



Freshwater Nuisance Species Prevention and Early Detection:

*Northeast Programs and Potential for
Regional Collaboration*

**A NEANS Workshop, May 7, 2008
The Georgian, Lake George, NY**

Workshop Summary

The focus of the workshop was aquatic invasive species freshwater prevention programs (e.g. boat inspections at public access points) and early detection programs (e.g. volunteer/paid staff surveys). Panelists representing existing programs within the Panel region presented their representative program to workshop participants. A discussion involving all participants followed each session. The goals of the workshop were to:

1. Enhance existing state/provincial programs by hearing from others in the region
2. Establish consistent data collection and messages for state prevention and early detection programs throughout the region
3. Develop NEANS-approved guidelines for states/provinces currently lacking prevention and early detection programs.

Part 1: Freshwater Prevention Programs

Panelists

NY: Leslie Surprenant, NY State Department of Environmental Conservation – Invasive species disposal sites

NY: Eric Holmlund, Paul Smith's College – Watershed Steward Program

ME: Karen Hahnel, ME Department of Environmental Protection – Boat Inspection Program

VT/NY: Meg Modley, Lake Champlain Basin Program – Boat Launch Steward Program

Workshop participants discussed challenges of programs. The group reviewed what specific data to collect and what data would be most meaningful; how to ask questions about spread prevention measures taken; what funding sources were available to support programs; how to coordinate efforts and programs in the Panel region; and discussed auditing the effectiveness of the inspections and the number of species catches.

Numerous workshop participants felt data collection should be a state/province by state/province decision. Issues included who will keep the data current for the Panel and what resources are available to do so.

Data the group felt should be available through the Panel and kept current included:

- last water body visited
- spread prevention measures taken

The group strongly supports tracking behavioral change related to invasive species spread prevention measures. The group did not identify a means to collect this data, but felt strongly that it was important to share this information around the region.

- state/provincial lists of infested waters

Data could feed into an informative geo-referenced GIS database to illustrate the state of infested lakes in the NEANS Panel region.

- annual inspection summary from each state/province: number of inspectors, number of inspections, number of lakes where inspections occur, and the number of “saves”

Part 2: Freshwater Early Detection Program

Panelists

VT: Leslie Matthews, VT Department of Environmental Conservation – Vermont Invasive Patrollers (VIPS)

RI: Hope Leeson, RI Natural History Survey

ME: Roberta Hill, Maine Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants Invasive Plant Patrol Program

NY: Hilary Oles, The Nature Conservancy Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program

CT: Roslyn Selsky, CT Agricultural Experiment Station

The main points discussed included available resources (e.g. Maine Aquatic Plant Guide), the sampling methods of the various programs, how to sustain volunteer participation in early detection programs and the need for consistent data collection. Issues related to data collection included:

- Common early detection data to collect NEANS Panel-wide – what’s reasonable? The North American Weed Management Association has 10-12 fields they address. NEANS Panel should review these.
- Many programs are already established. Is further coordination needed?
- Should reports go to one central location (e.g. IPANE)?
- What constitutes an early detection species?
- Is the region prepared if an early detection species is identified?
- NEANS members should consider surveying for plant *and* animal infestations.

Outcomes/Deliverables:

1. Develop a workshop summary for distribution to participants and posting on the Panel website. Archive the program documents provided by workshop participants for reference.
2. Compile and distribute annual state/provincial prevention program data described above. Participants did not determine how this can be accomplished. Will this be done by a committee intern or under a contract with existing Panel staff? Also, consider how these data may be enhanced, e.g., a potential NEANS project is to add georeferenced information to the state/provincial lists of infested lakes to allow linking to GIS.
3. Decide on the value of a NEANS region-wide sticker or similar outreach tool for a consistent message throughout region. If not feasible, consider other products where group buying power should be pursued.

Workshop Goals – Summary

Regarding the goals listed at the start of this summary, goal #1 was accomplished by simply holding the workshop. Participants felt there was value in hearing from other programs. Participants started on goal #2 but details of data collection/management and consistent messages are yet to be resolved. Participants did not recommend pursuing goal #3, i.e., developing guidelines to assist states and provinces lacking prevention and early detection programs, because they did not feel that the return warrants the effort to develop the guidelines.