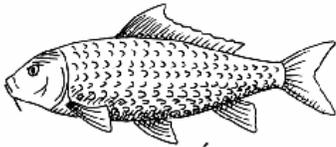




European Green Crab



Carp Species



Invasive Clams and Mussels



Mitten Crab



Eurasian Water Milfoil



Hydrilla



Giant Reed



Spartina

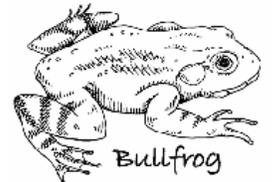
Purple Loosestrife



Giant Salvinia



New Zealand Mudsnaill



Bullfrog



Water Hyacinth

Brazilian Egenia



Tamarisk

Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force

Strategic Plan (2007 – 2012)

March 2007

Mission and ANSTF Structure.....1

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MISSION

The Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force (ANSTF) 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.

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).

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; establishes 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 Fisheries and Oceans Canada participates on the ANSTF as an invited observer.²

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.

The ANSTF established six regional panels whose memberships include representatives of states, Indian Tribes, non-governmental organizations, commercial interests, and neighboring countries.³ A regional panel's roles 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.

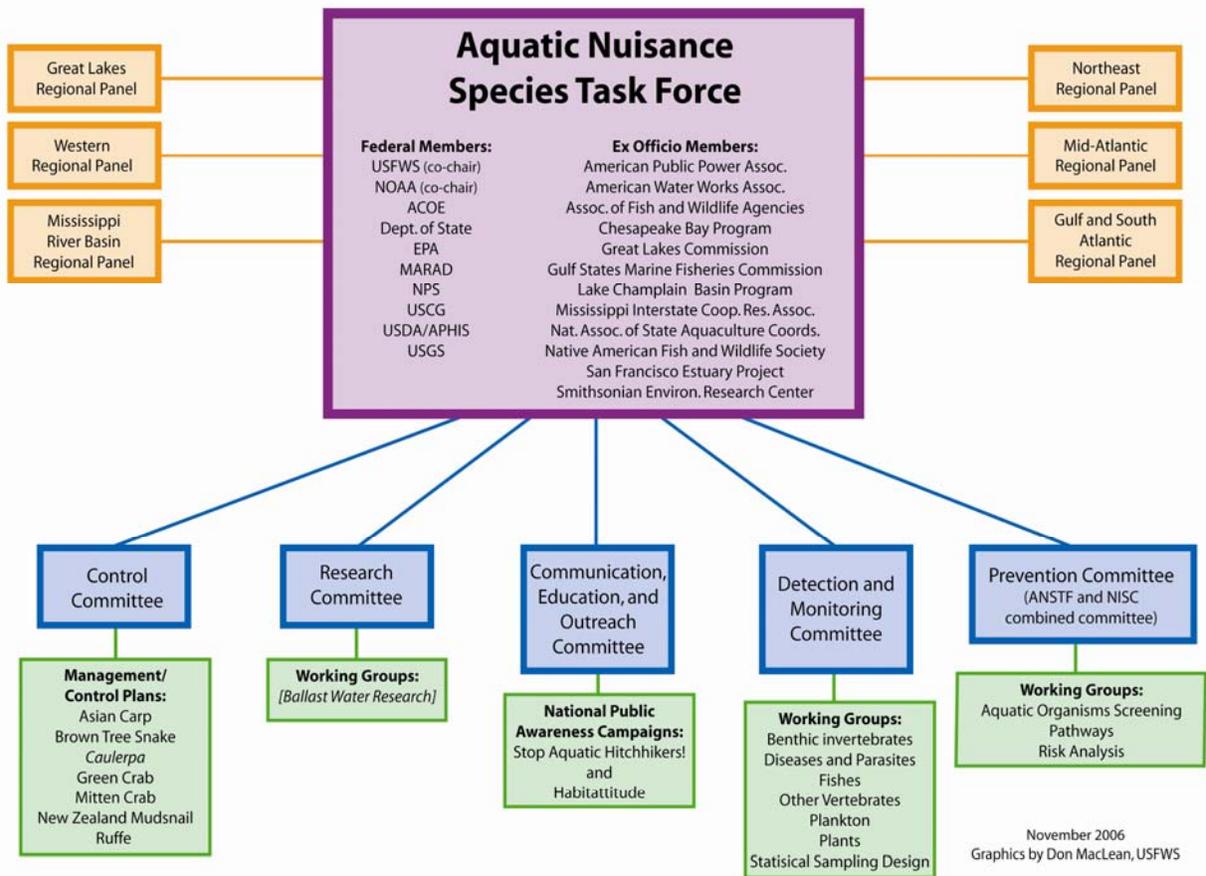
Regional Panels are a critical and effective mechanism for achieving the objectives of the ANSTF Strategic Plan and should incorporate these objectives into their planning documents.

The ANSTF has five standing committees, each focused on an essential aspect of the ANS Program.⁴

- 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 to provide technical advice to the ANSTF. Committees may form ad hoc working groups that focus on a specific discipline within the committee’s purview.

Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force Structure



Goal 1 **Develop strategies to identify and reduce the risk of harmful aquatic species being introduced into waters of the United States**

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 other decision tools to determine the risks associated with 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"; and
- Facilitate coordinated research to develop species invasion-risk forecast tools and approaches on a pathway and source-recipient ecosystem basis.

Objective 1.2 Identify priority pathways for the introduction of harmful aquatic species into waters of the United States and coordinate specific actions to reduce the likelihood of introduction of harmful nonindigenous aquatic species via these pathways.

- Continue the development and testing of pathways ranking tools in conjunction with the National Invasive Species Council (NISC)/Invasive Species Advisory Committee; and
- Develop and maintain a priority list of invasive pathways.

Objective 1.3 Investigate the feasibility and mechanisms for interdicting, interrupting, or minimizing priority pathways

The ANSTF will:

- Take steps to interdict specific pathways. Actions may include research on interdiction methods, support of regulatory actions, and/or outreach and education;
- Encourage coordinated research to develop species invasion-risk forecast tools and approaches on a pathway and source-recipient ecosystem basis;
- Seek to establish a national integrated database of species-specific information based on the outcome of species invasion-risk forecast analyses;
- Support development, testing, and approval of ballast water treatment technologies; and
- Support completion of a permanent barrier on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal and analysis of barrier options on other interconnecting waterways.

Goal 2 **Minimize the harmful effects of ANS already introduced into waters of the United States**

Despite the best preventive efforts, new nonindigenous aquatic species are certain to be introduced into waters of the United States. Once an introduced species is identified as causing, or having the potential to cause harm, the ANSTF works to identify environmentally sound methods that can control further spread and minimize harm to public interests. 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:

- Encourage and assist in coordination of new and existing aquatic systems monitoring and survey programs to incorporate invasive species;
- Support the development and use of common protocols for surveys and database standards;
- Support ongoing development and integration of existing databases (e.g. Nonindigenous Aquatic Species database and the National Exotic Marine and Estuarine Species Information System);
- Increase public involvement in monitoring activities (i.e. volunteer training programs);
- Facilitate the development of a system to report sightings and collections of non-native species to an appropriate authority; and
- Report annually on federal agency and strategic partner monitoring and assessment activities

Objective 2.2 Facilitate the 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:

- Synthesize lessons learned from previous attempts to respond rapidly to new ANS invasions and make it readily available (i.e. via ANSTF website);
- Make species specific control/management information available;
- Analyze and evaluate 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;
- Facilitate development of rapid response contingency plans;
- Encourage federal agencies to address key elements of regional contingency plans (infrastructure, resources and jurisdictional issues) in their program planning; and
- Encourage multi-party support for rapid response provisions in species specific national management and control plans.

Objective 2.3 Facilitate the development of state and interstate ANS management plans.⁵

- 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; and
- The ANSTF will review guidelines for the preparation of management plans.

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

The ANSTF approves and coordinates the development of national species specific management plans. Any entity (including individuals) may propose development of a management plan. To the extent practical, these proposals are considered, evaluated and acted on using the procedure described in pages 22-29 of the ANS Program Document. Anyone contemplating submittal of a proposal should contact the ANSTF Executive Secretary for guidance.

The ANSTF will:

- Coordinate discussions on species for which 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; and
- Monitor, evaluate, and report annually on the status of cooperative plans and programs.

Goal 3 Facilitate research to address the threat and harmful effects of ANS

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 an ANS and interactions within its new ecosystem, is essential for 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;
- Encourage the development of socio-economic methods for establishing relative benefits and costs that can be used to establish priorities for action;
- 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; and
- Encourage the development of tools that could be used in management and control.

Goal 4 **Increase public understanding of the importance of reducing the introduction, spread, and impact of ANS and recommend appropriate domestic and international actions.**

Objective 4.1 Ensure the people of the United States 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 waters of the United States. The ANSTF will:

- Participate in the 'Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers' and 'Habitattitude' campaigns;
- Develop educational activities and products aimed at targeted audiences on specific actions to take to detect, monitor, and control ANS;
- Use the World Wide Web to disseminate information; and
- Coordinate public affairs activities and the distribution of information during high profile events as needed.

Objective 4.2 Cooperate with nations that share waters and invasion pathways with the United States to prevent, manage and control ANS.

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:

- Broaden its involvement in international ANS activities and organizations;
- Raise the level of understanding and expertise on ANS worldwide by encouraging technical information exchange with other countries and participation in workshops; and
- Provide timely advice to the Secretary of State concerning ANS that infest waters shared with the United States.

Toward 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.

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

A primary objective of the ANSTF is to facilitate cooperation and coordination among federal agencies. Further, the federal agencies need to coordinate with state, tribal, and local governments to address the threat of ANS. Effective ANSTF processes and systems are essential to fulfilling this purpose. Beginning with enhanced federal agency collaboration, the ANSTF will work to lower institutional barriers to efficiency and effectiveness.

Objective 5.1 Strengthen the coordination capacity of the ANSTF

To help all ANS stakeholders address issues in a coordinated way, the ANSTF will:

- Increase communication among elements of the ANSTF to prioritize issues and activities;
- Encourage use of tools to facilitate communication;
- Provide technical guidance and resource assistance to states through a coordinated effort by Regional Panels to encourage development of state/interstate ANS management plans; and
- Work with the NISC to implement ANS activities and ANSTF products related to the ANSTF strategic plan and the NISC National Management Plan.

Objective 5.2 Explore opportunities to establish statutory and regulatory authorities necessary to implement ANSTF goals and objectives.

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

- Identify authorities and regulations to carry out emergency response actions;
- Identify authorities and regulation to carry out screening of specific pathways or species;
- Work with the NISC to develop National Environmental Policy Act guidance for ANS control and management activities;
- Determine if a need exists for new funding mechanisms for interagency activities; and
- Streamline the Control Program process created in NANPCA

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.

- Federal agencies will take ANSTF-approved Regional Panel recommendations into consideration during the budget development process and provide feedback.
- ANSTF will work with the NISC to ensure ANS priorities are reflected in the Interagency Invasive Species Performance Budget and communicated to the Office of Management and Budget.

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- 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 Fisheries and Oceans Canada is the lead Canadian federal government department responsible for developing and implementing policies and programs in support of Canada's economic, ecological and scientific interests in oceans and inland waters. <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/>
- ³ For links to each of the regional panels and a graphic depiction of the geographic area covered by each panel, visit: <http://anstaskforce.gov/panels.php>
- ⁴ The ANS Program Document (1994) is available at:
http://anstaskforce.gov/Documents/ANS_PROGRAM.pdf
- ⁵ Information about state/interstate management plans is available at:
<http://anstaskforce.gov/stateplans.php>