

NISC / ISAC Meeting – May 2015, Silver Spring, MD

The Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC) will hold a meeting to discuss a broad range of topics related to invasive species. These discussions will serve as a basis for making recommendations to the National Invasive Species Committee and to shape future work efforts of ISAC. While the meeting will focus on a broad range of invasive species topics, special emphasis will be placed on facilitating the productivity of ISAC subcommittees.

ACTION OR INFORMATION ITEM

SPONSORING NISC/ISAC MEMBER: Bonnie L. Harper-Lore

COMMITTEE AFFILIATION: Prevention

PRESENTER'S NAME/AFFILIATION: USDOT Policy Liaison (TBD); and Deirdre Remley, FHWA

TOPIC: Recommendation #137, FHWA's activities in support of roadside management principles

1. DESCRIPTION OF AGENDA ITEM:

This is a status report of the Federal Highway Administration's activities to help State DOTs implement integrated roadside vegetation management principles. Well managed highway roadsides can help prevent the spread of invasive plants and serve as habitat corridors, linking fragmented native habitats. FHWA's ongoing activities to benefit native species in highway rights-of-way, promote vegetation management and ecosystem health that will be addressed include: Vegetation management resources under development; innovative research and development; information on state of the practice among State DOTs; ongoing interagency and interest group collaboration; and a description of the relationship between USDOT and State DOTs.

2. WHY IS THIS ITEM IMPORTANT TO NISC / ISAC? DOES IT RELATE TO CURRENT OR ANTICIPATED SUBCOMMITTEE NEEDS, ACTIONS, OR DIRECTION?

This item was brought to our attention in a 2012 presentation. ISAC's Prevention Subcommittee is considering a White Paper on the issue. This presentation will inform our decision.

3. HOW DOES THIS ITEM RELATE TO THE 2008 – 2012 OR FUTURE NATIONAL INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT PLAN?

Prevention is the key goal in both plans. Highway roadsides present an opportunity for USDOT to support State departments of transportation in their efforts to establish native vegetation and prevent the movement of invasives.

4. PREVIOUS ACTIONS TAKEN BY NISC / ISAC ON THIS ITEM: Continued discussion in 2014.

5. ACTION REQUESTED OF NISC / ISAC: Status Report

6. ALTERNATIVES:

7. ATTACHMENTS: The 2012 Recommendation

RECOMMENDATION TO FHWA/USDOT

BACKGROUND:

Fifty (50) State Departments of Transportation (DOTs) manage 17 million acres of roadsides or rights-of-way (ROWs) across the nation. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides funding for new construction/upgrade projects on interstate, state, county and municipality highways. These are called Federal-Aid Highways and they are maintained by state and local agencies after completion.

New projects, considered "road improvements" disturb soils. The movement of soils and gravel during highway work, and/or disturbance of competitive vegetation, increase the opportunity for invasive plant/noxious weed seed introduction and release. Best management practices to prevent or reduce invasions is necessary. On completion of construction, all maintenance responsibility transfers to the state and local agencies. The cost of prevention, as well as the cost of vegetation management after construction of these disturbed sites continues to stress local and state budgets at the same time they diminish.

THEREFORE:

ISAC recommends the FHWA/USDOT require the inclusion of invasive plant/noxious weed inventory and control at all stages of construction/upgrade projects, beginning in FY14.

Inventory and control should include and not be limited to:

1. Inventory and control of existing corridor vegetation before project begins
2. Specify weed-free gravel, soils and mulches on each project
3. Clean construction/maintenance equipment before, during and after project
4. Construction funding be accountable for the costs associated with noxious weed monitoring/control following the project until a stable, sustainable plant community is reached, not to exceed 5 years following the project completion
5. Prepare a statewide integrated vegetation management plan for all highway corridors.