

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON REGIONAL COOPERATIVE ENFORCEMENT OPERATIONS

Aquatic invasive species (AIS) are one of the greatest threats to the Great Lakes–St. Lawrence Basin and its \$7 billion fishery. Today, more than 180 non-native species are present in our region.

Eight states, two provinces, three U.S. intertribal agencies, and several federal agencies are responsible for developing, implementing and enforcing measures to prevent the introduction and further spread of AIS. The region’s conservation officers are one of the first, and strongest, lines of defense against “least wanted” species such as Asian carp, killer shrimp and hydrilla.

Historically, wildlife and AIS laws have been difficult to enforce between jurisdictions, especially across the US-Canada border. The Memorandum of Understanding on Regional Cooperative Enforcement Operations was created to facilitate information sharing and cross-jurisdictional investigations.



The Memorandum of Understanding on Regional Cooperative Enforcement Operations (MOU) is applicable to both recreational users and commercial operators across all natural resource activities, and includes specific AIS provisions. This MOU has been used to aid in several inter-jurisdictional investigations pertaining to both invasive and endangered species. The timely sharing of information including intelligence, enforcement and prosecution reports is essential to these operations.

Specific objectives of this MOU include:

- Facilitating the investigation of wildlife offenses to meet the standards of the courts in both Canada and the United States;
- Supporting the enforcement operations of all Parties, and supporting any prosecutions that may result;
- Establishing a solid and ongoing framework to improve communications among wildlife enforcement agencies.

Parties to the MOU include enforcement agencies from Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Ontario, Pennsylvania, Quebec, Wisconsin, and the U.S. and Canadian federal governments.

The MOU does not create legally enforceable obligations among the Parties.