



Standard Operating Procedures

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The Executive Committee of the Western Regional Panel (WRP) on Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) created this document to provide guidance for consistent operations of the WRP that are not described in the Bylaws. These Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) also serve to provide a record of processes for actions that are taken by the WRP. The SOP is subject to change based on needs that arise and decision-making that guide future operational activities. The Executive Committee shall update the SOP as necessary and will review the document prior to the annual meeting each year.

Membership

Election Processes – Various Circumstances

Voting members shall elect the Executive Committee by holding an election during the annual meeting. If a member cannot be present to vote, a proxy can be designated by the absent member for that election only. This proxy designation is provided to the WRP Coordinator prior to the election.

If a candidate receives more than half of the first choices in races where voters elect one winner, that candidate wins, just like in a single-choice election. However, if there is no majority winner after counting first choices, the race is decided by an "instant runoff." The candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated, and voters who picked that candidate as 'number 1' will have their votes count for their next choice. This process continues until there's a majority winner or a candidate won with more than half of the vote.

At the first Executive Committee meeting that follows the election of the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee will elect a chair and vice chair by voice vote. Executive Committee members who are interested in serving as chair or vice chair will declare their intent to serve prior to the first meeting.

If an Executive Committee member steps down voluntarily prior to the completion of their term, several options may be used to fill the vacancy. 1) If there is significant time remaining prior to the annual meeting, the membership can hold a special election and select a new executive committee member by electronic vote. 2) If there is little time remaining prior to the annual meeting, the vacancy shall remain and be filled during the regular election period.

Recognition of Member Participation

The Executive Committee may determine that a member shall be recognized for service to the WRP. The following criteria are considered "recognition for service"; if a member has participated in the WRP for more than 10 years, and that member is leaving their work due to retirement or transfer out of AIS-based work. Other reasons for recognition shall be considered by the Executive Committee. Recognition shall consist of a framed certificate. If WRP has funding available, the recognition (and shipping to recipient) shall be paid for from WRP funds approved by the Executive Committee.

Executive Committee Procedures

Roles and Responsibilities of Chair, Vice Chair and Coordinator

The chair shall

- serve as the primary contact of the WRP
- fulfill participation requirements at ANSTF meetings
- Coordinating the Coordination (CTC) duties

The vice-chair shall

- initiate solicitation of the annual member reports
- facilitation of ANSTF recommendations during the annual meeting
- fulfill participation requirements at ANSTF meetings, if chair and coordinator are unable
- CTC duties

The coordinator shall

- serve as the operations contact for WRP activities
- provide a monthly list serv update
- be responsible for annual audit of website
- be responsible for monthly updates to the website
- fulfill participation requirements at ANSTF meetings, if chair is unable

Chair and Vice Chair Terms

The chair and vice chair are both one-year terms, but with no limit to the number of terms. During the history of the WRP there have been many chairs and vice chairs that have served terms as short as a year and as long as 6 years. Serving as the chair has primarily been a reflection of those who are able to dedicate time as they are professionally able, and therefore many have served multiple year terms. A one-year term of vice chair prior to serving as chair is an ideal succession to allow for individuals to familiarize themselves with WRP needs and ANSTF procedures.

Executive Committee Meetings

The Executive Committee meetings shall allow additional participation from non-Executive Committee participants as agreed upon by the committee members. The Chair or Coordinator shall provide advance notification of participation. Typically invited participants shall join at the start of the meeting and shall leave the meeting once the specified business has been shared or completed.

Committee and Workgroup Logistics and Procedures

Guidelines for Committees and Workgroups

Every committee/workgroup shall have a chair that will help complete the work of the committee. The chair serves as the primary point of contact, the person responsible for achieving committee/workgroup milestones, recording progress and completion of documents, and in many cases the committee/workgroup chair is the liaison to the Executive Committee.

A committee/workgroup will have a scoping document that outlines the purpose, goals, objectives, frequency of meeting, milestones with a timeline and is referred to as a committee/workgroup template. The template will be completed by the respective chair with feedback from the committee/workgroup members and reviewed/updated annually. The template will be submitted to the Executive Committee and Coordinator by January 1. The template will be approved by Executive Committee vote. The combined templates will assist in creating an annual action plan, as needed.

When a committee/workgroup is created by a need from the Executive Committee, then the Executive Committee shall outline the scope of the committee/workgroup in the template.

When a committee/workgroup is created by a need/request from the larger WRP membership, then the person who has requested the creation of the committee/workgroup shall outline the scope of the in the template. Committee/workgroup creation suggestions shall be at the request of voting members only.

Committee and Workgroup Composition

The chair of each committee/workgroup must be a voting member, however participants may be voting members or people with interest in the committee goal.

Committee and Workgroup Progress

Individuals who serve on the Executive Committee shall volunteer to serve on a committee/workgroup and act as the liaison between the committee/workgroup and the Executive Committee. The liaison is responsible for checking in with the chair of the committee. A committee chair shall provide a monthly summary of committee activities to the liaison. If monthly summaries are not provided, and lag for more than four months the Executive Committee will evaluate the committee scope. If monthly summaries indicate repeated committee member lack of participation (i.e. not attending calls, no one reviewing documents etc.), then the Executive Committee will evaluate the committee scope.

Committee and Workgroup Funding and Products

In most cases, committee/workgroup work proceeds via volunteer time without additional funding. In some cases, funding may be needed to complete aspects of committee tasks or products. Prior to the use of any funds to complete tasks or products, the committee chair shall note the amount of funds, the purpose of the funds and financial agreement of the funds; and share this information with the Executive Committee. Executive Committee will approve the use of any funds coming in for committee work. Use of funding to complete committee tasks or products will be considered on a case-by-case

basis. Where funding will be used to support the completion of documents, the Executive Committee will review the proposed document to be produced, the expectations for the document use and distribution, the staff time needed to produce document, and ensure that all parties interested in participating in the task or product are included.

Products developed by a committee shall follow the process for “Document Completion”. The following steps for document completion include: a) committee input and review, b) committee chair provides the document for preliminary review by Executive Committee, c) the committee chair provides the document to the entire membership for review and feedback, d) the committee chair incorporates feedback and provides the document to Executive Committee for final review, and e) Executive Committee vote to finalize the document.

Annual Action Plan

An annual action plan may be created by spring of each year. This action plan will be the result of the committee templates with summary information. The action plan will be assembled by the Coordinator and provided to the Executive Committee for approval. If activities arise that do not fall into the annual action plan, the Executive Committee shall review and approve any next steps.

ANS Task Force and Other ANSTF Panels

WRP Participation

The WRP is a subcommittee of the ANSTF, rather than a voting representative. Therefore, subcommittees do not vote on ANSTF business. The WRP provides recommendations biannually to the ANSTF if needed, activity reports to the ANSTF annually and other information as requested by the ANSTF.

The ANSTF holds two meetings a year, typically May and November. Ideally the Chair or Coordinator will attend in-person to represent the WRP, but both will not attend. Attendance at the ANSTF meeting will be dependent on the ability for WRP to support this travel. The Executive Committee will review travel expenses and available funds in final participation. There are times when WRP members participate at ANSTF meetings representing their primary agency or organization. In rare circumstances if the Chair or Coordinator are unable to attend, other WRP member entities may represent the WRP. While at ANSTF meeting, WRP Chair serves as an observer and provides feedback during the meeting.

The submission of recommendations from the WRP shall occur prior to each ANSTF meeting. Recommendations should be achievable and reasonable. The Executive Committee will solicit members and committees for suggested recommendations. Committees will discuss suggestions and provide to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will vote to approve final recommendations to the ANSTF. In some cases, the WRP will choose to submit ANSTF recommendations with other panels.

The WRP Executive Committee will coordinate with other ANSTF panels to improve AIS information sharing and maximize ANSTF panel related mechanics. Whenever possible the Chair, Vice Chair and Coordinator will communicate with other panel leadership, share resources if appropriate and provide

information to other panels when requested. Often at the ANSTF meeting, the panel principals from the other ANSTF panels will convene a separate meeting to share information.

Membership Meetings

Annual Meeting

The WRP has been holding an annual meeting since 1998. The WRP Annual Meeting provides a networking and information sharing opportunity for members and associated stakeholders interested in AIS. The location of the meeting is based on a host proposal from a member (See host proposal form) which is then approved by membership vote. Since 2011, the meeting has been held in either September or October depending on facility availability and rates. Typically, the meeting location alternates between inland and coastal areas, but will be based on host proposal.

Selecting the meeting location 2 years to 18 months prior to the event, is preferred to allow sufficient time for appropriate venue, accommodations, logistics and other details.

The Coordinator will manage the majority of meeting logistics (i.e. hotel bids, hotel contract signing, on-site hotel details) with final approval by the Executive Committee. The Coordinator solicits financial sponsorships for the meeting, which includes private companies, agencies and businesses. Sponsor package materials are approved by the Executive Committee.

The Annual Meeting Committee is responsible for agenda development. The host is responsible for agenda development, field trip logistics, host location recommendations and logistics. Often the host provides a financial or in-kind contribution to support the meeting.

Host locations should be able to provide reasonable airline flights, government rate hotel sleeping rooms, and unique opportunities to learn about local AIS issues. Venues for the meeting can be a variety of formats, however when the hotel and meeting space can be combined this is preferred. The location of the venue is preferred to be in one that allows participants to access dining and other needs without the need of a rental car.

The Annual Meeting Committee will be determined by volunteer at the previous annual meeting. The committee shall assemble in January of that meeting year and meet monthly until the event occurs. The Coordinator shall solicit presenter abstracts and the Annual Meeting Committee will review and select based on consensus. Some meetings have used a theme to guide the agenda. The Coordinator will be the primary contact for all speakers and provide all relevant information (See the guideline for presenters).

At the annual meeting, during the business meeting decisions are captured in minutes. These minutes shall be reviewed and approved by membership typically at the start of the next annual meeting.

There is no fee to attend an annual meeting. All are welcome to attend the annual meeting.

Mid-year Teleconference

The WRP holds a teleconference or webinar in the spring to keep members and others with an interest updated on WRP activities. The purpose of the teleconference is to share information and provide some further continuity between annual meetings.

Documentation and Communication

Finalizing a document

Products developed by a committee/workgroup shall follow the process for document completion. The following steps for document completion include: a) committee input and review, b) committee chair provides the document for preliminary review by Executive Committee, c) the committee chair provides the document to the entire membership for review and feedback, d) the committee chair incorporates feedback and provides the document to Executive Committee for final review, and e) Executive Committee vote to finalize the document.

The most involved option for input into documents is to join the committee and assist in the development of the product or document. All members will have an opportunity to review or provide feedback on a proposed project or document prior to finalization. Finalized documents or products may be reviewed as determined by a committee in the future and will be based on new information.

All final documents or projects shall be housed on the WRP website, shared via the WRP list serv, and encouraged to be shared electronically.

Letters and Endorsements

The WRP does send letters for a variety of purposes including but not limited to thank you letters for attending an event (i.e. NISAW), letters to leadership to encourage membership participation in the annual meeting or other event, and entities that may need additional education on AIS issues.

The WRP does not provide letters of support or correspondence for partners submitting grant proposals, endorsement of specific products or endorsing specific legislation.

Two specific policies have been adopted which further outline endorsement and letters of support: *WRP Endorsement Policy* and *Letter of Support Policy*.

Website and List serv

The WRP website was hosted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service from 1999 until December 2019. The Invasive Species Action Network took over responsibility of hosting the WRP website in December 2019. The *Website Transfer Agreement* outlines the conditions of the website hosting relationship.

The primary function of the website is to provide information to the members about WRP products, activities and events. Maintenance of the website is completed by the Coordinator. Upkeep such as membership information is completed regularly. The Executive Committee may review and direct the Coordinator to conduct changes to the website, as needed.

The list serv is hosted by the University of Georgia. The Coordinator maintains the list serv contacts and posts monthly updates on WRP activities. It is not the Coordinator's responsibility to post non-WRP information to the list serv. The Coordinator directs list serv members to post information. Those who are a member of the list serv may post to the list serv. Membership to the list serv is simply for anyone with an interest in the WRP and AIS in the West.

Moderating the list serv shall be the responsibility of the Coordinator, however the Chair and Vice Chair will have moderating capabilities. The following information is approved for posting: WRP documents, WRP activities and invitations, alerts on AIS species and emergencies, topics of broad scientific AIS interest, topics of query for management assistance, grant opportunities, and employment opportunities. The following information is not approved for posting: general press releases not associated with the WRP, personal one-on-one conversations, and non-AIS topics.

Under no circumstances shall the participant list serv list be provided to any outside party for their use.

Panel Support for Basic Functions and Fiscal Management

The WRP is not a legal entity and therefore cannot have a bank account. The USFWS has provided all panels with equally distributed financial support for the tenure of the panel existence. Since 2011, the WRP has elected to utilize this USFWS support for coordination of the panel. The WRP has the ability to select an entity or organization to provide coordination and utilize USFWS funds to do so. The WRP developed a scope of work for coordination and the membership annually confirms to continue to support coordination.

Since 2011, the coordination has been provided by Invasive Species Action Network (a conservation non-profit 501c3 organization). Because ISAN is a non-profit, it is able to serve as the fiscal sponsor of the WRP. This allows ISAN to accept financial support for the annual meeting, manage funds, and assume financial responsibility for WRP annual meeting expenses. The WRP and ISAN have a *Fiscal Management Agreement*.