Meeting Summary

Northern California Stakeholder Comments
on the Development of a California Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Management Plan

The meeting was held at the DoubleTree Hotel in Sacramento, California on November 19, 2002 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. The primary purpose of the meeting was to solicit ideas, concerns and suggestions from northern California stakeholders on the development of a California Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan. Sponsors were the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the CALFED Bay-Delta Program, the RIDNIS Project (Reducing the Introduction and Damage of Aquatic Nonindigenous Species through Education and Research) and the University of California at Davis, Department of Environmental Science and Policy (UCD). Invitations were sent to over 200 individuals and included representatives of many industries including the pet, aquarium, and nursery/landscaping trades, live bait and seafood dealers, and ports and marinas. Twenty people attended with representation from the following groups: Bitterroot Restoration, Inc., City of Antioch (Harbor Master), Columbo Bait, Growers in Tomales Bay, Habitat Assessment and Restoration Team, Inc., Marine Aquarists Round Table of Sacramento, Monterey Bay Aquarium (Applied Research and Field Operations), Northern CA Marine Association, Pacific Management Shipping Association, Save Our Shores and The Nature Conservancy.

Mike Fraidenburg of Dynamic Solutions Group (DSG) of Olympia, Washington facilitated the meeting. Mike began by welcoming the group and gave a summary of the agenda and facilitated introductions. Ted Grosholz (UCD and RIDNIS Project Director) discussed the ecological and economic costs of aquatic invasive species and introduced the goals and purpose of the meeting. Susan Ellis (CDFG's State Invasive Species Coordinator) explained the different roles and responsibilities of state agencies and current management activities for aquatic invasive species in California. Ted Grosholz and Holly Crosson (UCD's Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan Coordinator) discussed the process for the plan's development including future stakeholder and agency meetings as well as the current status of the plan. Mark Sytsma (Portland State University, Portland, Oregon) discussed Oregon's experience with writing a state management plan for aquatic invasive species as well as the uses and limits of state plans. The rest of the meeting was spent listening to concerns and suggestions presented by the stakeholders. The format of the meeting was informal with Mike facilitating an open dialogue between participants. Most of the comments could be divided into the categories of Education, Prevention, Best Management Practices, Regulation, State Invasive Species Council and General AIS Management Plan development suggestions. Below is a summary of specific comments made under each of these categories.

EDUCATION

1. Education about AIS should be a top priority
2. Educational tools should be used instead of legislation and regulations
3. A list of AIS experts should be made available to stakeholders
4. AIS information should be available at all bait shops, marinas, boat access areas, etc.
5. It may take 20 years, but *all* of the public needs to be educated about AIS (example used was educational programs for dealing with issues such as recycling, littering, etc.)
6. The public needs to know why they should care about AIS (i.e., the consequences of invasions)
7. The public as well as industry needs to know the economic cost of AIS (cost/benefit analysis)

8. Stakeholders are a resource and can help with education, such as public service announcements
9. Multiply educational efforts by identifying what industry sectors can do to help with AIS education and outreach (i.e., using Walmart, Home Depot, Petsmart etc. to educate their customers about AIS)
10. A database is needed that focuses on providing information about AIS outreach, education and research-based grants. Information on who is doing what on AIS should also be available and include efforts by NGO's, universities and industry.
11. AIS hazards that exist in particular areas need to be identified and publicized before they spread
12. Cross-education between interest groups and government would help understanding of the issues and concerns for both groups
13. Education in the K-12 classroom is important; biologists should go into schools to talk about AIS
14. Aqua-culturists need current information to help avoid AIS introduction problems of the past
15. There should be guidelines developed to help groups "self-police" and educate their constituents
16. Coordination needs to be improved between state, regional and federal groups
17. Identify all educational and technical resources currently available and make them easily accessible
18. Identify where the information gaps are

PREVENTION (including Early Detection and Rapid Response)

1. A Rapid Response program requires extensive coordination but is critical
2. An AIS "hotline" is needed so new sightings can be reported immediately
3. Management of introduction pathways is important for AIS prevention
4. We should have the ethic of not transporting California's AIS elsewhere; include this in the plan
5. The largest percentage of funds should be spent on prevention since it is the most cost-effective
6. Early detection is key to successful AIS eradication and management
7. Each vector/pathway that is identified in the plan should have a lead agency listed as well as a stakeholder group
8. Look into whether funds from anti-terrorism sources could be tapped into (i.e. to address the intentional introduction of a devastating foreign, water-borne organism)

BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES (BMP's)

1. Each industry should be actively involved in the development of the BMP's that relate to them
2. BMP's can be a tool for industry to understand and meet their obligations
3. Consider using a neutral third party or group (scientific panel) to offer advice and develop recommendations for BMP's instead of leaving development to agencies or industry alone
4. Investigate how "management" of a landscape (or lack thereof) affects the likelihood of invasion

REGULATION

1. The public and industry need to have an understanding of AIS laws and their history before they go into effect
2. We need more education and outreach on laws already passed so the public can abide by them
3. AIS laws and penalties need to be publicized in the CDFG regulations right up front
4. Regulatory agencies need to "get on the same page"; inconsistencies confuse the public
5. There should be more opportunity for stakeholder input when new regulations are being written, especially when livelihoods are at stake (*Caulerpa* in southern California was example used)
6. A patchwork of regulations makes coordination between state, regional and federal levels difficult
7. Inter-jurisdictional coordination needs improvement to make compliance easier
8. Guidelines need to be developed for meeting NPDES permit requirements

9. A process needs to be developed to authorize within-state transfer of approved live aquatic species
10. Laws, regulations and permits need to be more clear, consistent and effective
11. Enforcement needs to be more vigilant and consistent
12. Stakeholder input should be solicited when permitting procedures are being written
13. New legislation should be written with the help of stakeholders (ballast water example was used)
14. Methods for complying with aquaculture regulations need to be more clear
15. Some stakeholders feel like they are working in a vacuum; they need guidelines to help them determine if the right thing is being done
16. Develop a mechanism for mandatory reporting of listed AIS
17. Make sure regulations that affect industry are feasible (shipping example was used)
18. Use existing Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) laws to make AIS introductions illegal
19. Create a single, central clearing house for information on all AIS laws and regulations

STATE AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL (ISC)

1. The ISC needs to have broader public representation; consider expanding it to include more stakeholder groups
2. Each industry should decide who will represent them on the ISC
3. The number of industry representatives should be equal to or higher than the number of government representatives on the ISC
4. DBW should not represent all boating interests on the ISC

GENERAL AIS MANAGEMENT PLAN DEVELOPMENT

1. Make the plan short and simple
2. Funding priorities in the plan should be delineated by the ISC or another representative group
3. Work together; don't have government on one side and resource users on the other
4. Stakeholders are interested in practical solutions
5. Use common names in addition to scientific names for AIS to make the plan more user-friendly
6. Limit use of acronyms or fully explain them
7. Prioritization of species within the plan is necessary
8. Develop a system to prioritize aquatic invasive species using the ISC or another representative group
9. Use assigned "Management Classes" as Oregon did rather than prioritizing species
10. Consider using CDFA's ABC List of Noxious Weeds as a model
11. Develop a process to determine which method gets used to control or eradicate a species
12. Limit administrative overhead
13. Develop a process to resolve disputes
14. Make sure all groups are represented (include tribes, irrigation districts, bass anglers, boaters, etc.)
15. The planning effort should take into account the target species as well as the environment
16. There is a concern that some may try to sidetrack the plan or use the plan to push their own agenda
17. Consider using AIS instead of ANS (the word "invasive" is perhaps better than "nuisance")
18. Write into the plan that state and federal agencies coordinate through formal written agreements
19. High profile species should not take over concern for lesser-known problem species
20. Support for current AIS programs should be continued
21. Make sure limited resources go to on-the ground projects rather than getting lost in the bureaucracy