

MEETING OF THE INVASIVE SPECIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ISAC)

August 15, 2023 (Virtual via Zoom)

1:00 pm – 5:00 pm (ET)

DRAFT MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC)

Voting Members

- Charles T. Barger, IV, Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health, University of Georgia
- Laura Brewington, Arizona State University/East-West Center
- Carrie J. Brown-Lima, Cornell University/NY Invasive Species Research Institute [ISAC Vice Chair]
- Leah Elwell, Invasive Species Action Network
- Slade Franklin, Wyoming Department of Agriculture [ISAC Chair]
- Leigh F. Greenwood, The Nature Conservancy
- Jack Hicks, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Jiri Hulcr, Institute of Food and Agriculture Sciences, University of Florida
- Christy Martin, University of Hawai'i/Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species
- David Pegos, California Department of Food and Agriculture
- Leroy Rodgers, III, South Florida Water Management District
- Lizbeth Ann Seebacher, Pacific Northwest Invasive Plant Council/University of Washington

Ex Officio (Non-Voting) Members

- Nicole Angeli, Association of Fish and Wildlife
- Laurel James, Native American Fish and Wildlife Society
- Steven H. Long, National Plant Board
- William Simshauser, National Association of Conservation Districts

National Invasive Species Council (NISC) Staff

- Kelsey Brantley, Operations Director and ISAC Coordinator
- Stas Burgiel, Executive Director and FACA Designated Federal Officer
- Bryan Falk, Program Analyst
- Angela McMellen Brannigan, Technical Advisor

PROCEEDINGS

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Burgiel opened the meeting at 1:00 pm ET. He reflected on the recent wildfires and the role that invasive grasses played in the recent events on Maui. He noted that loss of life is one of the most tragic and often unexpected impacts of invasive species and called for further attention by federal agencies and their partners to the intersection of wildland fire and invasive species. After conducting the roll call and reviewing the agenda, **Burgiel** reiterated the purpose of the meeting as an opportunity for ISAC members to provide input into the work of three subcommittees focused on national priorities, underserved communities, and climate change.

Franklin, ISAC Chair, thanked everyone for their efforts in the subcommittees and for taking time to discuss their outputs today. He noted that these papers should be viewed as coming from the full committee and not just the subcommittee meetings. He thereby urged everyone to provide input to make sure that their concerns and perspectives are reflected in the documents.

ISAC Subcommittee Work Product Updates and Group Discussion

Subcommittee on National Priorities

Chair: ISAC Member Leah Elwell, Invasive Species Action Network

Elwell introduced the subcommittee's work focused on national priorities and the draft document that it produced. She reviewed how each of the incoming ISAC members was asked to provide three priorities, which resulted in a very extensive and broad list. Given their varied nature, the subcommittee struggled with determining which were truly national level priorities. **Elwell** recognized that not all of the submitted priorities may be reflected in the draft and asked ISAC to review the document with their original priorities in mind. She also noted questions around how to organize the information and proposed using the steps of the invasion curve as a structure.

Burgiel stated that the original assignment requested that ISAC identify national level priorities that NISC could then consider and determine whether any should be further addressed by NISC, its individual member agencies, or ISAC. He noted some concerns from federal agencies that the current framing of priorities in the form of recommendations could pre-judge such further work. He suggested that for the purposes of this discussion, ISAC focus on the substance and refer the issue of framing priorities to the subcommittee. **Franklin** also noted the issue of recommendations vs. topics and suggested that a focus on topics could provide additional opportunities to work with NISC and federal agencies.

Brown-Lima noted variation in the amount of detail across the different topics and suggested being more consistent. On the paper's organization, she supported use of the invasion curve as an organizational structure. **Brown-Lima** and **Franklin** supported moving the section on biosecurity could be placed within the section on prevention. **Brown-Lima** also asked to what extent federal agencies coordinate their biosecurity efforts. **Burgiel** noted that different agencies interpret the term biosecurity differently depending on their mission. He stated that in some areas like agricultural pests at ports of entry there is already a high degree of coordination, whereas in others, such as aquatic invasive species at ports of entry, there is a need to enhance coordination. **Hucl** noted that some of the more general text on biosecurity could be included in the introduction, and also suggested looking at programs that are working well as opposed to proposing new projects. **Rodgers** noted that the prevention section focused a lot on outreach and could also focus on pathway analysis and horizon scanning to inform work at borders. **Hucl** also suggested considering how federal agencies can work with international partners. **Greenwood** noted that existing language on pathways tended to focus on the domestic side. She suggested looking at international pathways and suggested additional focus on international agreements and efforts to address the movement of invasive species.

Numerous speakers highlighted the importance of coordination across federal agencies and with states, Tribes, and territorial governments. **Brown-Lima** suggested separate sections focusing on federal and state coordination and noted the need for additional support to states. **Rodgers** emphasized the role of agency leadership in supporting such coordination. **Pegos** highlighted the role of state invasive species councils as a mechanism for coordination within states, but also suggested that they could be a means of communicating across states and with federal agencies. **Angeli** highlighted the role of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in coordinating across states, noting that they convene discussions at least four times a year. **Martin** noted the efforts of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force in promoting state aquatic invasive species plans as a means to qualify for grants. **Brown** added that this system was authorized and appropriated through the National Invasive Species Act of 1996 (which amended the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act of 1990). **Simshauser** suggested recognition of conservation districts and other entities with boots on the ground that can help with information sharing. He noted that some of these groups have good connections with federal agencies, such as USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service. **Burgiel** reiterated the need to consider the federal role in engaging state agencies and councils.

On lists of prohibited species, there was significant discussion on the capacity of states to develop and enforce such lists, along with a potential role for federal support. **Brown-Lima** supported the idea of a database including state lists. **Angeli** suggested including relevant authorities that states use to manage invasive species. **Martin** highlighted the difficulties in compiling such information particularly given the nuances applicable to each state. She highlighted the example of the National Plant Board which points to websites maintained by the states. **Long** expressed concern about language that might "mandate" states to have lists noting that state, as well as federal, agencies may be limited in their capacity or by their authorities. **Hulcr** asked about the role of federal prohibited species lists and noted that if it does not include a particular species that might serve as a disincentive for states to be concerned about it. **Martin** also noted the role of international frameworks in guiding what federal agencies can do. **Burgiel** reminded the group that the focus needs to be on the role of federal agencies.

On early detection and rapid response (EDRR), **Martin** noted the value of a USDA training program on the National Incident Management System and suggested that it be reflected as a potential resource. **Rodgers** supported looking at ways to strengthen partnerships between federal and state agencies.

On examples of specific invasive species, **Franklin** suggested including invasive annual grasses given their intersection with wildland fire in the West and most recently on Maui. **Hulcr** questioned why the list of species was included under the section on data sharing and noted that the group was not trying to conduct a horizon scan of threatening species. **Elwell** noted the subcommittee's deliberations on how and where to include species examples given that many were highlighted in the original submissions. She noted that they could de-emphasize the examples. **Hulcr** suggested that species examples could be placed under topics where they might be relevant. **Brown-Lima** recognized that particular species may not be of national concern as they impact particular states or regions.

On control and regulatory issues, **Franklin** noted that EPA's evaluation of how pesticides may impact endangered species could restrict their application to invasive species. He suggested further analysis of the longer term, unanticipated consequences of such restrictions. **Brown-Lima** proposed a slightly broader focus on where regulations may be restricting longer term management options, highlighting difficulties with the review and approval of biological control agents as another example. **Hulcr** noted that sometimes simplifying regulations can result in higher risk, which needs to be considered.

Moving forward, **Elwell** asked ISAC members to submit additional comments on the draft in writing for consideration by the subcommittee.

Subcommittee on Underserved Communities

Chair: ISAC Member Christy Martin, University of Hawai'i/Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species

Martin introduced the work of the underserved communities subcommittee and the draft document that has been produced. **Martin** discussed the process used to produce the paper and walked the group through the process explaining that the group brought in a guest speaker from the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), framed the introduction as more of an abstract, and started the paper with a definition. The committee wanted to structure their paper the same as other ISAC papers but found the flow of the document was better if the recommendations came at the end. The group tried to use case studies to provide context for recommendations. The group wanted recommendations that would provide benefit to many and represented the many different types of underserved communities.

The group gave feedback on general impressions of the paper. **Brown-Lima** responded that she enjoyed reading it and found it full of interesting information but found the layout challenging and will provide in writing suggestions on reformatting sections. **Angeli** commented that she did enjoy reading the document but found that funding disparities between or even within regions were not clearly evident. She suggested it would be good to look for historic disparities and rectify moving forward especially for grant programs. **Rogers** agreed with the other comments saying the document reads well but could use some polishing and reformatting for scanners. He did make one comment on recommendations saying that number 9 addressed lack resources but not present a good solution to the problem. **Martin** noted that the recommendations might be a structural issue as the group struggled with a balance between specificity and a one-line recommendation. She noted that other white papers highlight recommendation and if want more specifics read above that.

Brown- Lima noted that there are sections on climate change in the priorities document and the and underserved communities paper. The subcommittees should coordinate so the language is cohesive and consistent between subcommittees. **Martin** noted it would be helpful to coordinate on climate and that help on the climate part would be appreciated.

Martin noted that the group spent time reviewing the CEQ and EPA tools and looked at the importance of the tools in various federal agencies and wanted to spend a few minutes talking about that. **Martin** explained that the third paragraph tried to bring in the definition of underserved communities from executive orders and noted that some characteristics can be mapped, but others cannot so the group spent time looking at EPA and CEQ tools. The group is concerned that big sections of underserved communities that are not being prioritized because do not fit on a map. **Greenwood** noted the paper could use a recommendation in that theme of using maps as an overly directive tool. What is the concrete statement there? **Martin** explained that they used the case studies to see how the tools fit and that the end of each paragraph explored the intersection between invasive species and underserved communities and also how well tools worked for each case study.

Franklin noted that the local capacity to get these projects on the ground is the most important and asked the group if the subcommittee addressed the priority of eliminating roadblocks in assisting these communities. **Rogers** answered the question by saying that the paper could use more work on bringing it out noting he did not see actionable information that agency could work with on helping underserved communities.

Martin noted that two of the call outs that could go here were adequately providing access or prioritized access to grants and helping communities recognizing the opportunities as relevant to them. **Pegos** shared that Laurel did great work with showing technical assistance provided by her organization and the impact it had and that needed to be more apparent in the document.

Angeli recommended moving the recommendations towards the top and using headers. **Angeli** noted that under number 5 that the America the Beautiful had great outreach to tribes and insular areas and subsequently received applications from a wide variety of people because of the tracks that they established as the invitation is the most important.

Brown- Lima asked if the subcommittees receive assistance on formatting or are given a specific format to use. **Burgiel** responded that layout services available explaining that a Word document would be adopted by ISAC and then professional layout services used. Subcommittees should note any specific layout requests in document.

Franklin wanted to consider next steps since the full ISAC is fairly supportive. He noted that many organizations have gone through funding with BIL and the committee would like to pull in folks who have evaluated grants from underserved communities to assess the good and bad to make sure helping answer the question asked of the subcommittee. **Burgiel** said that NISC staff can help figure out who those folks are. **Martin** noted that the most important recommendation is meeting underserved communities where they are.

Martin noted that the committee was asked about data sets that could make it easier to address underserved communities and invasive species. She noted that Pacific Islanders are natural resources dependent, but it is challenging to map. **James** noted that keeping up with mapping invasives is a never-ending battle noting the example of cheatgrass on rangelands. It is impossible to stay on top of it when resources are limited, and it spreads so rapidly. **Martin** noted that the fire on Lahaina was fed by invasive buffelgrass and other invasives, but nobody mapped these invasive species because so widespread. She asked the group how to map the ones that become invasive and how to continue to map when there are no resources to do so.

Greenwood noted that prevention is more impactful and needed given lack of resources noting that having limited suite of options could mean you miss important opportunities.

Seebacher noted that the recent fires on Maui may be a good opportunity to bring to people's attention in media. **Martin** stated that there have been articles in NYTimes and Washington Post. Lahaina was surrounded by these invasive grasses and the communities are more aware than we give credit for. Meeting where they are could have prevented this. Fire safe communities program in Hawaii it a great program and model of working with local communities.

Angeli noted that one of challenges of working outside the contiguous US is the lack of baseline data. Those areas need data sets that could easily be integrated into so those communities can have the same type of mapping and data management capabilities. **Brewington** noted that there is a lack of climate data and climate projections available for islands and will brainstorm innovative ways to solve problem of no long-term monitoring and missing data in certain areas. **Martin** noted that islands and rural areas lack connectivity which can limit access to data and those areas need partners to help with accessing data.

Burgiel asked for any additional comments from the group, and none were forthcoming. **Martin** thanked the group for agreeing to meet every other meet to group and staff.

BREAK (15 minutes)

Subcommittee on Climate Change

Chair: ISAC Member Leigh Greenwood, The Nature Conservancy

Greenwood, chair of the subcommittee on climate change, provided context on the development of the draft paper on climate change and invasive species, noting that the intersection of those fields is large and altogether unwieldy for their 2-year term. After much discussion, the subcommittee made the decision to tightly focus on how invasive species exacerbate climate change impacts and interfere with climate-resiliency strategies, while also acknowledging that climate change worsens invasive species issues. Greenwood outlined the current structure of the draft paper. The first section provides recommendations, the second section provides a series of case studies to bolster the recommendations, and the third section is not yet drafted.

Subcommittee on Climate Change (continued)

Hulcr suggested a stronger emphasis on the capacity for invasive species to impede climate-change mitigations (e.g., forest pests). **Greenwood** replied that they did try to do that, but they will clarify and strengthen that language. **Brewington** noted that they discussed illustrating that relationship with a diagram, which is in early development and so not yet ready for peer feedback. **Elwell** supported the inclusion of a figure.

Hulcr noted that while beautiful, some of the language was high-level and perhaps ambiguous. **Pegos** said they try to write their documents at the 6th-grade level. **Greenwood** agreed, saying that they will simplify the language and asking that members flag any specific sections that need attention.

Pegos thought the structure of the document, with the recommendations clear and at the front, was effective. **Greenwood** noted that they kept the examples discrete from the recommendations and asked for feedback on that approach. The goal of section 3 will be to highlight success stories.

Franklin asked if the case studies that haven't yet been written will be extensively detailed or not. **Greenwood** clarified that the subcommittee brainstormed about which case studies should be included, resulting in the current list, and they intend to provide more details on those listed but not yet expanded. The case study on water hyacinth is the approximate length and depth the subcommittee is aiming for, and feedback is welcome.

Brewington described how some of the case studies have evolved, with many being much more detailed in earlier iterations. The subcommittee is considering including those more-detailed versions in an appendix. **Brown-Lima** urged members to consider if any case studies are more effective than others or if any are missing.

Hulcr asked if tree and forest pests were missing, particularly those that impede attempts at carbon sequestration, and **Greenwood** replied that those examples are there, but they may have omitted some or perhaps should have covered them in a different way, and she asked for specific examples of any they missed.

Martin raised the example of invasive strawberry guava in Hawai'i, a plant with higher evapotranspiration rates than native species and thus negative impacts to water cycling. **Greenwood** said they did include salt cedar, an invasive plant with similar impacts, but the strawberry guava example is a good one, and she'd welcome additional details so they can include it. **Martin** shared via chat that she heard a talk by Andrew Nottingham about tropical forests and climate change. Hot soil attracts *Wasmannia* fire ants (Buhan et. al.), thus a warming climate makes more suitable habitat in the U.S.

Burgiel recognized that there are many ways to organize the case studies, and because the second recommendation acknowledges the Regional Invasive Species and Climate Change (RISCC) networks, he wondered if that reinforces the importance of regional approaches, and if so, whether regional differences should be reflected in the case studies. **Greenwood** replied that the subcommittee has discussed regional differences, giving the example of Japanese barberry, where the degree of invasiveness is variable among regions. **Burgiel** further clarified that in addition to the RISCC networks, there is regional organization among some federal agencies (e.g., USGS Climate Adaptation Science Centers, USDA Climate Hubs, NOAA Regional Climate Centers) that the subcommittee may address, and **Greenwood** agreed, asking for more information on those federal bodies.

Franklin wondered whether there are examples to link economic costs of invasive species, and **Greenwood** said they did include information on averted loss from brown treesnakes, and they may be able to bolster that with additional examples (e.g., spongy moth). **Brewington** has begun drafting a case study on invasive ants that also includes economic costs, including those incurred and that may be averted. **James** wondered about the potential for including costs that are very complex or astronomically high, confounding accurate estimation, and she gave the examples of cheat grass and the spruce budworm. That information may be unavailable, but the costs nonetheless exist. **Greenwood** acknowledged this difficulty and recalled how the subcommittee discussed direct and indirect costs, where sometimes the difference is ambiguous. **Burgiel** noted that stating the problem or question may be worthwhile, even if it can't be solved or answered. **Hulcr** suggested that the importance of incalculable costs could be emphasized by perhaps giving it its own section. **Greenwood** agreed on the importance and wondered if it would be a better fit for the paper on national priorities, rather than climate change; she and Elwell will coordinate. **Pegos** noted they have relevant data for a couple counties in California, available at: <https://ucanr.edu/sites/pshb/pest-overview/#potential-economic-impact>.

Burgiel asked for more explanation of section 3 of the draft paper, particularly the stated intent to solicit feedback from federal staff. **Greenwood** described the subcommittee's process, specifically that they wanted to

draft and get ISAC-member feedback on the first two sections during this August meeting before tackling the last section. While the subcommittee is not done scoping section 3, they tentatively plan to meet with agency staff to determine how they might craft actionable, agency-specific advice. **Angeli** suggested including not just federal but also state agencies, emphasizing the potential for collaboration. **Hulcr** suggested giving research its own section to emphasize that solutions to our problems will come from research. **Greenwood** said the subcommittee will consider whether research could be included as a recommendation, and **Burgiel** gave an update that NISC has begun discussion on how to better coordinate research priorities and ensure that research effectively addressing the most pressing questions. He also said that he and Falk could facilitate interaction with relevant federal staff.

Greenwood stated the subcommittee's intent to identify case studies that would more likely capture the attention of NISC-member agencies that may not otherwise consider invasive species (e.g., highlighting the negative impacts of invasive species to bridges would be relevant to the Department of Transportation). She asked committee members for help in identifying other such case studies.

Burgiel asked for final thoughts or comments on the efforts of the subcommittee on climate change, with **Franklin** acknowledging that some members joined late and may have comments on papers they were not able to give. There were no additional comments for the subcommittee on climate change.

Review of Next Steps

Regarding finalization of their work prior to the November ISAC meeting, all the subcommittees stated that they should be able to develop final drafts in time. The group discussed a timeline for receiving written comments on the current drafts and agreed to provide them to the respective subcommittee chair and DFO by August 30. The group also discussed a timeline for completion of the draft subcommittee outputs targeting late October, as well as opportunities to address any final comments during the November meeting itself. **Burgiel** noted that these issues would be incorporated into discussions on the November meeting's agenda with the ISAC Chair, Vice Chair, and subcommittee chairs. He also noted the need to consider federal updates on priority issues, discussion of future topics for ISAC's consideration, and engagement with NISC member agency representatives.

Martin asked about how the subcommittees could coordinate on cross-cutting topics such as climate change, and **Burgiel** suggested convening a meeting of the subcommittee chairs in late September. The subcommittee leads also noted the need for some coordination with federal agency experts to provide clarification and context on specific issues identified in the draft papers. **Burgiel** stated that he would liaise with NISC member agency representatives to identify a path forward for such engagement.

Regarding questions on formatting of the papers, **Burgiel** noted that the papers would be laid out professionally after their adoption by ISAC and that they could include graphics or figures. The group also discussed whether to use a similar format across the three papers and generally agreed that could be discussed at a meeting of the subcommittee chairs.

Angeli's recent appointment to ISAC as an ex officio member representing the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies was noted, and she expressed her interest in working with the subcommittee on national priorities.

Logistics Overview: ISAC Fall Meeting; November 13-15, 2023, U.S. Department of the Interior (Udall Building), Washington DC

Kelsey Brantley, NISC Operations Director and ISAC Coordinator

Brantley reviewed ongoing planning for the next ISAC meeting, scheduled for November 13-15, 2023, in Washington, D.C. The venue would be the Udall Department of the Interior Building. She explained that she is working with the Courtyard Marriott Foggy Bottom to secure lodging for ISAC members. **Brantley** requested that all ISAC members complete their travel and reimbursement forms by September 8, 2023, which need to be transmitted by encrypted email, fax, or priority mail. She stated that she is currently identifying a travel contact who can assist members with flight arrangements.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were received from the public.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Franklin called for adjournment of the meeting. **Simshauser** made a movement to adjourn, which was seconded by **Martin**. The meeting ended at 4:45 pm ET.