

Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force

DRAFT Strategic Plan

(2007 — 2012)

November 2006

Contents

Mission and Structure	1
Program Goals and Objectives	
Goal 1: <i>(Develop strategies to) Reduce (Identify) the threat (risk) of harmful aquatic species being introduced into U.S. waters.</i>	3
Goal 2: Minimize the harmful effects of aquatic nuisance species already introduced into the waters of the United States.	4
Goal 3: Prioritize and promote <i>facilitate</i> research to reduce the threat of ANS introduction into U.S. waters <i>and to minimize the harmful effects of established invasive species</i>	6
Goal 4: Increase domestic and international public awareness in the United States and around the world of the importance of reducing the risk of ANS harm	7
Goal 5: Maximize the organizational effectiveness of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force	7
Endnotes:	10

MISSION

The ~~mission of the~~ Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) ~~is to~~ will develop and implement a program for waters of the United States to:

- Prevent the introduction and dispersal of aquatic nuisance species (ANS);
- Monitor, control and study such species;
- Conduct research on methods to monitor, manage, control and/or eradicate such species;
- Coordinate ANS programs and activities of ANSTF members and affected state agencies; and
- Educate and inform the general public and program stakeholders about the prevention and management/control of these species.

ANSTF STRUCTURE

The Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990 (NANPCA), reauthorized in the National Invasive Species Act of 1996 (NISA), established the ANSTF to coordinate ANS activities among federal agencies and between federal agencies, regional, state, tribal, and local organizations.

NANPCA designates the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service and the Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere as the ANSTF Chairpersons; established a base ANSTF membership to include representatives from six federal agencies; and names four organizations as ex officio members. Using their NANPCA authority, the Chairs have expanded the membership to ten federal agencies and twelve ex officio members.¹

The ANSTF is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972. This chartering provides the ANSTF with its core structure and ensures an open and public forum for its activities. To meet the challenges of developing and implementing a coordinated and complementary federal program for ANS activities, the ANSTF has adopted the organizational structure shown on the next page.

All 50 states are represented on at least one of the ANSTF regional panels.² A panel's roles are similar to those of the ANSTF, but at a regional level. They include:

- Identifying regional ANS priorities;
- Coordinating ANS program activities in the region;
- Making recommendations to the ANSTF; and
- Providing advice to public and private interests concerning methods of ANS management/control.

The ANSTF has five standing committees, each focused on an essential aspect of the ANS Program.³

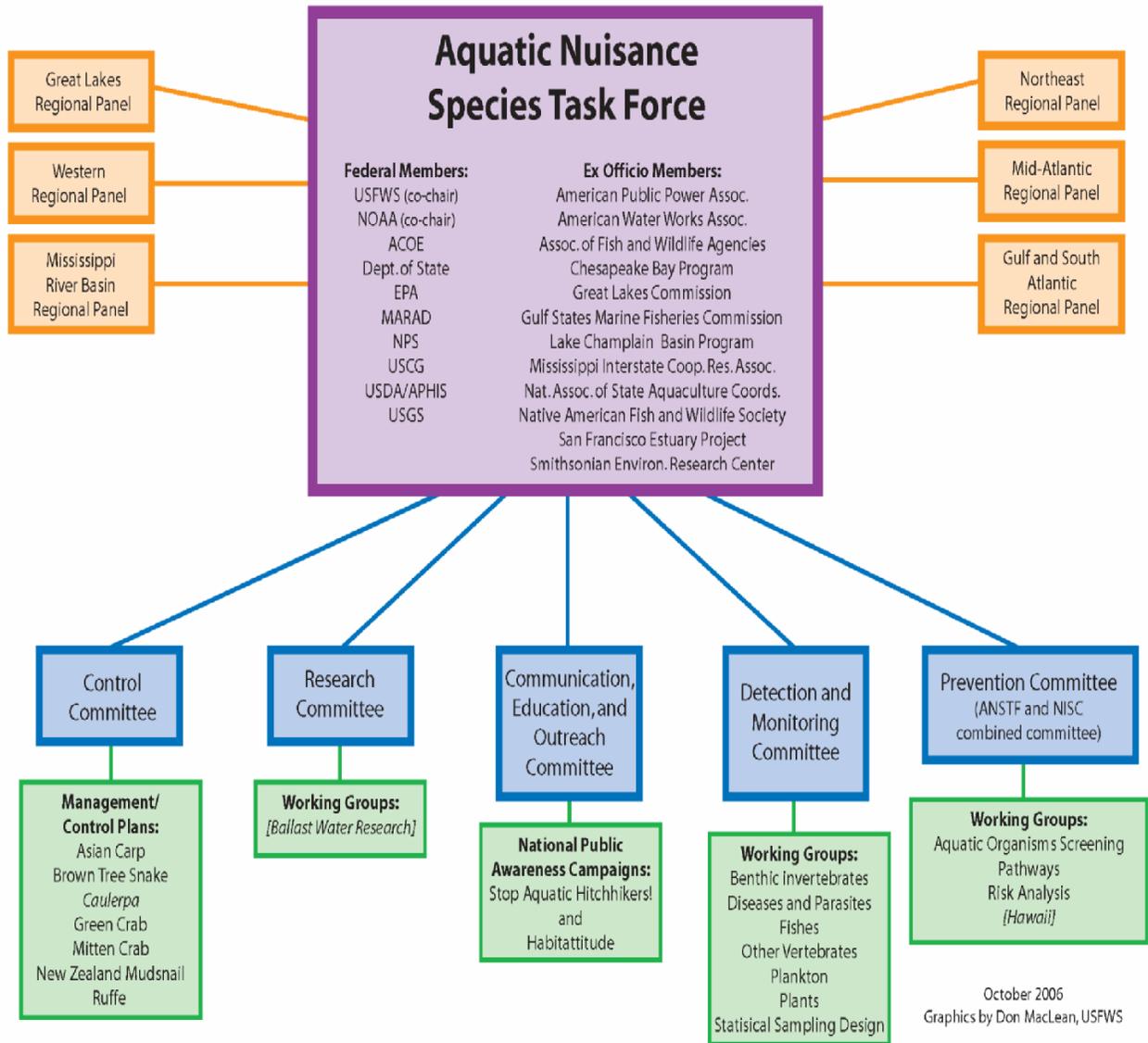
- Prevention
- Detection and Monitoring
- Control
- Research
- Communication, Education, and Outreach

Committees are made up of member agency representatives and subject matter experts. Committee activities include the development of species-specific control and management plans, standardized scientific protocols, public awareness/action campaigns, research priorities, theoretical frameworks to

screen organisms prior to their entry to the U.S., and providing technical advice to the ANSTF. Committees may form ad hoc working groups that focus on a specific discipline within the committee's purview.

This document serves as the ANSTF's blueprint for fulfilling this mission. It incorporates the lessons learned during the implementation of the ANSTF's first strategic plan (2002-2007).

Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Structure



Goal 1 **(Develop strategies to) Reduce (Identify) the threat (risk) of harmful aquatic species being introduced into U.S. waters.**

~~Preventing introductions of potentially harmful species is the most efficient way to reduce the threat of harmful aquatic nuisance species. This goal seeks to enhance Task Force activities, using existing authorities, to address intentional and unintentional introductions from all pathways, with a more comprehensive approach.~~

The most efficient way to reduce ANS risks is to prevent introductions of potentially harmful species by improving, developing and supporting authorities and programs that address intentional and unintentional introductions from all pathways.

Objective 1.1 Facilitate the development and use of science based risk assessments and decision tools to determine the risks associated with ~~intentional introductions~~ the movements of potentially invasive aquatic species and the methods to prevent or mitigate those risks.

- Update the ANSTF's "Generic Nonindigenous Aquatic Organisms Risk Analysis Review Process"
- Facilitate coordinated research to develop species invasion-risk forecast tools and approaches on a pathway and source-recipient ecosystem basis.

Objective 1.2 Identify high risk (priority) pathways for the introduction of harmful aquatic species into U.S. waters and coordinate specific actions to reduce the likelihood of introduction of harmful nonindigenous aquatic species.

~~Identifying high risk pathways is necessary but not sufficient to reduce the threat. High risk species likely to move within pathways must be identified and information about those species compiled in advance, to facilitate early detection monitoring and development of rapid response tools that are species specific.~~

- Complete the testing and final development of the "NISC/ANSTF Pathways Ranking Guide"
- Develop and maintain a priority list of invasive pathways

Objective 1.3 Investigate the feasibility for interrupting and/or minimizing high risk pathways.

The ANSTF will:

- Encourage coordinated research to develop species invasion-risk forecast tools and approaches on a pathway and source-recipient ecosystem basis; and
- Seek to establish a national integrated database of species-specific information based on the outcome of species invasion risk forecast analyses.
- ~~Have at least one approved ballast water treatment technology by January 1, 2009.~~ (This is well-established as a national priority and the ANSTF has little ability to effect this issue)

~~To meet the 2009 timeline, the following steps are necessary:~~

- ~~• Research will be sponsored on development of new technologies.~~
- ~~• Final discharge standards will be issued.~~
- ~~• Protocols for Environmental Technology Verification will be completed and tests will be conducted to determine the efficacy of new technologies.~~
- ~~• Recommendations for addressing the No Ballast on Board (NOBOB) issue will be made.~~

Objective 1.4 Develop feasibility criteria for *interdiction (interruption?)* strategies

To help determine appropriate interdiction strategies the ANSTF will consider many issues, including jurisdiction, agency and stakeholder resources (including volunteers), and required permitting. ~~and climatic influences. An important first step in this process is to develop cost numbers for interdiction practices completed or currently underway.~~

Objective 1.5 Plan and initiate interdiction strategies for high risk (priority) pathways

As appropriate, ANSTF agencies will take steps to interdict specific pathways. Actions may include research on interdiction methods, regulatory actions, and/or outreach and education. (Editor note: Should the ANSTF plan include actions for agencies? Can it really influence them to take action?)

Goal 2 **Minimize the harmful effects of aquatic nuisance species already introduced into the waters of the United States.**

Despite the best preventive efforts, new nonindigenous aquatic species are certain to be introduced into U.S. waters. Once an introduced species is identified as causing, or having the potential to cause harm, the ANSTF works to identify environmentally sound methods which can control further spread and minimize harm to public interests. Specific ANSTF activities are outlined in the 1994 ANS Program Document (pages 18 -29). In addition to developing species-specific control plans, other activities include the development of rapid response capabilities, survey and monitoring efforts, state management plans, and research and education specifically related to monitoring and control.

Objective 2.1 Facilitate survey and monitoring efforts to detect and control ANS

To effectively control invasions of ANS, it is necessary to conduct coordinated detection and monitoring efforts and ensure that data and information are readily available. The ANSTF plans to continue its efforts as described in the 1994 ANS Program Document (pages 18 - 22), and to emphasize the following:

- Encouraging and assisting in coordination of aquatic systems monitoring and survey programs;

- Supporting the development and use of common protocols for surveys and database standards;
- Supporting ongoing development and integration of existing databases (*e.g. Nonindigenous Aquatic Species database and the National Exotic Marine and Estuarine Species Information System*);
- ~~Making the information system more accessible;~~
- Increasing public involvement in monitoring activities (i.e. volunteer training programs); and
- Reporting annually on federal agency and strategic partner monitoring and assessment activities

Objective 2.2 Facilitate development of capacities to respond rapidly to invasions.

The best way to eradicate or control a new invasion is to take action as soon as possible. The development of a rapid response planning process should be the first step. The ANSTF will facilitate this planning process by:

- Synthesizing lessons learned from previous attempts to respond rapidly to new ANS invasions and make it readily available (i.e. via ANSTF website);
- Making species specific control/management information available.
- Analyzing and evaluating rapid response plans prepared for other events (oil spills, hurricanes, foreign animal diseases, etc.) to see how they could apply to reports of invasive species;
- Identifying what the ANSTF can do to facilitate the development of contingency plans;
- Encouraging federal agencies to address key elements of regional contingency plans (infrastructure, resources and jurisdictional issues) in their program planning;
- Encouraging multi-party support for rapid response provisions in species specific national management and control plans;
- ~~Setting up a rapid response monitoring system that measures and reports on the area of U.S. waters covered by contingency plans.~~

Objective 2.3 Facilitate the development of state and interstate ANS management plans⁴

- The ANSTF will continue to encourage states to develop ANS management plans and provide technical drafting assistance.
- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service state management plan grant program will continue to fund implementation of ANSTF approved management plans. The allocation of funds will be based on ANSTF recommendations.
- The ANSTF will report on the number of state management plans in place and under development.
- Review the ANSTF guidelines for the preparation of management plans with
- ~~Complete a permanent barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal to prevent movement of ANS between the Great Lakes and Mississippi watersheds. Analyze other interconnecting waterways.~~ (This is an ACOE issue already being

addressed through congressional politics)

Objective 2.4 Coordinate development and implementation of ANS control and management plans.

Pages 22-29 of the ANS Program Document contain the ANSTF's ANS control protocol. When a control or management action is proposed, the ANSTF will coordinate discussions about criteria to trigger an action, and will work to ensure that the criteria and processes in the ANS Program are incorporated to the extent possible. **(HAVE CRITERIA ALREADY BEEN DEVELOPED AND ADOPTED?)**

The ANSTF has approved control and/or management plans for ruffe, brown tree snake, mitten crab, European green crab and *Caulerpa*. Plans are in the final stages of development for Asian carp and New Zealand mud snail.

The ANSTF will:

- Monitor, evaluate, and report annually on the status of cooperative control plans and programs.
- Coordinate discussions on species for which control plans may be needed and will determine a lead entity for the development of the plans.
- Monitor the development, evaluate the effectiveness of implementation, and report on the status of those plans.

Goal 3

Prioritize and ~~promote~~ facilitate research to reduce the threat of ANS introduction into U.S. waters and to minimize the harmful effects of established invasive species.

Although much research has been conducted for some invasive aquatic species, there are many species for which little is known. Information, such as the biology of ANS and interactions within its new ecosystem, is essential to effective control and management. To help ensure that research addresses critical needs, the ANSTF Research Committee will coordinate nationwide with federal, state, and tribal governments, academia, and other participating entities to:

- Develop a list of ANS research priorities;
- Coordinate research activities and maintain a catalog of these activities to ensure efficient use of research resources;
- Maintain and disseminate biosecurity protocols for research to ensure that research does not result in new invasive introductions;
- Maintain a list of publications resulting from funded research under the ANSTF's priorities list.
- Encourage the development of new control methods.
- Encourage the development of socio-economic methods for establishing relative benefits and costs that can be used to establish priorities for action.
- ~~Develop and maintain a priority list of invasive pathways.~~ (moved to 1.1)

Goal 4 **Increase domestic and international public awareness ~~in the United States and around the world~~ of the importance of reducing the risk of ANS harm.**

Objective 4.1 Within the United States ensure that people understand the problems and impacts associated with ANS.

Robust public awareness and action programs will help the public understand what they can do to help monitor and control ANS in U.S. waters. The ANSTF will encourage and/or support:

- Participation in the 'Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers' and 'Habitattitude' campaigns
- Educational activities and products aimed at targeted audiences on specific actions to take to detect, monitor, and control ANS
- ~~Efforts to help the public understand the impacts of ANS and the reasons for developing ANS regulations (Seems redundant – included in previous bullets?)~~
- Use of the World Wide Web to disseminate information
- Coordination of public affairs activities and the distribution of information during high profile events as needed

Objective 4.2 Cooperate with nations that share boundaries with the United States to prevent, manage and control ANS. ~~in global efforts to reduce ANS impacts~~

Rapid increases in travel and trade have dramatically increased the introduction of invasive species, both within the U.S. and around the world. To gain a common understanding on invasion pathways and to anticipate new ANS problems, the ANSTF will:

- Work to broaden its involvement in international ANS activities and organizations
- Endeavor to raise the level of understanding and expertise on ANS worldwide, by encouraging technical assistance to other countries, sponsorship of workshops, and the sharing of scientific information.
- Provide timely advice to the Secretary of State concerning ANS that infest waters shared with the United States

Towards these ends, it is imperative that federal agencies coordinate their international ANS activities; establish complementary ANS policy, education, and outreach messages; and conduct compatible ANS monitoring and management programs.

SHOULD OBJECTIVE 4.2 ABOVE BE MOVED TO GOAL 1? PREVENTION?

Goal 5 **Maximize organizational effectiveness of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force**

~~No single entity has the human, technical and financial resources, or the regulatory authority, to fully address ANS problems. To be successful, cooperation and coordination are necessary at a variety of levels—among federal agencies; between federal agencies and state, tribal and local governments; and between public and non-public sectors. A~~

primary objective of the ANSTF is to facilitate cooperation and coordination between federal agencies and state, tribal and local governments to address the threat of ANS. Effective ANSTF processes and systems, and adequate staff support are essential to fulfilling this purpose. The ANSTF will work to lower institutional barriers to efficiency and effectiveness.

Objective 5.1 Strengthen the coordination capacity of the ANSTF

The ANSTF currently is one of several loosely connected governmental and non-governmental entities with varying degrees of overlapping influence in preventing and controlling ANS. The ANSTF formed relationships with these entities to assist with implementation of the 1994 ANS Program. While this arrangement enhanced a shared sense of ownership of the ANS issue by all entities, it added to the confusion about coordination processes, ANSTF accountability, and effectiveness in achieving the ANSTF's mission. To help all ANS stakeholders address issues in a coordinated way, the ANSTF will:

- ~~Evaluate the ANSTF committee structure to ensure consistency and efficiency in carrying out ANSTF activities. (Completed?)~~
- Increase communication among Regional Panels and the ANSTF to prioritize issues and activities.
- Provide technical guidance and resource assistance to states through a coordinated effort by Regional Panels to encourage development of state/interstate ANS management plans.
- ~~Support by ANSTF agencies to ensure effective ANSTF action on all aspects of this strategic plan.~~
- Work with the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) to implement ANS activities and ANSTF products related to the ANSTF strategic plan and the NISC National Management Plan.
- Publish a periodic electronic newsletter

Objective 5.2 Ensure that adequate statutory and regulatory legal authorities are in place to implement the ANS Program.

The following issues require resolution in order to effectively implement the ANS Program:

- Identify authorities to carry out emergency response actions;
- Identify authorities to carry out screening of specific pathways or species;
- Clarifying National Environmental Policy Act application to ANS control and management activities; and
- Establishing Joint Project Authority to pool agency funds when necessary.
- Streamlining the Control Program process created in NANCPA
- ~~Prevention activities such as screening specific pathways or species.~~

The ANSTF is also exploring the following:

- Relationship of Federal and State legal authorities.
- "Education" activities vs. "Marketing and Promotion" activities.
- International legal authorities (U. S./Canada/Mexico).
- Control program actions (NANPCA authorizes a very cumbersome process for initiating control programs).

Objective 5.3 Coordinate federal agency budgets to support ANSTF priorities and establish a clear process that links state and regional needs with the federal budget process.

The fall ANSTF meeting will include a discussion of recommendations from the Regional Panels on priority needs in their areas of responsibility. These recommendations will be taken into consideration by the federal agencies during their budget development process and feedback on what action was taken will be provided. ANSTF will work with the National Invasive Species Council to ensure ANS priorities are reflected in the Interagency Invasive Species Performance Budget and communicated to the Office of Management and Budget. The ANSTF will develop a matrix of individual federal agency ANS programs and budgets to communicate agency activities and needs to the Office of Management and Budget.

Objective 5.4 Institute an organizational improvement process based on an annual evaluation of ANS Program progress. (Who is going to do this?)

The ANSTF will produce an annual report that assesses progress in achieving ANS program goals and prioritizes future actions. The report will focus on annual priorities and goals decided at the prioritization meeting described in Objective 5.3. It is expected that much of the input for this report will originate from the Regional Panels. The ANSTF's Executive Secretary will be responsible for ensuring completion of the report and follow up actions recommended in the report.

¹ For a current listing of Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force membership and additional information about the organization's activities, visit: <http://anstaskforce.gov>

² For links to each of the regional panels visit: <http://anstaskforce.gov/panels.php>

³ The ANS Program Document (1994) is available at:
http://anstaskforce.gov/Documents/ANS_PROGRAM.pdf

⁴ Information about state/interstate management plans is available at:
<http://anstaskforce.gov/stateplans.php>

DRAFT