



FROM THE GROUND, UP

BEING GOOD NEIGHBORS

How can federal, state, and local agencies more effectively work across jurisdictional boundaries to address the threats that invasive species pose to Colorado's natural resources?

Hosted by the Interactions of Society and the Environment Seminar Series (ISESS) in conjunction with the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) Secretariat

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INVASIVE SPECIES: URGENT ACTION IS REQUIRED

It is the policy of the United States to prevent the introduction, establishment, and spread of invasive species, as well as to eradicate and control populations of invasive species that are established.¹ In the United States, environmental damages and associated losses are already amounting to more than \$100 billion annually.² In Colorado, invasive species damage lands and waters, hurt the economy, ruin recreational opportunities, result in a loss of property values and threaten public health. They impede water distribution systems for municipal, industrial, and agricultural supplies. They can damage boats, gear, and fishing equipment as well as impair all forms of water based recreation. They displace wildlife habitat and reduce forage, shelter, and range for big game and other native species.³

MAKING THE CASE FOR WORKING ACROSS FEDERAL, STATE, AND COUNTY GOVERNMENTS

Invasive species do not respect jurisdictional boundaries; a landscape-scale approach is needed to effectively prevent the establishment, spread, and impact of invasive species in Colorado. In order to safeguard the state's natural resources and the economies dependent on these natural resources, cooperation is needed across all levels of government.

THE PANEL: OPENING A DIALOGUE FOR BETTER COORDINATION

James Meldrum (U.S. Geological Survey) moderated discussion among the five panelists listed below. The conversation touched on issues related to invasive species management, research, and policy across federal, regional, state, and county jurisdictions.

- Casey Cisneros (Larimer County Natural Resources)
- Jeff Morisette (National Invasive Species Council Secretariat)
- Frank Sapio (State and Private Forestry, U.S. Forest Service)
- Robert Walters (Colorado Parks and Wildlife)
- Bill Whitacre (Western Governors Association)

¹ Executive Order 13751: <https://www.doi.gov/invasivespecies/management-plan-and-executive-order>

² Pimentel et al. 2004: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0921800904003027>

³ <http://cpw.state.co.us/aboutus/Pages/ISP-You-Can-Help.aspx>



Invasive species, and the damage they cause, do not respect jurisdictional boundaries. Likewise, effective management solutions require actions at a landscape scale.

The event provided a venue to share experiences and initiate a dialog on effective coordination. Federal agencies are being actively encouraged to work more effectively with state and local governments. NISC management plans, executive orders on invasive species, and a recent paper, “Strengthening Federal-State Coordination,” released by the Invasive Species Advisory Committee⁴ all point to the need for improved coordination among government at all levels in their efforts to address invasive species. The long-term successes in multi-agency cooperation fostered by such policies as the Colorado Noxious Weed Act and Colorado Pest Act could be translated into lessons learned that help the state prevent the establishment of new invaders. Federal, state, and local governments are coming together to prevent the introduction and spread of zebra and quagga mussels, for example.

KEY FINDINGS

- ***We need to talk to each other more.*** Coordination among government agencies can help identify opportunities for improving the linkages between localized invasive species management, public perception, and broader-scale federal research and policy priorities.
- ***We need to share better.*** While there have been many attempts to organize geospatial data on invasive species and related management actions, there is still a pressing need for *cooperative, authoritative* databases to serve research, management, and policy initiatives. Here, *cooperative*, means that there is open, transparent, and shared contribution and use of that database across multiple jurisdictions and groups involved. An *authoritative* database is a trusted source of relevant information with sufficient transparency and metadata to be used in support of management actions.



- ***We can leverage our partnerships for greater success.*** We all have funding and other resource constraints. However, opportunities exist to leverage cross-jurisdictional efforts. We share in a common struggle that can only be addressed effectively through the combination of our institutional missions and assets. Establishing more effective communication across a wider invasive species community of practice will facilitate greater access to technical, personnel, and monetary resources.
- ***The conversation must continue.*** The panel represented a cross-section of the invasive species community, yet there are many other voices to add to the discussion. Communities of practice need to “cast a wide net” across sectors and stakeholder groups. Importantly, networking among agencies and with non-governmental stakeholders needs to be regarded as a fundamental aspect of getting the job done well.

⁴ https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/uploads/isac_federal-state_white_paper.pdf

JOIN IN!

The NISC Secretariat is organizing an invasive species community of practice (CoP) in the Front Range of Colorado. The CoP is open to anyone interested in addressing the invasive species issue. Activities are communicated through the Invasive Species Colorado Meetup page.⁵ If you are interested in getting involved, please join the Meetup group.



Pictured from left to right: Bill Whitacre, Jeff Morisette, Robert Walters, Frank Sapio, and Casey Cisneros.

PANELISTS

Jeff Morisette is Chief Scientist for the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) Secretariat. He is working to connect NISC's high level science and technology priorities to initiatives that will bring substantial on-the-ground successes across the country. He is hosted by the National Park Service in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Casey Cisneros is the Land Stewardship Manager for Larimer County Department of Natural Resources. Prior to his current position, his primary focus was noxious and troublesome weed management on county managed open space. He also serves on the Central Rockies Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration Board of Directors.

Robert Walters coordinates Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination program. The primary mission of this program is to protect wildlife, recreation, natural resources, infrastructure, and the economy by preventing the introduction of zebra and quagga mussels, and other invasive species, by containing current infestations and stopping the spread into new waters.

Bill Whitacre is a Policy Advisor for Public Lands and Agriculture for the Western Governors' Association, an instrument of the governors for bipartisan policy development, information-sharing, and collective action on issues of critical importance to the western United States. Bill is currently leading a three year WGA initiative to improve interagency invasive species data management and exchange in the West.

⁵ <https://www.meetup.com/InvasiveSpeciesColorado>

The National Invasive Species Council Secretariat is organizing a Community of Practice in the Front Range area.

Frank Sapio of the U.S. Forest Service leads a two-office detached Washington Office Unit, whose role focuses on fostering the use of technologies to improve the health of the Nations Forests. Two programs within Frank's group focus specifically on invasive species, the Invasive Species Information Program and the Biocontrol/Biopesticides Program.

James Meldrum is a Research Economist at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Fort Collins Science Center. He mainly focuses on ecosystem services, or valuing the benefits that people receive from natural systems, and on the human dimensions of natural hazards, especially wildfire.

