

Meeting Minutes

SOUTH CAROLINA AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES TASK FORCE MEETING

South Carolina Aquarium
100 Aquarium Wharf
Charleston, South Carolina
Thursday, September 28, 2006
9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

In Attendance:

Tom Abrahamsen
Stephen Compton
Colette Degarady
Mary G. Douglas
Ed EuDaly
Larry Feller
Ken Glenn
Bill Hulslander
Stan Hutto
John Inabinet
Rachel Kalisperis
David Knott
Eddie Lasane
Billy Lempesis
Ken Manuel
John Mauger
Keith Nell
Melissa Rada
Jennifer Rawlings
Lisa Stephenson
David Wilkins

Organization

USGS South Carolina Water Science Center
Department of Plant Industry
The Nature Conservancy
US Department of Agriculture, APHIS
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
SC Landscape and Turfgrass Association
US Dept. of Agriculture - APHIS-PPQ
Congaree National Park
SC Parks, Recreation and Tourism
Santee Cooper
SC Aquarium
SC Department of Natural Resources
US Coast Guard
SC State Ports Authority
Duke Energy
US Coast Guard
Port of Charleston
SC Dept. of Health & Environmental Control-OCRM
Riverbanks Zoo and Garden
Volunteer – US Geological Survey
SC Aquarium

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1. Opening Comments

Steve de Kozlowski, SCDNR, welcomed the Task Force members and visitors. He thanked Jason Crichton (absent) and David Wilkins for arranging for the meeting at the Aquarium and for the tour afterward.

He asked if there were any modifications needed to the minutes from the July meeting before they were finalized. None were made and the minutes were finalized.

Steve introduced Lt. Commander John Mauger from the Coast Guard stationed in Charleston.

2. Enforcement of U.S. Coast Guard Ballast Water Regulations in South Carolina
Lt Commander John Mauger, *U.S. Coast Guard, Charleston*

Lt. Commander Mauger introduced Lt. Lesane to give a presentation on the Coast Guards ballast water management regulations. He reviewed the history of the program, mandatory requirements, the examination process, and enforcement actions. Aquatic nuisance species discharged from ballast water can cause billions of dollars in direct and indirect costs, cause adverse impacts to the quality of life, and cause potentially serious damage to aquatic ecosystems.

The historical progression of the Ballast Water Management (BWM) program was:

- 1990 – Mandatory ballast water management initiated in the Great Lakes.
- 1996 - The National Invasive Species Act of 1996 charged the Coast Guard with initiating a voluntary ballast water management program in all U.S. ports and required all vessels to submit reports.
- 1997 – The National Ballast Information Clearinghouse was created.
- 2001 – Mandatory ballast water reporting and record keeping required for all ports in U.S.

All vessels in U.S. waters equipped with BW tanks must:

- Develop a ship specific BW plan addresses management, staff training and record keeping.
- Report before departing a port or place of departure if the voyage is < 24 hrs; or 24 hrs before arrival to a port or place of destination if voyage is >24 hrs
- Employ primary BWM practices:
 1. Maintain ballast on board
 2. Minimize ballast water uptake or discharge in certain locations & times
 3. Complete mid-ocean exchange of ballast water no less than 200 NM off any shore
- Exemptions include Crude Oil Tankers on Coastwise Voyage, Dept. of Defense vessels (Coast Guard and Armed Service Vessels), and Vessels that operate exclusively in one COTP Zone.

The Coast Guard's initial report to Congress indicated that there was inadequate compliance with the reporting law. Initially only 20% of vessels submitted reports during voluntary period. That increased to 40% after two years.

Coast Guard Ballast Water Examination:

- Primary goal: To determine if vessel is in compliance with BWM during regular PSC safety examinations & to verify whether ballast water strategies were implemented
- Pre-examination preparation:
 1. Prior to conducting examinations, CG MI's review the vessel's history in our MISLE database (Any current BWM lookout list issued by CG HQs).

Aboard the vessel:

1. Check anchor equipment, hull and components visible below water line for biofouling (i.e., seaweed, barnacles, other algae and shellfish).
2. If at DD, verify if sediments in ballast tanks; if so vessel must dispose of in accordance with State and local laws (Vessels should be cleaning tanks regularly).
3. Check for specific ballast water plan; if a plan is not made available a violation for failure to comply and an expanded examination will be conducted.
4. CG Marine Inspectors presently examine onboard BWM records going back 2 years

5. If vessel is on BWM Lookout List for failing to report or is suspected of being out of compliance, ensure expanded examination is conducted (Ballast Water Sampling to be included).

Vessels that fail to comply w/BWM requirements are subject to the following: Verbal Education, Letter of Warning, Notice of Violations, Civil Penalties (\$32,500/day), Suspension and Revocation, Captain of the Port Orders, Criminal Charges (Class C Felony). Charleston Coast Guard focuses mainly on education. Most vessels are now in compliance with the law.

3. Precautions to Prevent the Introduction of AIS into South Carolina Ports
Billy Lempeis, General Manager Berthing and Scheduling, State Ports Authority

The State Ports Authority activities are governed by the Federal Maritime Commission rules. Over 2000 commercial ships pass through the Charleston Port each year, 97% of those are container ships. No bulk cargo that passes through SPA Charleston terminals. However, Georgetown SPA terminal does handle bulk cargo. Some bulk cargo is handled in Charleston at private terminals. Not all ports in the state are run by the SPA, some are privately operated and do not fall under their jurisdiction. New Homeland Security laws require closer scrutiny of ships and cargo. SPA does not inspect ballast water and U.S. Customs inspects cargo.

4. Review and finalize existing agency authorities and programs, species of concern, pathways of concern (Based on homework review and input by task force members)

Steve asked the task force to refer to the handout "Summary of Task Force Comments". Five members submitted comments after reviewing the homework assignment, Ken Glenn, Dick Yetter, John Inabinet, Thomas Abrahamsen, and Ken Manuel. Steve expressed his appreciation for their input. The task force reviewed and discussed each of their written comments (see attachment). Bill Hulslander offered to provide jurisdiction write-up for the National Park Service. All wording and change suggestions were accepted.

Steve then referred the Task Force to the draft plan outline in their handout packet (see attachment). He reviewed the major outline headings of all other state management plans. Most of the major headings are dictated by state plan guidelines from the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. He went through each major section of the plan and discussed content and gaps in information.

Introduction – Most of the content is determined by the ANSTF guidelines; staff will put some words together for this section.

Historic AIS Problems in SC – This would be a general discussion of AIS problems and cost to give reader an overview of the problem in SC. Some text can come from the Communication Plan. He asked for input on impacts to electric power plants, marine impacts, and aquaculture release problems.

Invasive Species of Concern – This section was developed primarily from the Communication Plan. There is good content for the plant section; he discussed other species that may be added like alligatorweed, water primrose and Brazilian elodea. Most freshwater fish write-ups are already available. Other fish suggested by the TF were snakehead, white bass, and swamp eel. Steve will get with Chris Thomason (DNR Fisheries) to discuss further. Additional mollusks beside Asiatic clams and zebra

mussels were suggested. These were Giant Asian snail, Channeled apple snail, and Viviparus species.

There was a long discussion on including mosquitoes in the plan. Two exotics from Asia have arrived and are displacing natives and old non-natives. It was decided that they would be included. Steve asked John Inabinet to provide a write-up on the mosquitoes and the agencies that are responsible for management. Other additions to the plan included freshwater crustaceans (crabs, crayfish) and the mammal Nutria. David Knott will provide write-ups for the marine animals (Lionfish, Rapana whelk, green mussel).

Pathways of Introductions – Steve discussed the USGS pathways database and showed summary graphs. It is a good source of information but we need to check entries and modify as necessary to make sure it is as accurate as possible. This will be used to provide an overview of how invasive species are getting into the state. The categories were reviewed and some changes made. Aquarium and pet release/escapes were combined to “Aquarium/Pet Trade (intentional and accidental releases)”. The shipping category was clarified to “Maritime Industry”. Content is available for many of these, but we need more. Billy Lempesis was asked to help with the Shipping section, Jack Whetstone with the Aquaculture section, and Chris Thomason with the Stocking and Bait sections.

Jurisdictions and Responsibilities - Write-ups are available for most of the agencies listed from the Communication Plan. Steve asked if this is a complete list. Is anyone left out? The National Park Service will be added. Since mosquitoes have been added some new agencies need to be added. John Inabinet was asked to provide write-ups for those agencies. How do we handle electric utilities that have lake management responsibilities under the FERC? General consensus was to include discussion about individual power companies and not FERC.

5. Other Business
 - a. Homework Assignment
The scheduled homework assignment (review management goals and objectives) was changed because additional work was needed to complete the background information. DNR staff will flesh-out the approved outline for sections 1-6 and send it out to the Task Force for review and, hopefully, review and approval at the next meeting.
 - b. Future Meeting Dates
Steve informed the Task Force that future meeting dates would be **November 30, January 25, March 29, May 31** based on the agreed to meeting on the last Thursday of alternate months.
 - c. Next meeting location
The Task Force agreed to meet in Columbia at Riverbanks Zoo or Congaree National Park on November 30.
6. Adjournment for Lunch
The members adjourned for lunch about 12:15.
7. Behind the Scenes Tour of the Aquarium
David Wilkins took about 10 members of the Task Force for an excellent and informative tour of the Aquarium.