

**Regional Panel Highlights of Activities and Recommendations for the
Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Meeting
May 6-8, 2015**

Regional Panel Name: Mid-Atlantic Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species
Submitted by: Ray Fernald, Chair

Key ANS Activities from November 2014 through May 2015:

Major Accomplishments:

- The fall meeting was held December 10-11, 2014 in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The meeting focused on AIS issues of concern in Virginia, with presentations on blue catfish, nutria, snakehead fish, feral hogs, lionfish, and *Phragmites*, as well as presentations about issues of regional concern including hydrilla, AIS in aquariums, and invasive species harvest incentives. An afternoon field trip provided an opportunity for participants to learn firsthand about ongoing efforts related to monitoring and eradication of nutria and feral hogs in Virginia. Sarah Whitney (Pennsylvania Sea Grant) and Steve Minkkinen (USFWS) stepped down as Panel chair and vice chair, and Ray Fernald (Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries) and Mike Allen (Maryland Sea Grant) were elected to serve as chair and vice-chair, respectively.
- The Panel has conducted a small-grants competition annually since 2007 to fund on-the-ground activities addressing MAPAIS' mission and regional priorities. Four small-grant projects were completed in 2014 including a strategic plan for nutria eradication in areas of Virginia and North Carolina, the West Virginia Invasive Species Management Plan, an invasive species management plan and monitoring smartphone/internet application for Bushkill Township in Pennsylvania, and an invasive species teacher professional development project led by the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in New York.

Ongoing Work:

- Annual progress reports were received, and work continues on two ongoing small-grant projects including an invasive species toolkit for educators, and an eDNA monitoring project for *Didymosphenia geminata*.
- As previously reported, the Panel allocated \$34,000 to fund three projects proposed in 2014: (1) characterization of the invasive New Zealand mud snail population in central Pennsylvania - \$12,000; (2) a cooperative MAPAIS project with the National Sea Grant Law Center, the National Association of Attorneys General, and the Environmental Law Institute to improve regional understanding of strategies available to facilitate agency access to private land for eradication and control of aquatic nuisance species - \$7,000; and (3) expansion of the Pennsylvania Field Guide to Aquatic Invasive Species (also partially funded through MAPAIS) into a regional AIS field guide covering approximately 100 invasive species threatening

the Mid-Atlantic Region - \$15,000 for first year of 2-year effort. Each of these projects is continuing on schedule.

- The 2015 Request for Proposals was released last month, and we anticipate funding several projects this year. Proposals submitted by the May 1 deadline will be reviewed by members of the Panel, and decisions regarding funding will be made at the spring 2015 meeting, tentatively scheduled for June.

Panel Recommendations to the ANSTF:

See attached MAPAIS recommendation dated 24 April 2015.