

Meeting Minutes

SOUTH CAROLINA AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES TASK FORCE MEETING

Ramage Conference center
1001 Bluff Road
Columbia, South Carolina
Thursday, July 27, 2006
10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

In Attendance:

Tom Abrahamsen	USGS South Carolina Water Science Center
Marilyn Barrett-O'Leary	Southeastern Aquatic Resource Partnership
Wayne Boykin	National Park Service
Stephen Compton	Department of Plant Industry
Jason Crichton	South Carolina Aquarium
Steve de Kozlowski	SC Department of Natural Resources
Jeannie Eidson	SC Dept. of Health & Environmental Control
Ed EuDaly	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Larry Feller	SC Landscape Association
Ken Glenn	US Dept. of Agriculture - APHIS-PPQ
John Hensel	SCDHEC-OCRM
Bill Hulslander	Congaree National Park
David Knott	SC Department of Natural Resources
Robin Mackie	US Forest Service
Keith Nell	Port of Charleston
Matt Nespeca	The Nature Conservancy
Jennifer Rawlings	Riverbanks Zoo and Garden
Brandon Stutts	South Carolina Electric & Gas Co.
Kelly Jo Swygert	SC Department of Transportation
Susan Wilde	USC / SCDNR Marine Resources
David Wilkins	South Carolina Aquarium
Dick Yetter	USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service

Staff:

Steve de Kozlowski	SC Department of Natural Resources
Michael Hook	SC Department of Natural Resources
Chris Page	SC Department of Natural Resources

- 1. Welcome and Introductions**— Steve de Kozlowski, Chief, Environmental Conservation Section, SCDNR welcomed the task force and reviewed the purpose of the meeting which was to get to know each other and to provide background information on aquatic invasive species in general, and this project.

2. Overview of Regional & National Aquatic Invasive Species Activities

Ms. Barrett-O'Leary, ANS Coordinator, Southeastern Aquatic Resource Partnership gave a PowerPoint presentation on regional and national aquatic invasive species history and activities.

The following are highlights of information covered by Ms. Barrett O'Leary:

- Non-indigenous species are not always invasive
- Humans are the primary introducers of indigenous (invasive and non) species.
- The unique characteristics of invasive species
- The number of non-indigenous species has increased significantly since WWII due to an accelerated increase in international trade and travel
- The cost in plant, fish and economic loss due to invasive species is estimated to be in the billions of dollars.

The four core federal laws created to address the problems presented by invasive species:

NANPCA (1990)

- Created to address the zebra mussel invasion, and ballast water pathways.
- Established National ANS Task Force
- Called for state plans

NISA (1996)

- Introduced national guidelines, regional coordination
- Broadened the focus to include aquatic, terrestrial and other invasive species

Executive Order 13112 (1999)

- Coordinated departments
- Incorporated terrestrial as well as aquatic species
- Developed a National Invasive Species Management Plan

NAISA (2006 – in Congress)

- Reauthorized NISA; added regional/national management, education, federal support

Ms. Barrett-O'Leary discussed the role of the National ANS Task Force (1991)
Established by NANPCA

Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force

- Structure
- Goals
- Web site: www.anstaskforce.org
- The Regional Panels of the ANSTF
 - Panels now include all states

- The Regional Panels are currently encouraging and supporting the development of state aquatic invasive species management plans
- South Carolina is a member of the Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species.

National Invasive Species Council (1999) established by Executive Order 13112

- Website: www.invasivespecies.gov

Review of networks and support

- ANS Task Force & Congress
- NISC & Executive Branch
- Federal Agency Programs
- Regional Panels
- Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership.

Ms. Barrett O'Leary stated that a State AIS Management Plan is necessary because states have primary responsibility for people & resources

- AIS threaten health, biodiversity, and the economy of people and resources
- South Carolina has an advantage because it already has the multi-agency Aquatic Plant Management Council, an annual mechanism for plants, and a funding source.

Information is needed from every task force member

- ANS species in state, the problems caused and pathways to state
- State agencies' jurisdictions & needs related to species and pathways.

3. Overview of Aquatic Invasive Species Issues/Concerns in SC

Steve de Kozlowski thanked Ms. Barrett O'Leary and gave a Power Point presentation on aquatic invasive species issues and concerns in South Carolina. He reviewed the importance of the state's water resources and the increase in the number of introduced aquatic species in the last century. There has been a 6-fold increase in animals alone. Current issues include infestations by aquatic plants such as hydrilla, water hyacinth, and Phragmites. Impacts include clogged water intakes, restricted public access, impaired power production, flooding, displaced native vegetation, vector control problems, and impaired water quality. Since 1980, the state has treated over 60,000 acres of aquatic invasive plants at a cost of over \$15 million. There is still a potential for zebra mussel introductions. Other species of concern include northern snakehead fish, lionfish, Rapana Whelk, Green Mussels, and giant Salvinia.

The DNR just completed an ANS Communication Plan that established a list of priority AIS issues that include Invasive aquatic plants, zebra mussels, aquarium pets, ornamental pond species, invasive fish, fish, shellfish, and shrimp pathogens,

invasive bait fish and invasive aquaculture species. Many task force members were involved in the process. This group may or may not agree with this list.

Based on these concerns, the advisory committee also identified priority pathways in which AIS may be introduced to South Carolina. The pathways for marine and freshwater organisms were slightly different.

Marine Pathways- Seafood businesses, Ports and shipping, Recreational boaters, anglers, and hunters, and public aquaria.

Freshwater Pathways – Recreational boaters, anglers, hunters, Aquarium pet stores/owners, internet sales, Plant nursery trade, Commercial aquaculture, and Public zoos, aquaria, botanical gardens. Government agencies not included, but based on subsequent studies, should be. Greatest source of invasive species has been from intentional stocking (45%), aquarium releases (14%), shipping, and bait releases. Most introductions have been freshwater (85%).

Our state is at a distinct advantage in this planning process for at least three reasons:

- Aquatic Plant Management Council – We have an existing AIS organization model that seems to be working well. 10 member board of state agency representatives; DNR serves as chairman.
- Zebra Mussel Task Force – another model of multi-agency cooperation.
- State Communication Plan – This plan provides a good foundation for the Management Plan. Compiled ANS background information on issues, pathways, agency jurisdictions, regulations and recommendations.

4. Purpose of the AIS Task Force

Steve de Kozlowski informed the Task Force that their purpose was to:

- Assist in developing a statewide Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan
- Assist in implementing the state AIS Management Plan
- Provide a formal statewide communication network to address invasive species issues
 - Early detection and rapid response
 - Public education
 - Input into state and regional issues

5. South Carolina Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan

Steve de Kozlowski briefly reviewed the general outline of the proposed plan.

- Introduction
- Problem Definition
 - Species of concern

- Pathways
- Existing authorities and programs
- Goals and objectives
- Priorities of action
- Implementation Table
- Program monitoring and evaluation

The first three bullets have already been addressed in the communication plan but need to be reviewed and have input from the group. This is the first homework assignment. The next four items can be pulled from other state plans and crafted for South Carolina. He will work with Ms. O'Leary to get that information.

6. Task Force meeting schedule

Steve de Kozlowski reviewed the proposed task force schedule. Each meeting would have an educational component, activities period, and homework assignment. The tentative meeting dates are as follows:

July 27, 2006

Presentation- AIS and project overview

Activities- Introductions, general discussion

Homework- Review Communications Plan, existing authorities, species, and pathways of concern

September 28, 2006

Presentation- Port/shipping AIS precautions

Activities- Review input from homework; finalize background information

Homework- Review draft management goals and objectives from other states

November 2006 (Date to be assigned)

Presentation- Zoo/aquarium AIS precautions

Activities- Discuss input on draft management goals and objectives; finalize goals and objectives

Homework- Consider action items to achieve goals and objectives

January 2007 (Date to be assigned)

Presentation- TBA

Activities- Compile action items by goal and objective

Homework- Consider prioritization and timing of action items

March 2007 (Date to be assigned)

Presentation- TBA

Activities- Prioritize action items

Homework- Review and comment on draft AIS Management Plan

May 2007 (Date to be assigned)

Presentation- TBA

Activities- Review and approve AIS Management Plan

7. Questions and comments

The group decided that the meetings should be longer in order to cover all the material. So future meetings will start at 9:00 am. the group also decided that the next meeting should be held somewhere in Charleston. The SC Aquarium or DNR offices at Fort Johnson will be considered. All meetings will be held roughly on the last Thursday of the month.

The homework assignment given to review and comment on existing authorities, species of concern, and pathways as presented in the ANS Communications Plan. Emails would be sent as reminders.

8. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 12:30pm.

