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Marrone Bio Innovations Receives $500,000 Award from the National Science Foundation

Grant to Fund Commercial Development of a Natural Biopesticide for Control of Invasive Zebra and Quagga Mussels

DAVIS, Calif. March 6, 2008 – The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded Marrone Bio Innovations, Inc. (MBI) a two-year $500,000 Small Business Technology Transfer grant entitled "Commercialization of an Innovative Green Technology for Controlling Zebra Mussels" (http://www.nsf.gov/awardsearch/showAward.do?AwardNumber=0750549).

Zebra mussels encrusting pipe orifice.
(Credit: J. E. Marsden)

The damage caused by zebra mussels and their close relatives, quagga mussels, represents billions of dollars in cost to the North American economy and results in a major negative impact on freshwater ecosystems. These tiny, fingernail-sized mussels foul the aquatic environment while clogging the intake pipes of industries that draw water from infested lakes and rivers. Although populations have been widespread in the Great Lakes region and midwest for almost two decades, these mussels were only found for the first time west of the Rockies in the last 18 months, specifically in regions of Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Colorado and California.

In 2007, MBI was selected by the New York State Museum (NYSM) as the commercial partner for a microbial biopesticide that combats the invasive creatures. The technology was originally discovered and patented by Dr. Daniel Molloy, Director of the NYSM's Field Research Laboratory. The NYSM will receive a portion of the grant to support its research efforts in this industry-government partnership. An additional subaward will go to another small business, Particle and Coating Technologies, Inc., to assist in product formulation.

"We are thrilled to receive the NSF's support as we develop an economically viable, and environmentally sensitive finished product for this rapidly expanding problem," said Dr. Pam Marrone, MBI's Founder and CEO. "And, it's an honor to collaborate with Dr. Molloy and his NYSM research team to bring this exciting technology to market,"

"Because of its extraordinary safety, this green technology represents a real alternative to the widespread use of chlorine and other polluting biocides for zebra and quagga mussel control," said Molloy. "We are very pleased to be receiving this NSF funding to partner with MBI, a company whose staff have an unparalleled track record of success in commercializing microbial biopesticides."

MBI will use the NSF award and its own resources to conduct the key development tasks required to commercialize this microbial biopesticide.

Under the direction of Denise Mayer, Molloy's chief scientist on the project, his NYSM lab will use their NSF funding to further define environmental safety by doing additional environmental safety tests and will also work closely with MBI on other scientific aspects of product development.

About Marrone Bio Innovations, Inc.

Marrone Bio Innovations (MBI) discovers, develops, and markets natural products for pest management. Through a combination of in-licensed technology and its own R&D, MBI develops products that target markets needing effective and environmentally responsible solutions. MBI's own R&D finds naturally occurring microorganisms from unique habitats and develops them into products for controlling insects, weeds, nematodes, and plant diseases.

About the New York State Museum

The New York State Museum in Albany is a cultural program of the New York State Education Department. Founded in 1836, the museum has the longest continuously operating state natural history research and collection survey in the U.S. Since its establishment in 1973, the State Museum's Field Research Laboratory has focused on investigating the biology, ecology, taxonomy, and biological control of aquatic invertebrate pests, especially zebra and quagga mussels. Further information on the Museum can be obtained by calling (518) 474-5877 or visiting the museum website at www.nysm.nysed.gov.

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