

## AQUATIC NUISANCE SPECIES TASK FORCE: MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 2018 TELECONFERENCE

**OCTOBER 15, 2018; 1 – 4 PM (EASTERN TIME)**

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On October 15, 2015, the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force held a teleconference from 1 to 4 p.m. (ET) to discuss the draft ANS Task Force goals, priorities, and strategies that will form the foundation of the next ANS Task Force Strategic Plan.

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Susan Pasko (ANS Task Force Executive Secretary) welcomed participants and thanked them for calling into the meeting.

ANS Task Force members and other participants introduced themselves. The list below includes the call-in attendees.

Name	Affiliation
Kim Bogenschutz	Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Iowa Department of Natural Resources
Bill Bolen	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Lynn Creekmore	U.S. Department of Agriculture - APHIS
Jeanette Davis	NOAA
Nate Drag	Alliance for the Great Lakes
Ray Fernald	Mid-Atlantic Regional Panel
Eric Fischer	Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
Lisa Gonzalez	Indiana Department of Natural Resources
David Hoskins	Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel
Dave Hu	Houston Advanced Research Center
Mike Ielmini	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Carolyn Junemann	Bureau of Land Management
Mark Lewandowski	USDA Forest Service
Jennifer Lukens	U.S. Department of Transportation; Maritime Administration
Don Maclean	Chesapeake Bay Program
Craig Martin	Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Karen McDowell	NOAA
Meg Modley	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
John Morris	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
	San Francisco Estuary Partnership
	Lake Champlain Basin Program
	U.S. Coast Guard

Linda Nelson	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Morgan Neuhoff	BoatUS
Susan Pasko	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Brittnee Preston	Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation
Portia Sapp	Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Michele Tremblay	Northeast Regional Panel
Jolene Trujillo	U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Bill Whitacre	Western Governors' Association
Libby Yranski	National Marine Manufacturers Association
Dennis Zabaglo	Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
Paul Zajicek	National Aquaculture Association

Jennifer Lukens (NOAA, ANS Task Force co-chair) provided an overview of the work accomplished at the June 2018 ANS Task Force meeting in which breakout sessions were conducted to evaluate past Task Force and regional panel accomplishments and identify priority objectives and strategies to inform the next ANS Task Force Strategic Plan. Since the June meeting, NOAA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have reviewed and refined these draft goals, objectives, and strategies to create the document that was discussed during the call. The expectation was that the ANS Task Force members and regional panels reach an initial agreement about the priorities that the ANS Task Force will pursue over the next five years. After the teleconference, the comments and suggestions will be used to continue development of the ANS Task Force Strategic Plan for 2019-2024.

David Hoskins (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, ANS Task Force co-chair) provided an overview of the draft outline. There are six strategic goals, each with three objectives (except for the Outreach and Education Goal, which current includes four objectives) that provide detail about how each goal will be accomplished. Each objective has a list of strategies, or specific activities that will be completed during the timeframe of the Plan. Hoskins also reviewed the guiding principle for the next ANS Task Force Strategic Plan, as identified during the June 2018 ANS Task Force meeting:

- The Non-indigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act directs the ANS Task Force to “develop and implement a program for waters of the United States to prevent the introduction and dispersal of ANS; to monitor, control and study such species; and to disseminate related information.”
- It should be recognized that the ANS Task Force serves to coordinate these functions, while the individual organizations constituting the ANS Task Force membership implement the program.
- The ANS Task Force Strategic Plan should identify what can be accomplished as a unified organization, yet highlight how individual member activities roll up to advance a collective and national need.

- The ANS Task Force should review individual member accomplishments in order to survey the ANS landscape and identify gaps and opportunities, making recommendation on how to fulfil these needs.
- The ANS Task Force should identify potential gaps in policies or authorities and raise awareness with Congress and the Administration regarding these ANS needs.
- The ANS Task Force should serve as a forum to receive recommendations from the regional panels on matters related to ANS and work within its organizational structure to address these recommendations.
- The plan should present feasible strategies and outputs that can be implemented within the next five years.
- Member and regional panel reporting should focus on how the work products and guidance developed under this Plan have improved their operations, thus showcasing the value of the ANS Task Force.

## 2. Discussion

The ANS Task Force co-chairs reviewed the objectives and strategies under each goal and then opened the discussion up to others for comment or suggestions. A summary of the discussion for each goal is provided below.

### *Coordination Goal Discussion*

Jennifer Lukens read the description of the Coordination Goal and provided an overview of the objectives and strategies within the goal. Afterward, she provided the call participants the opportunity to ask questions or make comments, reminding everyone that the intention of the call was to reach agreement among the ANS Task Force members that the right objectives and strategies each been identified for each goal.

Under the Coordination Goal, there was concern that some objectives that align with regional panel activities may not be feasible based on current funding levels. The ANS Task Force may wish consider measures to show that there are needs beyond the current level of funding, and record any shortfalls to demonstrate the need for additional support to better accomplish the strategic goals and objectives. Lukens and Hoskins responded that this idea may be applicable to the strategy within objective 3 of the Coordination Goal that currently states "identify opportunities where Federal agency authorities align with ANS priority needs that can be met with additional resources." The mechanism for Federal agencies to request additional funding is through the President's budget, thus more specific requests may not be appropriate in the Strategic Plan.

Clarification was asked for on the panel meetings referred to under objective 2. This current language was specific to the All – Panel meetings that occur annually with representatives from all six panels. A recommendation was made to clarify this wording so that it better understood which meeting is being referenced.

There was another question asking to clarify the intent of the progress reports for the State ANS Management Plans and if this would create an additional burden for the states. It was explained that the

ANS Task Force has seen an increase in requests for progress on these plans; accordingly, the intent of this strategy is to make existing progress reports from the States more accessible and will not create additional work for those that manage the State and Interstate ANS Plans.

#### *Prevention Goal Discussion*

David Hoskins read the description of the Prevention Goal and provided an overview of the objectives and strategies within the goal.

Clarification was asked on the distinction between objectives 2 and 3. Hoskins responded that objective 2 focuses on strategies that evaluate existing authorities for gaps and areas that can be strengthened whereas objective 3 refers to the implementation of the recommended measures.

A comment was made that to the recent opening of the North passage to the Arctic has been a priority pathway identified by the ANS Task Force and should be specifically identified in the plan. Lukens and Hoskins responded that objective 2 requires the ANS Task Force to evaluate and prioritize pathways. If the North passage opening is identified in this process, then further action could be taken. John Morris (U.S. Coast Guard) offered to provide the ANS Task Force with information from the Arctic Invasive Species Working Group under the Arctic Council on this issue.

An additional comment was made that industries and other partners should be identified in the outcome and objectives as they have been essential to implementing preventative strategies. There was concurrence that these groups should be identified.

#### *Early Detection and Rapid Response Goal Discussion*

Jennifer Lukens read the description of the Early Detection and Rapid Response Goal and provided an overview of the objectives and strategies within the goal. There was also a reminder the objectives and strategies under this goal were drafted to align with the Department of Interior's Early Detection and Rapid Response Framework in order to assist with the facilitation of this framework. There was agreement that objectives and strategies under this goal are comprehensive, and no additional changes were needed at this time.

#### *Control and Restoration Goal Discussion*

David Hoskins read the description of the Control and Restoration Goal and provided an overview of the objectives and strategies within the goal. A comment was made that several of the Species Control and Management Plans were developed several years ago and may be inactive. A recommendation was made to start evaluating the oldest plans first to see if these plans need retired or refreshed. An additional comment was made that it often take time and numerous individuals to develop new plans, and it is unclear if there is staff to support such efforts. Hoskins commented that control plans are a tool to coordinate efforts to control an individual or group of species and the ANS Task Force should work to implement the approved plans as well as develop a timetable for new plan development based on collective priorities.

#### *Research Goal Discussion*

Jennifer Lukens read the description of the Research Goal and provided an overview of the objectives and strategies within the goal. No comments were made.

### *Outreach and Education Goal Discussion*

David Hoskins read the description of the Outreach and Education Goal and provided an overview of the objectives and strategies within the goal. A recommendation was made to revise the goal so that it is similar to the others with three objectives rather than four. A comment was made that the current objectives under this goal focus on evaluation outreach effectiveness and developing a long range communications plan, there is little emphasis on refining existing or developing new campaigns or messages. The other goals have a strong emphasis on managing pathways; accordingly, a recommendation was made for the outreach goal to also include this emphasis to ensure that the ANS Task Force continues to develop necessary campaigns and messages and not just evaluate them.

### **3. Overview and Next Steps**

A large number of ANS Task Force members and regional panel representatives participated on the call. There was agreement that the small number of comments and recommendations articulated during the call was indicative of support for the proposed goals, objectives, and strategies. It was decided that the Executive Secretary of the ANS Task Force will refine the document based on the comments made during the call.

Concern was expressed in regards to the capacity of the regional panels and their ability to provide outputs to help implement the strategies identified. A response was given that the plan should be ambitious, yet realistic. The regional panel chairs will be encouraged to carefully review the plan to ensure that there is not overreach and that the strategies are feasible.

Implementing the plan will be a shared responsibility between the members and regional plans, and under this plan, the ANS Task Force is making a commitment to work collaboratively. Objective 1 of the Coordination Goal states the ANS Task Force will “identify the roles and responsibilities for each ANS Task Force member in implementing the ANS Task Force goals and objectives,” this will apply to both the members as well as the regional panels.

Members should also be reporting back on accomplishments so that the ANS Task Force can continue to act as a catalyst for each of the members to accomplish goals of the ANS Task Force. This concept is articulated in the guiding principle that states “the ANS Task Force Strategic Plan should identify what can be accomplished as a unified organization, yet highlight how individual member activities roll up to advance a collective and national need.”

Another comment was made to call attention to the fact that the responsibility entities for implementing several of the strategies are ANS Task Force committees; it was unclear if new committees will be formed. A response was given that form should follow function and once the new Strategic Plan is approved, the ANS Task Force will need to evaluate its current committee structure to identify what changes are needed to facilitate implementation of the plan. Committees will be essential for the ANS Task Force to work collaboratively with partners to implement the plan, rather than relying on individual efforts of the members and regional panels.

The next meeting of the ANS Task Force is December 12-13, 2018, and will give another opportunity to discuss the Strategic Plan before it is distributed for formal review. Before this meeting, the co-chairs would like to refine the goals based on the comments made during the call and start developing an introduction, conclusion, and supplementary text to explain each goal in more detail. It was recommended that the Executive Secretary of the ANS Task Force work with the co-chairs to produce a draft Plan and distribute the document to the ANS Task Force within 30 days of the December meeting for review.

The regional panels expressed concern with this approach as many hold meetings in October and November and would not have a draft to discuss with their members during these meetings under the proposed timeline. To remedy this situation, it was suggested that the outline discussed on the call be refined and distributed to the panels to use as a basis for discussion at their meetings.

**Action Items:**

The ANS Task Force Executive Secretary will work with staff from the co-chair organizations to refine the outlined goals, objectives, and strategies and distribute the revised draft outline to ANS Task Force members and regional panels to vet within their forums or organizations

The ANS Task Force Executive Secretary will work with staff from the co-chair organizations to develop a draft Strategic Plan using the outlined goals, objectives, and strategies as a foundation. The draft will be distributed to the ANS Task Force approximately 30 days before the next meeting, scheduled for December 12-13, 2018

**4. Public Comment**

None.

**5. Meeting Summary**

A list of final action items and decision items were reviewed (see above). The ANS Task Force Teleconference was adjourned.