

# Communications, Education and Outreach Committee Activities and Recommendations for the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Meeting, Arlington, Virginia, October 28-29, 2008

## Committee Name:

CHAIR: Joe Starinchak

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## High-Priority and/or Emerging Issues:

- 1) Need to reinvigorate CEO committee, engagement of the Task Force and its member organizations
- 2) Need to revisit the current working group structure and Roles and Responsibilities based on the new NISC management plan and ANSTF strategic plan charges.

## Key Committee Activities from May 2008 to October 2008:

- 1) On a committee level, no significant committee activities occurred during this time period.
- 2) Two "Action Item" assignments were made to the Committee and they were addressed.
  - a. Coordinate with regional panels to assess existing database resources and their capabilities for addressing the NEANS Panel recommendation of utilizing an existing database(s) that could be used where the user could build customizable guide based on information in DB including, but not limited to pictures, habitat, characteristics, distribution, links to states and experts database, and
    - i. **Action: The work the USGS and in particular, the work Pam Fuller has lead with the NAS Database, will fit the needs that were expressed by the Northeast Panel's recommendation (see link: <http://nas.er.usgs.gov/queries/default.asp> ).**
  - b. 2) Explore the feasibility of/options to harmonizing and posting state and regional ANS lists on the website to create a national picture of the current biological picture
    - i. **Action: As of 10/14, the Western Panel has responded saying that they do not coordinate state lists. And the Great Lakes Panel has asked a variety of questions seeking clarity about these lists.**

## Recommendations to the ANS Task Force (Any recommendations for ANSTF Action?)

- 1) Since Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers! and Habitattitude were unveiled, no activity on a national level involving the entire committee has occurred. Staff turn-over, retirements and ongoing learning curves of the committee members have all contributed to this lack of activity. To fill in this vacuum, various individuals and organizations have played a role in implementing various aspects of these campaigns. While this implementation has worked nicely with the grass roots branding strategies and has facilitated shared ownership of this complex issue, a lack of consistency within this implementation has become an obstacle. And since engaging individual citizens to adopt prevention behaviors has become an important part of the government's overall response, it is the recommendation of the chairperson to develop and deliver a series of consistent

workshops around the country that helps government agencies to use these campaigns to engage citizens and communities as the next level for implementation and evaluation.