



Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force
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Memorandum for: ANS Task Force Members and Invited Observers
From: Scott Newsham, Executive Secretary //s//
Subject: Rapid Response Management System for Aquatic Nuisance Species

BACKGROUND:

1. The November 2006 Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) meeting focused on the issue of rapid response to reports of aquatic nuisance species. One aspect that received extensive discussion was the management framework for planning and response activities. There was broad support for adopting the Incident Command System (ICS), but consensus was not reached at the meeting. With NOAA's coordination, an ad hoc working group was formed to explore the issue further.
2. During its deliberations, the working group found that Homeland Security Presidential Directive Five (HSPD-5)¹ called on the Secretary of Homeland Security to develop a national incident management system to provide a consistent nationwide approach for federal, state, tribal and local governments to work together to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from domestic incidents, regardless of cause, size or complexity.
3. On March 1, 2004, after close collaboration with state and local government officials and representatives from a wide range of public safety organizations, Homeland Security issued the National Incident Management System (NIMS). It incorporates many existing best practices into a comprehensive national approach to domestic incident management, applicable at all jurisdictional levels and across all functional disciplines. Central to the NIMS is the standardized organizational structure of ICS.
4. The language in HSPD-5 indicates the decision as to what management system to use for responding to aquatic nuisance species has been made for federal agencies. Given the need to work together at the federal, state, tribal and local levels, it is essential that all parties use the same system.
5. The working group recommends:
 - a) The ANSTF formally adopt the Incident Command System as the structure for rapid response planning and operations. As a first step in this process, federal members should identify members for a unified command group and constitute a federal standby team to assist in responses.
 - b) Appropriate federal agencies provide initial points of contact for scientific information that may be needed in responding to a developing threat. Among the

scientific information needs are taxonomic identification, capacity to assess whether a specific species will cause serious problems, and available control methods. (This is not intended to be a list of the various individuals with the expertise, but a point of contact who could work within the agency to obtain the requested information.)

- c) Federal ANSTF members identify federal regulatory requirements that need to be considered by federal, state, tribal and local authorities in planning for and responding to reports of ANS. Recognizing agencies have varying scopes of involvement, the EPA's "Overview of EPA Authorities for Natural Resource Managers Developing Aquatic Invasive Species Rapid Response and Management Plans" is offered as a guide. http://www.epa.gov/owow/invasive_species/invasives_management/

Recommended Actions:

1. The ANSTF should adopt the working group's recommendations and form a working group whose responsibility would be to develop a federal ANS rapid response plan based on NIMS ICS. Consideration should be given to hiring an ICS fluent contractor to facilitate this process. This effort should draw on the recent experiences of those agencies (federal/state/tribal/local) involved in the response to the reports of quagga mussels in the Colorado River, as well as ongoing interagency planning activities.
2. Suggest a goal of completing the plan in conjunction with the ANSTF Fall 2007 meeting which may want to again have a focus on response planning/management.

¹ <http://www.nimsonline.com/docs/hspd-5.pdf>