

Mid-Atlantic Regional Panel Standard Operating Procedures Updated September 2012

I. Scope and Purpose

In November 2003, the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) approved formation of a Mid-Atlantic Regional Panel (MAP) on Aquatic Invasive Species.

The Mid-Atlantic Regional Panel (MAP), hereafter referred to as the “Panel”, will provide a collaborative approach to prevention and control of aquatic invasive species as authorized under the Non-Indigenous Aquatic Nuisance Species Prevention and Control Act (NANPCA) of 1990 (as amended by the National Invasive Species Act of 1996). The Panel will: 1) identify regional priorities with respect to aquatic invasive species (AIS); 2) make recommendations to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force regarding programs to carry out, pursuant to Section 1202 of NANPCA; 3) assist the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force in coordinating Federal programs; 4) coordinate, where possible, AIS program activities that are not conducted pursuant to NANPCA; 5) advise public and private individuals and entities concerning methods of preventing and controlling AIS infestations; and 6) submit annual report to the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force describing the various activities underway.

II. Mission Statement

The Panel will assist state, regional, and federal agencies and organizations, and other stakeholders in developing and implementing strategic, coordinated, action-oriented approaches to prevention and control of aquatic invasive species in the Mid-Atlantic region, including the states of New York, New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia, and North Carolina.

III. Staff Support

The Panel is supported by a Panel Coordinator and staff to assist the Panel Coordinator. The Panel Coordinator staff time (.5 FTE) is currently donated by the USFWS Virginia Fisheries Coordinator office. The Chesapeake Bay Program will provide, in-kind, a portion of staff time for one CBP staff member to assist the Panel Coordinator. Panel Coordinator and staff will be responsible for the coordination and administrative support of Mid-Atlantic Regional Panel activities, including:

- Organizing Panel meetings and coordinating meeting logistics (including securing venue, drafting the agenda, arranging for presenters, arranging for equipment and refreshments, and preparing meeting materials), setting up conference calls, and taking meeting minutes;
- Preparing and mailing official Panel correspondence, and maintaining Panel files ;
- Communicating information from the ANS Task Force and other regional panels to the Panel, and coordinating Panel responses to information requests. .
- Maintaining and revising Panel membership lists ;
- Assisting with identification of regional priorities and facilitating agency, academic and NGO collaboration for their implementation;
- Participating as a non-voting executive committee member;
- Developing and submitting annual proposals supporting Panel projects as needed;
- Developing and submitting Panel progress reports to the ANS Task Force;
- Preparing budgets and financial documents and development of annual work plans;
- Coordinating the small grants program;
- Presenting MAP funded project report updates at biannual Panel meetings;
- Updating and maintaining the MAP website;
- Facilitating internal and external outreach and communication

Representation of the Panel is required at biannual meetings of the ANS Task Force. Both the Panel Chair and Panel Coordinator are encouraged to attend.

IV. Officers

a. Panel Chair

A Chair of the Panel will be elected by a simple majority vote by Voting Members. Voting will occur via email ballot or at Panel meetings with a quorum. The Chair will be responsible for conducting meetings of the Panel. The Chair will serve a two year term, after which time an election will be held by the Panel to select a new Chair. The Chair may serve two consecutive two-year terms, after which time a new Chair must be elected. A person who has served as Chair may be elected to serve additional terms in future years, provided there is a two year break.

b. Panel Vice Chair

The Panel Vice Chair will be elected in the same manner as the Chair. The Vice Chair will serve as the Chair in the absence of the Chair. In the event the Chair is unable to continue to serve, the Vice Chair will assume the Chair's responsibilities until a new Chair is elected at the end of the two year term. If the Vice Chair position becomes vacant, the Executive Committee may appoint a new Vice Chair.

c. Executive Committee

An Executive Committee will be established to oversee administrative and executive functions of the Panel. The Executive Committee will consist of the Panel Chair, Vice Chair, Ad hoc Committee Chairs, Fiscal Agent, and Panel Coordinator. Specific functions of the Executive Committee include: planning Panel meetings; developing meeting agendas; preparing recommendations and information for Panel review and action; approving Ad hoc work plans and budgets; and finalizing budget requests. The Committee in its entirety is authorized to act on the Panel's behalf if a decision must be made in a timely manner. Committee decisions will be made by simple majority vote.

VI. Ad hoc Committees

The Panel may establish Ad hoc committees to address specific issues or tasks as they arise. Ad hoc committees have a charge, sunset clause, and a leader drawn from Panel membership. Once the purpose for which the Ad hoc committee was formed has been accomplished, the committee is disbanded. Ad hoc committee membership will be established from the regular panel membership (Voting, At Large, and Interested Parties) and may include other individuals with specific expertise who are willing and able to serve. Ad hoc committees can be created by a majority vote of the Panel. Potential members to serve on Ad hoc committees will be identified by Panel members and approved by the Panel Chair. As appropriate, invitations to serve will be made in writing by the Panel Coordinator.

VII. Membership

a. Panel membership must be reviewed and approved by the ANSTF. Initial recommendations for membership were made by the administrative host entity (CBP) in 2005. Thereafter, the Panel will annually review the membership to ensure that there is a balanced and broad representation of diverse interests pertaining to aquatic invasive species issues. However, all participants of the Panel may at any time provide recommendations for additional membership. Recommendations should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Panel. The Chair will then call for a vote (as defined in Section VIIIc) to determine whether the membership recommendation is forwarded to the Task Force for approval. The co-chairs of the ANS Task Force will be responsible for extending Panel membership invitations.

b. Membership in the Panel will consist of the following categories: Regular Members, Alternate Members, At-Large Members, and Interested Parties.

c. Regular Members. Regular Members can vote. Regular Members of the Panel include individuals representing federal and state agencies, regional entities, university and research institutions, private

environmental groups, and commercial interests from the States of Delaware, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Members will be selected by their respective agencies and organizations and will serve until replaced by the agency or organization. Upon the resignation of a member, the agency or organization of that member will be asked to provide a replacement.

d. Alternate Members. Regular Members may appoint an Alternate Member to represent them, if the Regular Member may not be able to attend a regular Panel meeting. Organizations are encouraged to appoint a Regular Member who can regularly attend Panel meetings. Alternate Members may vote only when the Regular member, who they are representing, is absent from the meeting.

e. At-Large Membership. At-Large Members can vote. At-Large Members will serve three year terms but can be re-elected by Panel members for a second term. A Panel member may nominate an At-Large Member and an individual or organization may also petition the Panel for an At-Large membership seat. The nomination or petition (consistent with VIIa) must be voted on by the Panel. At-Large membership should have expertise on current and/or emerging issues regarding AIS prevention and control in the region that is not fulfilled by existing membership.

f. Interested Parties. Interested Parties shall not vote, but may participate in Panel discussion and in Panel Ad hoc Committees on the same terms as other Panel members. Individuals should contact the Panel Chair or Panel Coordinator to request to be added as an interested party to the Panel membership list.

g. Duties of membership. Duties of members include active participation in Panel meetings and voting when a decision must be made. A member who misses two consecutive meetings (and is not represented by a designated alternate) will be contacted concerning his/her absences. After three consecutive absences, the Panel Coordinator, as directed by the Executive Committee may seek a replacement for the member.

VIII. Meeting Procedures

a. Meeting Frequency. The Panel will meet at least twice in a calendar year, rotating sites between the Panel member states when practical. Meetings will be scheduled by the Panel Chair and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Executive Secretary will be notified 30 days prior to the meeting. The Executive Secretary will also approve the agenda.

b. Ad hoc committee meetings. The Ad hoc chair may schedule meetings as often as needed to address issues or activities. Ad hoc committee meetings may occur via conference call.

c. Decision Making. Decisions by the Panel will be done on a consensus basis whenever possible. As a guiding principle, consensus is defined as, "reaching a decision wherein most of the group agrees." During a Panel meeting, if anyone expresses an objection with a decision, then the Chair/Vice Chair will ask the member(s): "Can you live with this decision?" If the answer is no, then debate is continued regarding the decision and then a formal vote by voting members (Regular Members and At-Large Members) will be necessary to determine whether there is a majority. Only voting members or, in their absence, designated alternates may vote. Panel decisions shall be made by simple majority vote. A simple majority vote of the Panel is defined as, "more than half of the voting members present (Regular Members and At-Large Members) vote in support of the motion." A vote requires a motion and a second. A vote may be by voice vote, by raising of hands, or by roll call vote at the discretion of the meeting Chair. Minority or dissenting opinions are considered important in the decision making process and will be documented in the Panel meeting minutes when there is less than full consensus on a decision or recommendation.

All main or substantive motions shall be subjected to debate. A motion to close debate is not debatable, but requires a two-thirds majority vote of those voting members present to pass.

The Panel may also make decisions by mail-in vote, which may include E-mail, mail, and fax. An announcement will be made via E-mail or list serve for any pending ballot issues, to all Panel participants. The procedures for mail-in vote shall be as follows: The Panel chair will specify a period of at least two weeks, with a closing date, during which ballots will be accepted. The ballots will be emailed, mailed or faxed to the Coordinator of the Panel. The Panel Coordinator shall not provide any information on the ballots received, including information on the total number of ballots received, to any Panel member, until the closure time has passed. The Coordinator shall reject any ballots received after the closing date for voting, and shall reject any ballots not cast by a Regular Member, At-large Member, or an Alternate Member. If a Regular Member and his or her respective Alternate Member both cast a ballot, than the Coordinator shall reject the Alternate Member's ballot. The Coordinator will list the names of all accepted ballots and provide the tally to the Chair. The results will be presented to the Panel and there will be opportunity for comments.

e. Meeting Summaries/Minutes. A summary report of each meeting of the Panel will be distributed to the membership and to other interested parties upon request. In addition, detailed minutes of each meeting as well as recommendations made and all studies and reports received, issued, or approved will be made available for public inspection and copying by the Executive Secretary of the ANS Task Force. Detailed meeting minutes will also be posted on the Panel website.

IX. Funding

Consistent with Section 1301(b)(6) of the Act, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will provide financial support to the administrative entities to fund the Regional Panels. Funding for Ad hoc committees will depend upon the agencies participating in the committees.

X. Annual Reports

The Coordinator will develop an annual report to be submitted to the ANS Task Force. The report will include information regarding the activities, decisions, and recommendations of the Panel that took place during the subject year. The report should also include an action plan for the upcoming year. The annual report must be approved by the Executive Committee before submittal to the ANS Task Force.

XI. Amendment of Procedures

Any amendments or changes to the Panel procedures will require a two-thirds majority vote of members present at an officially called Panel meeting. Any pending procedural amendments must be announced at least 30 days before a Panel meeting.