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Meeting Summary Draft • May 7-8, 2008
Lake George, NY

Panelists in attendance: Jay Baker, MA Office of Coastal Zone Management; Marcel Bernard, Ministère des Ressources naturelles et de la Faune; Ann Bove, VT Department of Environmental Conservation; Kevin Cute, RI Coastal Resources Management Council; Michael Goehle, US Fish and Wildlife Service; Karen Hahnel, ME Department of Environmental Protection; Bill Harman, NY State Federation of Lake Associations; Bill Hyatt, CT Department of Environmental Protection; Susannah King, NE Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission; Hope Leeson, RI Natural History Survey; Mark Malchoff, Lake Champlain Sea Grant Project; Paul Marangelo, The Nature Conservancy; Leslie Matthews, VT Department of Environmental Conservation; John McPhedran, ME Department of Environmental Protection; Leslie Matthews, VT Department of Environmental Conservation; Les Mehrhoff, Invasive Plant Atlas of New England; Meg Modley, Lake Champlain Basin Program; Chuck O'Neill, NY Sea Grant Extension and National Aquatic Species Clearinghouse; Judith Pederson, MIT Sea Grant College Program; Joseph Roman, New England Aquarium/Fund Institute; Michelle Robinson for Jim Straub, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation; Amy Smagula, NH Department of Environmental Services, Leslie Surprenant, NYS Division of Fish, Wildlife, and Marine Resources; and Jan Smith, MA Bays Program.

Others present: Thomas Berry, The Nature Conservancy; Katie DeGoosh, RI Department of Environmental Management; Roberta Hill, ME Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program/Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants; Jennifer Mehaffey, NEANS Panel Shipping Committee contractor; Nancy Murray, CT Department of Environmental Protection; Hillary Oles, Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program; Adrienne Pappal, MA Office of Coastal Zone Management; Roslyn Reeps, CT Agricultural Experiment Station; Michele L. Tremblay, and NEANS Panel ANS Program Manager (nature resource communications); and Meg Wilkinson, The Nature Conservancy.

Full Panel meeting: welcome, introductions, review of meeting agenda, and updates by Co-Chairs – Susy King, New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission and Recreation and Kevin Cute, RI Coastal Resources Management Council welcomed everyone to the meeting.

ANS updates and Panel business:

- The Panelists and guests introduced themselves and their organizations.
- The Panel accepted the November 2007 meeting summary.
- *NEANS Panel Business and November 2008 meeting scheduling* – Michele Tremblay. The November 2008 meeting rotation falls in the State of New Hampshire. Michele will secure a location in the Granite State. The week of November 18 appears to be open. Invasive friends will be asked to provide any possible date conflicts in response to an upcoming email pilling that Michele will distribute via the panel@northeastans.org listserve.

Action: Michele Tremblay will begin work on finalizing a date and securing a facility for the November 2008 (week of November 17) meeting.

- ANS Task Force (ANSTF) action items and other updates – Susy provided an update on the NEANS Panel’s recommendation and those made by other regional panels. The Panel had recommended that the ANSTF explore the regional panels’ efforts to create guides, databases, and identification keys so that they might help coordinate efforts. Susy reported that the ANSTF did not appear to be enthusiastic about the recommendation. The ANSTF’s CEO Committee will work with that of the Panel’s to explore collaboration opportunities. The other panels’ recommendations included filling the Executive Secretary position, reviewing state and regional ANS lists and posting similar formats to present an accurate national picture, keep ANSTF meetings focused on themes, keep the meetings and work focuses on action plans, incident command system training model for rapid response, take the lead on develop voluntary codes of conduct for aquarium, bait, and water gardening industries, recognize carp as a species of national concern, effective regulation of ballast water discharge into the Great Lakes, and investigate and recognize science and biology curricula as a vector for introducing invasive species. The USFWS indicated that budget issues were preventing the Executive Secretary position. They felt that regional panels should talk more. Michele reminded everyone that there is a listserve for them to reach each other: anspanels@northeastans.org. The next meeting is tentatively schedule for October 28-29, 2008 in Arlington, VA. The joint panel discussion would be held on October 27 to focus on national center for invasive species.
- National Invasive Species Advisory Council – Chuck indicated that the Council is meeting in Anchorage next week. The focus is on Zebra mussels, which have crossed the 100th meridian. Ongoing efforts will be targeted to securing federal funds for invasive species initiatives.
- State work plan funding for regional efforts – Former Executive Secretary Scott Newsham created a mechanism in the US Fish and Wildlife Service grants office for states to opt to divert management plan funds to the Panel for regional efforts. Jay reported that the management plan funds supported staff positions so MA may not be able to do as it had once intended. John echoed the concern. Judy suggested that the Panels should tell USFWS that they need to to release the \$4MM authorized federal funds. She said that the Panel should send a letter to the Governors of the regional states asking for funding. The Panel discussed its and its members’ ability to advocate for issues and funding. The Panel cannot “lobby” per se but it can be the single regional voice it was meant to be. For federal issues, it has to make recommendations to the ANSTF—not directly to agencies or legislators. Judy moved that the Panel send a letter to the ANSTF asking them to provide the full \$4MM rather than the amount currently provided. Jan seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- ANS Experts database – Michele renewed her offer to assist states by entering in to the database their Tier 1 or primary contacts.
- Northeastans.org state and province pages – Michele reported that CT’s and NY’s web pages were lacking basic information. Other states’ and provinces’ pages have missing or outdated information.
- Michele recommended that the NEANS Panel write a letter to the US Fish and Wildlife Service urging them to fill as soon as possible the executive secretary position. It is very important for the states who have or are drafting management plans as well as for the NEANS Panel. Michele suggested that the NEANS Panel work with the other regional panels via the ANSPANELS@northeastans.org listserve. It would be easier and more expeditious for each panel to write its own letter vs. writing one sign-on letter for all of the panels. Meg Modley said that the USFWS indicated at the ANSTF meeting last week that they are planning to fill the Executive Secretary position very soon.

- Judy presented a draft letter/talking points for a letter to the ANSTF asking for the full \$4MM for the northeast states' management plans.

Action: The Panel co-chairs will investigate the suggestion that the Panel write a funding request letter to the Northeast region Governors. In the meantime, Kevin, Susy, and Michele will work on the draft and talking points that Judy provided to send a letter to the ANS Task Force and work with the other regional panels to write their own letters. Michele will draft a letter to the ANS Task force encouraging them to fill the Executive Secretary position, maintain their strong leadership and coordination role, and to assure that the Executive Secretary or his/her designee regularly attend regional panel meetings.

Action: CT and NY will provide information for their webpages at northeastans.org.

Highlights from New York – Leslie Surprenant, Office of Invasive Species Coordination, moderated the NY session. From the new legislation, the state has formed the new Office of Invasive Species Coordination, Council, and Advisory Committee, using federal models. The four-tiered list of non-native species is being developed. The new Office is charged with implementing the twelve recommendations and the Council and Advisory Committee. Bill provided an update on the PRISM process. The Catskills could be better included in the process with Bill working on soliciting input. Meg Wilkinson will provide an overview of the iMapInvasives project tomorrow. Chuck provided the URL for the PRISM effort: fingerlakesprism.org.

Northeast ANS Roundtable

Susy and Kevin asked that updates be kept to two or less minutes. At the November meeting, each state will have no more than two individuals (freshwater and marine) to provide their updates.

Adrienne Pappal, MA Office of Coastal Zone Management, reported on the NEANS Panel volunteering monitoring workshop. There were 50 in attendance, mostly volunteers, who will participate in a network for Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The other NEANS Panel states and provinces are not included at this time. The MACZM continues to work on the rapid response for Didymo with MA Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Judy Pederson, MIT Sea Grant

Proceedings for the marine invasives workshop are now available at a nominal cost. Judy distributed waterproof Mitten Crab cases that MIT produced. The Northeast Sea Grant Project is now posted on the website. The revised database is much more functional.

John McPhedran, ME Department of Environmental Protection, reported that there was an increase in the dollar amount of grants to remove aquatic invasive plants due to the USFWS support. There were 50K boat inspections conducted and no new infestations in 2007. The DEP is helping lake groups develop plant management plans. The ME Department of Marine Resources is working with UConn Sea Grant on a poster targeted to bait users and outlining appropriate disposal. The Maine Marine Invasives Work Group updated its existing collateral and poster as well as its “keytainer.” The urchin surveys are being timed to help monitor Didemnum. The Gulf of Maine Research Institute program received a \$900,000 grant to include invasives species in its Vital Signs monitoring program.

Ann Bove, VT Department of Environmental Conservation, reported that there is no increased funding but so far, no losses. The current programs should continue and there are efforts to

begin new initiatives. There are ongoing studies to examine non-target species impacts from herbicide applications.

Meg Modley, Lake Champlain Basin Program, reported that the boat launch program will continue this season. The rapid response plan is nearly completed. Asian clams have been found in the basin. The extent of the infestation is not known. There was a huge Alewife die-off this week.

Mike Goehle, US Fish and Wildlife Service, reported that there is a new web page: fws.gov/invasives that serves as a starting point for all invasive information. The 877.StopANS line is operational. Callers are directed to a real person who refers them to other resources via a .WAV file of the recorded conversation. Mike presented a publication recently revised by the Great Lakes Panel. Mike and Michele are working on testing a video conferencing service to help the Panel and its Committees to expand its communications.

Leslie Matthews, VT Department of Environmental Conservation, reported that DEC is initiating its boat launch program this season. They are implementing Didymo outreach and limited monitoring of existing populations and some surveillance is ongoing. There is a new ANS guide slated for a spring release.

Chuck O'Neill, Sea Grant, reported that there are new fact sheets. A ballast water issue of Aquatic Invaders and a September issue on zebra mussels are planned. The funding for this product has been lost. The northeast water chestnut website is not updated and will be taken down. Chuck is planning a Sea Grant sabbatical and will likely work on a project with Cornell.

Joe Roman, (associate) New England Aquarium, reported that most of his work is conservation genetics and invasive species genetics with UNH and Harvard. There has been a secondary outbreak of carsinas in Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland and Labrador. It has extended through the Gulf of Maine and to Long Island Sound. Judy suggested that they talk about their respective efforts in this area.

Marcel Bernard, QC MIN, reported that they continue to focus on Didymo and their website presence. The early detection network is in place. VHS is not yet reported in QC. There are also very good risk assessments for Mitten Crab and Carsinas.

Mark Malchoff, Lake Champlain Sea Grant Project, reported that his organization is planning a May workshop targeted to the tourism industry. He is working with bass tournaments in the Champlain area on outreach. There is a northeast regional aquaculture center grant to fund a fisheries pathologist for VHS testing procedures.

Bill Hyatt, CT, Department of Environmental Protection, reported that Long Island Sound plan is complete. Invasives Plant Coordinator position (50% aquatic), ANS Coordinator position approval is pending. There is a new UConn staff that is a Steering Committee member. The agency has contracted with him to work on an approach to eliminate a Hydrilla infestation. Warmouth from the southeast part of the country has been found in CT. The Northeast Fisheries Administrators Association approved the development of fish health guidelines to regulate movement between states.

Paul Marangelo, The Nature Conservancy, reported that TNC is working on advocacy efforts and an initiative to prevent ANS moving up the Champlain Canal with the NY Canal Corporation.

Hope Leeson, RI Natural History Survey, reported that a bill was passed to make it a violation (misdemeanor) to transport or import invasive species. The associated species list has to be developed for the new law. The water resources group will continue to monitor docks and boat ramps. The Fish and Wildlife Department will monitor streams and ponds for macrophytes and specifically for *Didymo*. Signage will be posted at state boat ramps. A second training session for water quality monitors will be conducted this season.

Kevin Cute, Coastal Resources Management Council, reported that the Rhode Island Management Plan approval is forthcoming. Priorities are experts database population, statewide coordination with RI Department of Environmental Monitoring, and a small portion of funding will support a grant program to implement plan activities.

Michelle Robinson, MA Department of Conservation and Recreation, reported that they are entering their third year of boat ramp monitoring program. The weed watcher program continues with 600 volunteers. The publications have been updated and a new poster has been produced.

Les Mehrhoff, iPANE, reported that the program is now funded to increase botanical expertise (technical assistance), to set up early detection, and to the administer iPANE.

Committee updates (committees will be preparing and submitting detailed work plans and funding proposals)

Communication, Education, and Outreach (CEO) Committee - Karen Hahnel and Leslie Matthews, Co-chairs

Karen and Leslie reported on the CEO meeting that was very well attended. The discussions focused on the online guide. The CEO worked with Michele at the end of 2007 to post an online survey. Mark provided a review of the survey results on specific questions. Out of the roughly 160 surveyed via the Panel listserv about 36% responded with 75% indicating that they “strongly agreed” that an online guide would be useful and 19% indicating “somewhat agree.” Since then, the CEO has been discussing how to structure the product. Michelle explained that the proposed product is not a database or a collection of fact sheets. Instead, it would enable users to create a customized page for one or more species to use in the field. The finished product would carry the NEANS Panel logo. Jan suggested that the ID cards must contain the line drawing and a color image to assure that the NEANS Panel product is of acceptable quality for field identification. Known range (map) of a species would be included. Michele suggested states and provinces be listed (if mapping is too costly). Judy asked how ongoing maintenance costs would be covered. Leslie said that twenty priority species would be chosen to include in the first phase of the project and the structure would be built so that more could be added. CEO members and others would agree to keep the species profiles updated. Judy agreed that sharing the workload is important but from her own experience felt that even keeping one or two species updated can be daunting. Jan is concerned that \$15,000 is a high cost to create the product and what it would take to maintain it. Michele said that there is currently available 68MB out of 500MB so the Panel may need to pay for additional storage space on its current server. He asked if the Panel could charge for its use and if there is a way that local groups can add their own logo. The latter is possible. Charging for the product would require the Panel to engage in “e-commerce,” which would bring with it

additional costs. The CEO felt that these volunteers are already doing this work in their agencies and for more species so this would reduce duplication and may reduce individuals' workloads. Tying into existing efforts is possible to an extent but there is a concern that this product should not depend on others' servers. Publicizing the product would save others' work by their using it and not duplicating efforts. The Panel recommends that initial state that the CEO would draft sample templates for freshwater and marine species and the user input interface. The next step would be to have a contractor program the tool. There would be ten species for freshwater and ten for marine species in the first year for a total of \$15,000. The other items in the work plan that totaled \$3,000 would be dropped and not funded.

Action: Kevin will convene the Steering Committee via telephone during the lunch break so that it can approve the CEO work plan that includes the online, dynamic guide based on the Panel's discussions and CEO's statement of work.

Policy and Legislation (PL) Committee - Susannah King, Sole Co-chair

Susy was not available so Kevin provided an update on the proclamation process and presented the changes from the Steering Committee calls and meetings. The Panel worked together to finalize the proclamation text in Kevin's presentation. Bill Hyatt reported that the P&L is producing a briefing paper for June/early July to help prepare for the proclamation signing. The National Governors Association is considering a cooperation policy that may have implications in the proclamation process. Bill Hyatt distributed a copy of the Northeast Fish Health Guidelines March 2008 draft and discussed its implications. Bill moved that after a five-day comment period that the Panel endorse the guidelines document. He would draft a letter for the co-chairs Panels. Bill Harman seconded the motion. Bill Hyatt agreed to serve as Policy and Legislation Co-chair.

Action: Kevin will work with the Policy and Legislation Committee to finalize the proclamation document and move forward with the Governors and Premiers signing process.

Action: Bill Hyatt will send to Michele the Fish Health document so that she can distribute to the Panel and collect comments.

Action: Bill Hyatt will prepare an endorsement letter for the Panel Co-chairs to sign pending a discussion on the June 6 Steering Committee conference call.

Shipping Committee (SH) - Currently, there are no co-chairs.

Jennifer Mehaffey presented the Ballast Water Management in the Northeast Region including the current legislative and operating conditions as well as policy recommendations. The Panelists provided referrals to resources including an economic analysis of an on-site treatment system. It was noted that a lot of NY shipping is in ports located in NJ.

Action: Judy will distribute to the Panel listserve the on-site treatment system economic analysis.

Action: Kevin will distribute to the Panel listserve for a 30-day comment period for Jennifer to incorporate and to finalize.

Science and Technology (ST) Committee - Jan Smith and Meg Modley, Co-chairs

Jan reported that Meg Modley agreed to serve as freshwater Co-chair. Two workshops were held: yesterday's on boat inspections and the earlier workshop for the volunteer monitor network. He anticipates that both workshops have been completed under budget. The network will include volunteers in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. Kevin suggested that Rhode Island may wish to benefit from the Panel's work for those three states. Jay said that the Committee discussed hosting the workshop in another state. The "most wanted" poster will be implemented in cooperation with the CEO Committee. The Committee also discussed follow-up in the pilot Hydrilla effort. ST discussed ideas for next year's work

plan to finalize in November. Included in those ideas is the flower show. Les introduced a concept that the Panel would create a display at the March 14-22, 2009 Boston Flower Show (the “Heroes and Villains” theme will focus non-native vs. non-native species). There would be a work group with CEO and S&T members who would work together to plan and staff the display. Costs may include renting booth space and creating the display. There might be lecture time available to talk about water gardening and disposal issues. Les volunteered to contact the flower show management to learn about the opportunity and cost Jan suggested that MIT Sea Grant be provided with financial support (\$5,000) for her database work. Judy agreed and indicated there is pressure for her to receive support from groups using her work. Adrienne would like to conduct another volunteer training session. Corbicula could be the Spotlight on Species for the November 2008 meeting. Judy wants the Panel to create and produce hats. The NEANS Panel display has been found in MA!

Action: The ST will work with Michele on the “Spotlight on Species” session for the November 2008 meeting and a presentation on the risk assessment work in Canada.

Current invasive species coordination efforts in NY

Leslie Surprenant, Office of Invasive Species Coordination, presented the NY’s new coordination framework. The Invasive Species Task Force (nine state agencies) was established through 2003 legislation. The Invasive Species Council was formed through 2007 legislation. The Task Force is currently implementing twelve recommendations. These activities are funded through a mortgage tax. The Invasives Species Advisory committee (not yet been formed) will be private sector participants. The focus of the new structure and initiatives is the Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) framework. There is now an Office of Invasive Species Coordination with a small staff with \$5MM. Cornell University is the outreach and clearinghouse (NewYorkInvasiveSpecies.org) contractor.

Workshop and field trip overview

John McPhedran summarized yesterday’s prevention and early detection (PED) workshop and field trip. There were presenters from several agencies and programs. The boat washing station was brought to the conference center parking lot for a demonstration. Leslie suggested a website where everyone would enter their own data into a centralized database. The Panel discussed whether to confine this to the summary data vs. the raw inspection information. The 100th Meridian Initiative (100thMeridian.org) program has been conducting this type of monitoring and has a website on which they enter data. The coordinators of the initiative would like eastern data so this may be a way for our region to collect and analyze data. The contributors’ documents are now posted at <ftp://ped:edrrx@northeastans.org>.

Action: The ST Committee will explore the feasibility of using existing databases or creating its own for summary or raw boat inspection data.

iMapInvasives: A web-base approach to Invasives Species Data Aggregation, Mapping, and decision making

Meg Wilkinson, NY Natural Heritage Survey/The Nature Conservancy, presented an overview of the new web tool. The program will charge a state annual user membership fee of \$5,000 and a one-time set-up fee of \$2,500.

Other business and public comment period

There were no comments from the public.

Meeting summary prepared by Michele L. Tremblay, ANS Program Manager, NEANS Panel