Rapid Response Plan; 2) a dedicated ANS outreach specialist in 2009; 3) other ANS management activities such as nutria, NZMS, Didymo, and American bullfrog; and 4) marine invasive tunicates.

6) Website

Tina will activate website committee with current volunteers, Kevin and Jason, and will ask for other volunteers from the members. A conference call will be planned for late January.

7) Plans for 2008

The committee discussed desired accomplishments for 2008, which include: 1) updating the Threats the West brochures; 2) revamping the website; 3) increasing coordination with the other Regional Panels, and 4) reviewing the priorities for 06-07. Tina will send out the 06-07 priority list for discussion at the January call.

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