

Great Lakes Commission | Ann Arbor, MI

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We have selected two projects that address aquatic invasive species (AIS) prevention efforts in the Great Lakes which we believe would be ideal for a Sea Grant intern interested in AIS and looking to gain experience working with a diverse set of Great Lakes stakeholders. Between both projects the intern will have the opportunity to engage with a variety of audiences including the bait industry Great Lakes agency partners and community members. Working closely with Great Lakes Commission staff the intern will assist with conducting interviews through in-person conversations and surveys as well as summarizing/analyzing the results for respective projects. The intern will also assist in generating outreach and education materials and will have the opportunity to interact with the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species (GLP). Depending on the intern's interests and skillset specific portions of the projects may be assigned to the intern to lead.

The first project will focus on engagement with the bait fish retailers to inform the development of a regional bait identification guide. The use of live bait for angling is a primary pathway for the potential introduction of AIS to new waters. Within the Great Lakes basin state and provincial agencies generally regulate most aspects of the bait pathway including harvest or culture sale use and disposal of bait for angling within their respective jurisdictions. However, for areas such as import/export or transport of bait within and between jurisdictions for retail purposes an intersection of different rules/regulations amongst states/provinces highlights the value of broader coordination and outreach to industry regarding the specific rules for sale/use of bait throughout the basin. Further the bait industry plays an important role as a point of contact for sharing vital information to their customers on the rules associated with the use of bait as well as outreach on the importance of prevention measures for AIS. This project seeks to obtain essential feedback from the bait industry in the Great Lakes basin by conducting in-person interviews with bait fish producers and retailers soliciting feedback on the regional bait identification guide that is currently under development and documenting/communicating industry perceptions of AIS with GLP members.

The second project the intern will have the opportunity to work on is with the Great Lakes Aquatic Invasive Species Landing Blitz (www.glc.org/work/blitz) an annual event where boaters and other recreators learn about the risks of spreading AIS at public and private boating access sites across the Great Lakes region. Each year local volunteers partner with state and provincial agencies to deliver consistent Clean Drain Dry messaging. Outside those directly engaging with boaters a lot happens on the backend to keep the Landing Blitz constantly evolving and to enhance the experience for all involved! The intern, depending on their interest and expertise, will work with Great Lakes Commission staff on ways to improve the Landing Blitz experience for future years including evaluating the event name and/or creating guidance documents to help participants keep event costs low.

Intern Duties

Bait Industry Engagement: The bait engagement project is being coordinated by the Organisms in Trade Ad Hoc Committee under the Great Lakes Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species (GLP) with support staff from Pennsylvania Sea Grant and a Great Lakes Joint Fellow. The intern will have the opportunity to work with GLP members and Sea Grant staff to implement critical project components.

Duties include:

- Conducting in-person interviews with bait retailers across multiple Great Lakes states (all travel expenses will be covered under the internship)
- Summarization and basic analysis of survey responses
- Development of educational materials to promote project outcomes
- Participation in OIT Ad Hoc Committee meetings and providing project updates
- Additional optional duties are based on interest and project needs

Great Lakes AIS Landing Blitz: The intern will assist with a project evaluating the current event name to address concerns of the word “Blitz” and its potential connotation. This project aligns with the Great Lakes Panel of Aquatic Nuisance Species’ Language Position Statement and recent Michigan Sea Grant publications in a joint interest to ensure invasive species messaging is effective without any unintended consequences. The intern will have the opportunity to work directly with the Great Lakes Commission and Wisconsin Sea Grant staff in the evaluation process.

Duties may include but are not limited to:

- soliciting feedback from recreational users at local Landing Blitz events
- soliciting feedback from relevant agency partners
- creating a product testing survey and evaluating the results

There will also be an opportunity for the intern to assist in the creation of guidance and best practices documents that will help organizations put on cost-efficient Landing Blitz events.

Duties may include but are not limited to:

- assist in the development of a guidance document for funding Landing Blitz events
- help develop a virtual location where relevant Landing Blitz outreach material can be shared and/or help develop regionally applicable guidance (i.e. recommendations that comply with legal requirements across Great Lakes jurisdictions) for low cost/DIY boat cleaning stations