

Western Regional Panel Organizational Meeting Report

July 9th, 1997

The following Western Regional Panel Organizational Meeting Report has been developed for Western Regional Panel members in attendance at the first meeting and those appointed but absent from meeting. This report discusses issues raised by attendees at meeting, provides clarification on issues where appropriate, and requests Panel members comments on issues relating to Panel draft operating and work plan and nomination of Panel chairs.

Co-Chairs of the intergovernmental Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (Task Force), invited selected representatives to participate on the Western Regional Panel, a committee of the Task Force. The Task Force was created by the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (Act, 16 U.S.C. 4701-4741) and the WRP has been established pursuant to 1996 amendments of that Act. The purposes of the WRP are to:

- identify Western Region priorities for responding to aquatic nuisance species;
- make recommendations to the Task Force regarding an education, monitoring (including inspection), prevention, and control program to prevent the spread of the zebra mussel west of the 100th Meridian;
- coordinate, where possible, other aquatic nuisance species program activities in the West not conducted pursuant to the Act;
- develop an emergency response strategy for Federal, State, and local entities for stemming new invasions of aquatic nuisance species in the region;
- provide advice to public and private individuals and entities concerning methods of preventing and controlling aquatic nuisance species infestations; and
- submit an annual report to the Task Force describing activities within the western region related to aquatic nuisance species prevention, research and control.

State, provincial, tribal, federal agencies, conservation and scientific community representatives which responded to the invitation met at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon to attend a forum on nuisance invasive species and the first organizational meeting of the Western Regional Panel(WRP).

Attendees spent the first day becoming acquainted with invasive species issues through presentations by leading researchers and resource managers(See attached agenda).

The second day attendees began the task of Panel organization, beginning with presentation by Mike Donahue of the Great Lakes Commission and Doug Jensen of Minnesota Sea Grant on the work and history of the Great Lakes Panel. A facilitated discussion on draft operating Panel operating guidelines and committee structure followed. The following issues arose during this discussion of operating guidelines and committee structure.

1. Goals of Panel The statutory goals for the WRP are described in the Act . The WRP is to play a key role in developing and coordinating aquatic nuisance species prevention and control strategies in the West and advising the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force on western priorities.

There was some discussion regarding the inclusion of terrestrial species other than brown tree snake and aquatic weeds within the purview of the Panel. The National Invasive Species Act provides guidance with regard to this issue- The statute purposes are listed on page 4 of the enclosed copy of the Act. Those purposes are 1. To prevent unintentional introduction and dispersal of nonindigenous species into waters of the U.S. through ballast water management and other requirements; 2. To coordinate federally conducted, funded or authorized research, prevention control, information dissemination and other activities regarding the zebra mussel and other aquatic nuisance species; 3. To develop and carry out environmentally sound control methods to prevent, monitor and control unintentional introductions of nonindigenous species from pathways other than ballast water exchange; 4. To understand and minimize economic and ecological impacts of nonindigenous aquatic nuisance species that become established, including the zebra mussel;

and 5 to establish a program of research and technology development and assistance to States in management and removal of zebra mussels.

Statute definition of “aquatic nuisance species” is the following “aquatic nuisance species” as “a nonindigenous species that threatens the diversity or abundance or ecological stability of infested waters, or abundance of native species or the ecological stability of infested waters, or commercial, agricultural, aquaculture or recreational activities dependent on such water.”(The act addresses flora and fauna and certain shell fish pathogens). The statute appears clear that brown tree snake and aquatic weeds are considered aquatic nuisance species under the Act and therefore appropriate resource issues for the WRP to address.

Concern was raised that expanding to include all terrestrial species could dilute the focus of the WRP work.

Additional concern was raised that the WRP should effectively balance prevention and control strategies when addressing aquatic nuisance species issues.

Issue for Consideration by Panel Members on Goals:

Given the background and clarification provided above;

Should the WRP consider species other than aquatic plant and animal species and the brown tree snake?

2. Panel Membership The participants reviewed current membership. Government membership was deemed appropriate but ensure that provincial/state designation is used. Suggestions to include as interested parties, ex-officio members or members are;

Western Aquatic Plant Management Society
Pacific Island Regional Group
Increase Tribal Representation
Include Columbia Basin Fish and Wildlife Authority
Pacific Legislative Task Force
Western Governor’s Association
North American Lake Management Association

The WRP as approved by the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force includes 48 voting members. This includes federal, state, provincial and tribal agencies with jurisdictional and programmatic responsibility regarding aquatic nuisance species and a balance of affected marine and freshwater interest groups. The Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Charter requires that the Task Force approve Great Lakes Panel Membership. This language will probably be amended to include other Regional Panels.

Issue for consideration by Panel members on membership

Given the present membership(see attached list);

Are significant interests absent from membership list?

What members should be added?

Should these members be added as voting members(subject to ANS Task Force approval), ex-officio or interested parties?

3. Chairs Two federal chairs, two state chairs and two at-large chairs were nominated

Federal -

Max Haegele - Bureau of Reclamation
Jim Athern - Army Corps of Engineers

State -

Randy Brown - California Department of Food and Agriculture

Larry McKinney - Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

At-Large -

Andrew Cohen- San Francisco Estuary Institute

Mark Sytsma - Portland State University

The attendees determined that all members (those present and absent) be given an opportunity to elect chairs. A mail in ballot will determine chairs.

Issues for Panel Members Consideration on Chairs

Should outgoing chairs serve as vice chairs for 1 yr post-term?

What term should chairs serve ...1,2,3 years?

Should chairs be staggered for continuity?

4. Panel Decisions While the Panel intends to work by consensus and agreement, there may be a limited number of times when voting is required. Given the size and geographic scope of the WRP, attendance at meetings by all members may be difficult. Some attendees suggested using the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association process(MICRA) as a model. MICRA has 28 members representing 28 states in the Mississippi River Basin. All members may unable to attend each meetings. 15 members represent a quorum. A simple majority is required for approval of general business matters. The MICRA Constitution and By-Laws may be amended at any regular meeting or through mail ballot by 3/4 majority vote of all Delegates.

Issues for Panel Consideration on Panel Decisions

Should the presence of 24 members at a meeting constitute a quorum and be sufficient to conduct business?

Should business be conducted by the entire membership through mail in ballot?

5. Funding for WRP Activities A discussion of need for funding for proposed WRP activities and administration raises the following funding opportunities. A letter received from a Panel member not in attendance pointed out the federal dollars will be needed to complement the few state dollars that are available.

Federal Funding: Regional plans: NISA authorizes \$300,000 to the Department of the Interior, to be used by the Director to fund regional panels and other similar entities under section 1203(d), of which \$100,000 shall be used to fund activities of the Great Lakes Commission. It is unclear whether funding for these regional efforts has been appropriated by Congress.

State Management Plans: NISA authorizes to be appropriated for each fiscal years 1997 through 2002, \$4,000,000 to the Department of the Interior, to be used by the Director for making grants under section 1204, of which \$1,500,000 shall be used by the Director, in consultation with the Assistant Secretary for management of aquatic nuisance vegetation species. Again, it is unclear what has been appropriated for these efforts.

Member funding: Member funding may be available on a project by project basis. Some discussion centered around set dues to WRP activities but no resolution occurred.

Granting Organizations and Industry: Granting organizations such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and interested power and water industries could be solicited for funding of WRP activities and work plans.

Issues for Panel Members Consideration on Funding

Should the WRP solicit the ANS Task Force for funds to conduct WRP work plan?

Should the WRP solicit other granting organizations and agencies for funds to conduct work plan activities?

Proposed Panel Work Committees The meeting attendees disbursed into three breakout sessions. There was general acceptance of using the Great Lakes Panel model with regard to the use of Committees to develop work plans and effectuate the goals of the Act. However, there was discussion as to the balance of

prevention and control in responding to aquatic nuisance species issues. In some instances States, Tribes or Federal agencies may want to place more emphasis on preventing introductions of nuisance species than managing or controlling those species already present. Panel members may wish to consider what balance they wish to strike between management/control and prevention strategies when finalizing a work plan. Education/Outreach Committee(Co-Chairs Kathy Hamel and Jodi Cossell) Legislative/Policy Committee (Chair-Jon Sjorberg) and Management/Research Committee(Co-chairs Scott Smith and John Chapman). The products of those breakouts are enclosed. These products with modification could be used as a basis for the WRP 1998 work plan for submission to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force.

Issues for Panel Members Consideration on Committees Should the Panel utilize Committees to develop yearly work plans for review by WRP members?
Should additional committees be created? If so what should be the subject of these committees?
Who if any members should be added to the committees?

[Responses to Issues](#)

[Fact Sheet](#)

Last Updated: January 9, 2003