

Regional Panel Recommendations and Activities for the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Meeting, North Charleston, South Carolina, April 29-30, 2008

Panel: Northeast Regional Panel

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High-Priority and/or Emerging Regional Issues:

- Last year's Didymo invasion or first detection
- Early detection and rapid response at the regional level

Key ANS activities from November 2007 to April 2008:

Panel

- The Panel is convening its semi-annual meeting in Lake George, NY, May 7-8. This marks the fourteenth Panel meeting since its inception in the fall of 2001. In conjunction with this meeting, the Panel is holding the Freshwater Nuisance Species Prevention and Early Detection: Northeast Programs and Potential for Regional Collaboration" workshop including a field trip to a boat washing station.
- The Panel is conducting its "Marine Invader Monitoring and Information Collaborative Workshop on April 29, 2008 at the New England Aquarium, Boston, MA. The workshop is focused on supporting volunteer monitoring efforts
- The Panel has finalized a proclamation to recognize invasive species concerns and is working with the New England Governor's Conference to have it signed at their next meeting.
- The Panel held a focused Didymo workshop in November and has been working with Mike Goehle and headquarters USFWS staff to form a program and materials to partner with several outdoor suppliers.

State/Interstate

- ME Department of Marine Resources (MEDMR) has been working with Nancy Balcom of CT Sea Grant to produce a poster that will alert recreational fishermen etc. to not dispose of bait, packing material (wormweed), and containers, overboard. The poster design is near completion and consists of a graphic, and the information in several languages, according to location posted. The poster will be distributed by various Sea Grants, state recreational fish survey crews etc, to bait shops and fishing locations on both coasts, with as wide a distribution as possible. The design will also be produced as a flyer for handout by bait shops and recreational fish crews.
- The Maine Marine Invasives Working Group (MMIWG) has updated and reprinted its informational flyer, Maine's Marine Invasion; and is now making modifications to produce a poster-sized version.
- "Keytainers" were produced and distributed by the MMIWG that feature identification and contact information for the Chinese mitten crab
- The MEDMR urchin diving team will again this spring be documenting areas of last year's Didemnum growth as they survey urchin pops.

- NH continues to focus on prevention (through a Lake Host Program), early detection (through a Weed Watcher Program), containment (through Restricted Use Areas), and control (through Integrated Pest Management) of exotic plants in the state. Currently, 72 waterbodies are infested, with a total of 82 infestations overall (some waterbodies have more than one exotic aquatic plant).
- In NH, variable milfoil (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*) continues to be the most common problem, followed by fanwort, curly-leaf pondweed, watch chestnut, and Eurasian water milfoil.
- New Hampshire is working on developing more expansive use of diver-assisted suction harvesting for follow-up control practices as part of an integrated approach, as well as increasing the accuracy of plant mapping through developing an Underwater Surveillance Vessel (USV).
- MA Office of Coastal Zone Management Aquatic Invasive Species Program staff will be monitoring for marine invasive species at five high-risk port areas within Massachusetts from May to October.
- The Massachusetts Aquatic Invasive Species (MAAIS) Working Group is refining an inter-agency prevention, early detection, and rapid response plan for *Didymosphenia geminata*. An outreach plan has been developed, a one-page alert completed, and a tri-fold brochure is in production.
- A subgroup of the MAAIS working group is continuing to evaluate the species, *Mytilopsis leucophaeata*, (Dark False Mussel) recently reported in the Charles River. A species evaluation has been completed and assessment survey planned for May 2008.
- The MA Department of Conservation and Recreation Lakes and Ponds program will continue its successful boat ramp program with six monitors posted at popular ramps across Massachusetts.
- 20,000 copies of "A Guide to Invasive Plants of Massachusetts" have been printed and are available to the public
- MACZM Wetlands Restoration Team will continue the purple loosestrife biocontrol project throughout the summer

Panel Recommendations to the ANS Task Force:

1. The NEANS Panel's Communication, Education, and Outreach (CEO) Committee has scoped a project to produce an online guide targeted to citizens and laypeople. Importantly, this guide differs from existing tools for experts and will include downloadable guides and public domain, downloadable photos. This project is a result of the CEO Committee's vision and an online survey it conducted at the end of 2007. Respondents strongly (?) indicated they would like to see the Panel develop an online guide as described above. The Committee has developed a great deal of momentum, so we hope the Task Force can assist and support it by partially (?) funding the NEANS CEO committee to develop this project as a pilot that could be used as a template for a national project or for other Panels. Additionally, the Panel respectfully (?) recommends (1) the Task Force determine if there are similar projects that other Panels might be developing and (2) the Task Force consider designing a tool at the national level on which Regional Panels would collaborate and populate with data from regional guides the various panels develop. This tool could be expanded so that it provides users with customizable, downloadable keys and it ties in with the expert's database.