

MISSISSIPPI AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES TASK FORCE

Tuesday, April 26, 2005
9:00 a.m. – 11:35 a.m. CST

Minutes of Meeting

Participants: Phil Bass (MDEQ); Dale Diaz (MDMR); Tom Herrington (FDA/GoMP); Vernon Hartley (MS Farm Bureau); Gene Robertson and Jim Lipe (MDAC); Craig Tucker (MS State National Warmwater Aquaculture Center); Marilyn O'Leary (SARP/Louisiana Sea Grant); Ron Lukens (Gulf States Marine Fisheries Commission); George Ramseur (The Nature Conservancy, Ocean Springs); Doug Meffert, Richard Campanella, and Alysia Kravitz Loshbaugh (Center for Bioenvironmental Research).

I. OPENING REMARKS AND INTRODUCTION

The meeting commenced at approximately 9:00 a.m.

P. Bass provided an update on funding for the management plan. The EPA Gulf of Mexico Program will contribute about one-third of the necessary funds, and another one-third is currently already funded. P. Bass relayed that MDWFP may be able to fund the remaining third with next year's funds.

P. Bass reminded the group that the Mississippi plan is already well underway at this third Task Force meeting and that the writers should have the beginnings of a first draft before the fourth meeting.

II. WHERE WE ARE IN THE PROCESS

R. Campanella gave an overview of the management plan process thus far and then summarized the topics for today's meeting. The Task Force first met in October 2004 with the overall goal of drafting a Mississippi Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan. The first meeting consisted of a round-table discussion of the various issues within the state. The second meeting in January 2005 resulted in a number of decisions on how to alter / adjust the Louisiana management plan toward Mississippi's specific situation. Some of these decisions include:

- Re-working the Louisiana definition of "aquatic species" to a three-tiered system comprising (1) aquatic-based species, (2) aquatic-impacting species, and (3) aquatic-associated pathways;
- Include "native transplant" species (species native to the U.S. and southeast region but not to Mississippi);
- Include non-native viruses, bacteria, and parasites in the plan, particularly stressing those that may arrive in ballast water or other aquatic pathways;
- Making education / outreach the primary objective in the management plan, followed by control and management, early eradication, and regulation.

R. Campanella concluded by informing the group that the items for discussion would be: the three species lists (approved / restricted / banned) and identifying those species that warrant description in the management plan.

III. DISCUSSION: COMPILATION OF RECOMMENDED STATE INVASIVE SPECIES LISTS

The Task Force reviewed the exact language of the law that mandates the establishment of the species lists. A. Loshbaugh raised the issue of terminology. Should the Task Force use the language in the statute or, in creating / recommending these lists, would the Task Force prefer to recommend better terminology (example: "white" list, "black" list, etc.). Current terminology is the approved / restricted / prohibited lists. The general consensus was that the Task Force should recommend lists using the same terminology in the statute.

The Task Force agreed that the list should be very inclusive and include both fresh- and salt-water species.

After much discussion, the group decided to define the three lists as follows:

- **Approved List** – comprises all species native to Mississippi and nonnative species found to be benign or beneficial. The "benign" or "beneficial" classification will be based on the results of a scientific risk analysis.
- **Restricted List** – will include species approved for aquaculture and/or that require a permit for possession / sale / use / transport / etc.
- **Prohibited List** – comprises certain species already known to be invasive (example: all snakehead species). In general, all nonnative species not already on the "approved" or "restricted" lists will be placed on the prohibited list. For a species to be removed from the prohibited list and placed on one of the other two lists, it must undergo a scientific risk analysis.

ACTION: R. Campanella and A. Loshbaugh will sort the USGS species list (compiled and distributed to membership before meeting) into the three lists using the above definitions. The sorted lists will be circulated to the Task Force for approval. Any species about which R. Campanella and A. Loshbaugh have no knowledge or incomplete knowledge will be placed on a fourth "unknown" list and will be sorted by the Task Force at a later date.

A. Loshbaugh and R. Campanella then shifted the discussion and asked the Task Force which species warrant specific mention, description, and discussion in the management plan. This will form the basis for much of Chapter 3: Problem Definitions. A. Loshbaugh stressed that in this portion of the management plan, it is not necessary to list and describe every single invasive species within the state, but just those that are of particular concern and need special attention.

To start the discussion, A. Loshbaugh distributed a handout based on a submission from Dennis Riecke (MDWFP) where he describes his concerns for invasive species management in the state. The Task Force discussed each species on the handout and decided whether or not to include it in the Problem Definition chapter. A complete list of the known invasives in Mississippi will be in one of the appendices. The species in Chapter 3 will be grouped into the following categories based on their ranges within the state: Extensively Established, Recently Established, and Potential Arrivals.

The Task Force concluded that the following species warranted inclusion in Chapter 3 of the management plan:

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| • Silver carp | • Bighead carp | • Black carp |
| • Common carp | • Grass carp | • Tilapia |
| • Nutria | • Australian spotted jellyfish | • Giant Malaysian prawn |
| • Zebra mussel | • Green mussel | • Armored catfish |
| • Hydrilla | • Purple loosestrife | • Eurasian watermilfoil |
| • Water lettuce | • Water hyacinth | • Giant salvinia |
| • Common salvinia | • Torpedo grass | • Peruvian watergrass |
| • Wild taro ("elephant ear") | • Cogon grass | • Chinese tallow tree |
| • Tropical soda apple | • Kudzu | |

ACTION: R. Campanella and A. Loshbaugh will prepare a first draft of the Mississippi Management Plan and circulate it to the Task Force membership prior to the next meeting.

IV. MISSISSIPPI INVASIVE SPECIES ACTIVITIES BY THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

G. Ramseur gave a very interesting presentation on The Nature Conservancy and its ongoing invasive species activities in Mississippi. Species he specifically discussed included: cogon grass, Chinese privet, Japanese climbing fern, torpedo grass, and Chinese tallow trees. G. Ramseur indicated that The Nature Conservancy in Mississippi currently focuses mostly on terrestrial invasive species and not as much on aquatics.

V. FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 21, 2005, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. CST. The meeting will be in the second floor conference room at the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources, Bolton State Office Building, located at 1141 Bayview Avenue in Biloxi.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 11:35 a.m. CST.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Bass
Chairman, Mississippi Aquatic Invasive Species Task Force

Subject to Approval

* Although kudzu is strictly a terrestrial species, the Task Force deemed that it would be remiss to not at least briefly mention kudzu and the problems it causes within the state.