



# AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES TASK FORCE MEETING SUMMARY

**Meeting Dates: December 8 -10, 2020**

## Overview

The Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force was established by the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act (reauthorized in 1996 with the passage of the National Invasive Species Act) to serve as a multi-agency body dedicated to preventing and controlling ANS (also known as aquatic invasive species, or AIS). On December 8 -10, 2020, the ANS Task Force held a virtual public meeting, in accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The following is an executive summary of the meeting. Additional details about the meeting, including the agenda and detailed meeting minutes can be found at:

[https://www.anstaskforce.gov/Meetings/2020\\_December/default.php](https://www.anstaskforce.gov/Meetings/2020_December/default.php)

## Meeting Agenda

### Business Items:

- Adoption of Agenda, Approval of Minutes, Status of Action Items
- Regional Panel Recommendations
- State Plan ANS Management Plan Submitted for Approval
- Public Comment

### Topics for Discussion:

- ANS Task Force Bylaws
- Annual Subcommittee Work Plans for the ANS Task Force Strategic Plan for 2020-2025

### Informative Presentations:

- USGS NAS Database: New Species Occurrences and eDNA Standards
- Progress Toward a National Early Detection Rapid Response Framework
- Incident Command System Modifications in the Columbia River Basin

### Updates:

- Implementation of the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act
- Technical Information Report on Watercraft Design and Construction in Consideration of ANS
- Updated Priorities for the Implementation of the Quagga Zebra Action Plan for Western Waters
- Implementation of the National Plan for Asian carp
- National Invasive Species Council Management Plan
- The Department of the Interior Invasive Species Activities

## Decisional Items

- ANS Task Force approved the revised Indiana State ANS Management Plan.
- ANS Task Force approved the Colorado State ANS Management Plan.

## Action Items

- The ANS Task Force will provide comments on the Control Plan Assessment and Draft Guidance for ANS Management and Control plan development to the Control subcommittee by February 26. Based on this input, the Control subcommittee will refine the documents for consideration at next ANSTF meeting.
- Subcommittees will refine their work plans and resubmit them to the ANS Task Force by January 15. ANS Task Force members and panels will provide comments on the work plans by January 29.
- The ANS Task Force will respond to the U.S. Coast Guard draft Report to Congress described under the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act to the ANS Task Force and engage in developing new Intergovernmental Response to ANS Risks from Vessel Discharges.
- Based on input from ANS Task Force, the ANS Task Force co-chairs, in consultation with the bylaws workgroup, will refine the draft bylaws for consideration at the next ANSTF meeting.
- The next ANS Task Force meeting will be held the first week in May 2021 as a virtual meeting. However, if an in-person meeting is scheduled, a later date may be considered.

## Members Present

The full list of attendees, including the names of individuals present, is available in the full meeting minutes.

### Federal:

- Bureau of Land Management
- Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Coast Guard
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- National Park Service

### Ex-officio:

- Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies
- Chesapeake Bay Program
- Great Lakes Commission
- Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Lake Champlain Basin Program
- Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resources Association
- Native American Fish and Wildlife Society
- San Francisco Estuary Partnership
- Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

### Regional Panels:

- Great Lakes Regional Panel
- Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel
- Mid-Atlantic Regional Panel
- Mississippi River Basin Regional Panel
- Northeast Regional Panel
- Western Regional Panel

## Regional Panel Recommendations

### Western Regional Panel

1. In order to facilitate the ANSTF Strategic Plan, WRP recommends continued and additional funding for Regional Panels, QZAP and State/Inter-state Plans.

Response: *FY 2020 saw an increase in funds for the State and Interstate ANS Management Plans, from approximately \$2 million to \$3.8 million, with each plan receiving nearly \$90,000 for implementation. Regional Panel funding was also restored to \$300,000, or \$50,000 per panel. Funding for control and prevention under QZAP implementation increased from \$1 to \$2 million. We will continue to support the operation of the regional panels as budgets allow.*

2. Support immediate actions to detect and control European green crab (EGC) in Washington State, Alaska and National Marine Sanctuaries located in the eastern Pacific Ocean:
  - NOAA provide adequate long-term funding to eastern Pacific Ocean National Marine Sanctuaries, Washington Sea Grant, Alaska Sea Grant, and Kachemak Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve to maintain and expand their critical community-based citizen-science early detection monitoring programs and technical expertise;
  - USFWS, NOAA and EPA actively engage and provide funding to address imminent danger of EGC developing a self-recruiting population in the Salish Sea, and to prevent aquaculture and fishery impacts to coastal estuaries;
  - USFWS, NOAA and EPA actively engage in research and development of early detection and control management tools for EGC.

Response: *We have shared the recommendations with NOAA points of contact. There are a variety of ongoing programs that contribute funding. We do our best within existing funding, yet long term funding is more of a challenge.*

3. The Frank LoBiondo Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2018 requires that the Secretary of Commerce and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to establish a program, to be known as the "Coastal Aquatic Invasive Species Mitigation Grant Program," under which the Secretary and the Foundation shall award grants to eligible entities. We have not seen any movement on the establishment of this Grant Program from the Department of Commerce. The WRP requests the ANSTF to encourage the Department of Commerce to prioritize the establishment of the Coastal Aquatic Invasive Species Mitigation Grant Program in an expedited manner.

Response: *Regarding the ANS mitigation grant program – while the Program is authorized, no appropriations were made for this grant program. It will not be set up until appropriations are made*

available.

4. Consider the Western Regional Panel's Entrance, Exit, and Off-Water inspection protocols for adoption as the national standards for watercraft inspection. This recommendation could be responded to by the prevention committee.

Response: *The Prevention Subcommittee is planning to review and adopt, as appropriate, existing prevention strategies developed by ANS Task Force members and regional panels and share recommended strategies to ANS Task Force members and partners who can take action. The Western Regional Panel's Entrance, Exit, and Off-Water inspection protocols will be shared with the Prevention Subcommittee; the subcommittee members will review the document and make a recommendation for the appropriate action.*

#### **Mid-Atlantic Regional Panel**

1. The Mid-Atlantic Regional panel recommends that the Commonwealth of Virginia seek funding under the Nutria Control and Eradication Act of 2020 in order to control and eventually eradicate this invasive species in the Commonwealth, completing the eradication of nutria from the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The Panel further recommends that the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force as a whole - and its member agencies individually - vigorously support Virginia's fiscal request.

Response: *The Service has recognized the value of the Chesapeake Bay Nutria Eradication Project program and has previously expressed support for its expansion into neighboring states (e.g., Testimony of Stephen Guertin on H.R. 3399). The Service will provide the panel information on the grant program established under the Nutria Eradication and Control Act of 2020. Should Virginia decide to submit a request for funding, the Service will evaluate this request against the grant requirements and take the appropriate steps.*

#### **Mississippi River Basin Regional Panel**

1. Increase funds to regional panels. Regional panels serve as an invaluable tool for disseminating ANS information, building partnerships, and coordinating regional ANS management efforts. The capacity of the panels to provide these benefits is limited by available funding. Increased funding would increase services provided by the panels and improve overall ANS coordination in the regions. Additional funds to regional panels would allow the regional panels to address emerging coordination, prevention, early detection and rapid response, control and restoration, research, and outreach and education priorities in a timely manner.

Response: *See response to Western Regional Panel*

2. Do not revise Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps Management and Control Plan. Revising the current Bighead, Black, Grass, and Silver Carps Management and Control Plan would provide little benefit in comparison to the enormous amount of time and effort needed to complete the task. The sub-basin frameworks are a much better option for inclusion of new or revision of outdated information. They were designed as living documents to be updated as needed for management of Asian Carps.

Response: *During 2020 the ANS Task Force Control Subcommittee began a review of the Task Force-approved species management plans. The review will conclude with a recommendation for each plan for it to be achieved, updated, or remain active without change. The control subcommittee was been forwarded this recommendation and it is being considered as they draft their final recommendations to the ANS Task Force.*

## **For More Information**

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