



April 1, 2016

Mr. David Hoskins and Ms. Jennifer Lukens
Co-Chairs, Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

Dear Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Co-Chairs,

I am writing on behalf of the Mississippi River Basin Panel (MRBP) on Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) to request your assistance in soliciting active members representing the ANSTF-member Federal agencies, relevant non-government organizations and stakeholder groups. As you are aware, the strength of the ANS regional panels results from ideas put forth by a diverse group of panel participants. Panel membership is afforded to industries, academia, non-governmental organizations, as well as state, tribal, and federal agencies with each participant bringing a different perspective to the panel discussions and offering new insights. The breadth of experience and views represented by regional panel members is critical in addressing complex ANS issues that can have vast effects on the public, industry, and ecosystems.

It is this diverse participation that the MRBP seeks to maintain and preserve by soliciting active representatives for a number of long standing, critical vacancies. Several Federal agencies and key stakeholder groups no longer have a designated or active representative participating in the MRBP, which has impacted the effectiveness of the panel's broad coordination efforts. It is our understanding that this is a shared concern with other regional panels. The MRBP will continue to pursue potential representatives for vacant and inactive membership positions within the panel, but requests additional assistance from the ANSTF co-chairs, federal agencies and ex-officio members.

The ANSTF is well-positioned to provide assistance with increasing federal agency representation on the regional panels. Specifically, MRBP requests assistance in soliciting representation from the US Coast Guard, US Department of Agriculture – APHIS, US Environmental Protection Agency, and an active replacement for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Further, we request ANSTF federal agency members to provide an update on their agency's participation in all regional panels at the 2016 Fall ANSTF meeting.

We also request the assistance of all the ANSTF members in recruiting active participation from non-government and key stakeholder groups in the MRBP, and all regional panels as needed. Maintaining diverse representation and active participation in all regional panels should be an on-going and shared priority of the ANSTF and regional panels.

Thank you for your consideration of our request, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Dennis K. Riecke'.

Dennis Riecke
Second-Term MRBP Co-Chair