



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Invasive Species Research Institute Gains Further Support

Efforts to establish an Invasive Species Research Institute (ISRI) in Sault Ste. Marie have been further strengthened by the recent completion of a final report from Metropolitan Knowledge International (MKI), a Toronto based consultant firm.

The report outlines and makes recommendations for the organizational structure and functions of the Institute, which would manage the threat of forest, aquatic and plant invasive species through research, knowledge management and scientific advice.

Based on the research and stakeholder consultations conducted by MKI, the final report confirms a strong rationale for the Institute and support for it to be located in Sault Ste. Marie.

MKI developed the final report under the direction of Science Enterprise Algoma (seA) and a steering committee comprised of representatives from the City of Sault Ste. Marie, Destiny Sault Ste. Marie, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Canada, Environment Canada, Fisheries and Oceans, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Envisioned as a non-profit corporation led out of Algoma University, the Institute would be governed by federal, provincial, academic and private sector board members. Efforts are now underway to obtain approval from federal and provincial governments as core funding sources.

“Our government recognizes the threats posed to Ontario’s environment and natural resources by invasive species,” says David Oraziotti Sault Ste. Marie MPP. “We have supported this study with a \$25,000 contribution and I am committed to the development of an invasive species centre in our city that will help us develop innovative solutions to address this growing issue.”

According to Dr. Celia Ross, President of Algoma U, “The establishment of the ISRI would provide Algoma U with a major focus for its future biosciences program and further support the implementation of its independence.”

As a Centre for Excellence in invasive species research, the facility would support and add value to the National Strategy on invasives by focusing on four strategic goals: prevention, early detection, rapid response and management. It would also play a key research funding role in addition to developing its own research capabilities.

The majority of research would focus on forestry invasives with aquatic and terrestrial invasives largely being a support role for ongoing, existing efforts of other organizations with which the ISRI would collaborate.

Initially, the centre would concentrate its research to Ontario and the Great Lakes; however, as the ISRI grows and progresses, its scope is expected to expand to include cooperative opportunities with the U.S. and particularly Border States such as Michigan.

It will be determined in the future whether the ISRI in Sault Ste. Marie will become national, bi-national or one of several regional centres.

By locating the Institute on the property of Natural Resources Canada and the City of Sault Ste. Marie, the ISRI would provide unique opportunities for collaboration with federal and provincial governments, municipalities, academia and private interests.

Resulting knowledge and research would be consolidated to maximize value for funding, share best practices and provide scientific advice for emergency preparedness and response.

Research faculty, including a current Canada Research Chair from Algoma U, would be co-located within the planned infrastructure, which would include a state of the art quarantine facility to be made available to all centre and network participants based on demonstrated need.

It is estimated that 56 new positions in the fields of research, public outreach, quality assurance, finance and administration will be required to perform the functions of the centre.

“The next steps in the establishment of the ISRI will be making a compelling case to the Ontario and Federal Governments that their investment in the Institute will pay future dividends by improving economic and ecological protection against foreign biological invaders,” says Mr. Errol Caldwell, Executive Director of seA and main project lead.

To view the executive summary of the final report, visit the seA website at www.seainnovation.com.

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