



Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force
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Memorandum for: ANS Task Force Members and Invited Observers
From: Scott Newsham, Executive Secretary
Subject: Definition of Rapid Response

1. One element of the ANS Task Force's upcoming discussions on rapid response to reports of nonindigenous and potentially invasive species will be reaching agreement on what is meant by the term 'rapid response'.
2. The National Invasive Species Council has adopted the following definition.

Rapid response is a systematic effort to eradicate, contain, or control a potentially invasive non-native species introduced into an ecosystem while the infestation of that ecosystem is still localized.

3. The following notes are provided as further explanation:

Rapid response is a process that may include:

- Assessment activity necessary to determine if action is necessary/warranted;
- Determination of the extent of infestation; and
- If necessary, research to determine how to respond to a new infestation; and/or monitoring the success of actions.

As an example of a particularly successful program, the statutorily mandated emergency response systems implemented by APHIS Veterinary Services, incorporates all of these elements.

Rapid response may encompass both totally new introductions into the United States or satellite infestations of previously established species. As an example, control measures taken to combat leafy spurge where it is already widespread would not qualify, but an effort to eradicate a new infestation in an area where it has not been established previously should qualify.

Although timeliness is a key element in rapid response, there are species differences as to what would be considered rapid or timely based on variables such as

reproductive rates, ability of a vector to transmit a disease agent, and likelihood and method of spread. In some instances, a species may become invasive after only a few days. In others, much longer periods of time may qualify as a rapid response. The key issue is whether it is possible to quickly mobilize resources to manage an infestation while it is still localized. Ecosystems are not limited to natural ecosystems, but may include areas such as croplands, livestock production systems, or urban areas.

Recommended Action:

The ANSTF should adopt the above definition of 'rapid response' as its working definition.