

Report of the Control ANSTF Committee – Fall 2008

1. Should the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force assemble and maintain a list of invasive species?

The Control Committee was tasked by the Co-Chairs at the spring 2008 ANSTF meeting in Charleston, S.C. with developing a recommendation in response to a request by the Gulf States Panel that the common carp be listed by the Task Force. It was apparent that there were vigorous opinions on both sides of the list issue. The Mid-Atlantic Panel had previously raised the issue in the form of a recommendation that the Task Force coordinate state and regional lists.

There are many lists of aquatic invasive species lists already in existence. Most states maintain an official list, either through one or more state agencies or through a state invasive species council. Some states have more than one list. At least one ANSTF regional Panel maintains a ‘species of interest’ list. All of the state ANS plans solicited, approved and often funded by the ANSTF have lists in their appendices. And the Task Force has a de facto ‘official’ species list in the species that have been selected for ANSTF control plans.

The request that the common carp be given some official priority status by the ANSTF was originated by a researcher working with this species, presumably in order to elevate the profile of the species as an invasive. A strong argument could indeed be made that the common carp is one of North America’s oldest and most widespread ecological outlaws. Few species have had so great level of Federal government effort invested in their spread. Furthermore, the recent adoption of a control plan for four other carp species - excluding the common carp - could be perceived as a value judgment upon the severity of the ecological threat it represents. But there is no evidence that the exclusion of this carp from the national management plan has had this effect. Should substantial new funding be forthcoming for the implementation of the Asian carp plan, that situation could change.

The role of the ANSTF, as defined in its charter, is explicitly advisory. As such, the danger that an ANSTF species list would be somehow regulatory in nature is not imminent. However, the Federal nature of the ANSTF and its genesis from an Act of congress could create the scent of a putative regulatory species list. The Control Committee is sensitive to this concern. There is little enough to be gained by a listing exercise at the current time to justify overcoming the sensitivity of the Task Force membership.

Recommendation: For the present, the Task Force should decline to construct a national invasive species list or to select any species for special consideration beyond those species previously selected as suitable for ANSTF national plans.

2. What mechanism could beleaguered Management Plan Coordinators use to track plan implementation? An adapted version of the (attached) matrix framework developed by Jeff Herod of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.