

## DRAFT

# ISAC Teleconference Minutes

May 2, 2019

### **Members Present**

- Chuck Barger (Chair), University of Georgia
- Edward Clark, The Wildlife Center of Virginia
- Slade Franklin, Wyoming Dept. of Agriculture
- William Hyatt, Connecticut Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection (ret.)
- Janis McFarland, Syngenta Crop Protection, LLC.
- Laura Meyerson, University of Rhode Island
- Carol Okada, Hawaii Dept. of Agriculture
- Blaine Parker (Vice-Chair), Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
- Jeffrey White, Newmont Mining Corporation/Elko Land and Livestock Company

### **Members Absent**

- Brent Stewart, Hubbs-Sea World Institute
- Sean Southey, PCI Media Impact
- Gary Tabor, The Center for Large Landscape Conservation

### **NISC Secretariat Staff Present**

- Stas Burgiel, Acting Executive Director
- Jeffrey Morisette, Senior Scientist
- Jason Kirkey, Director of Publications
- Sarah Veatch, Interdepartmental Coordinator/Project Manager

### **Review, Discussion, and Approval of Minutes**

*February 26-28, 2019 ISAC Meeting Minutes*

J. McFarland provided minor corrections to the minutes.

W. Hyatt made a motion to approve the minutes, noting the pending changes from J. McFarland. The motion was seconded by B. Parker and the minutes were approved unanimously.

## **NISC Update**

*Scott Cameron, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of the Interior (DOI)*

S. Cameron reviewed the decision by the three NISC co-chair department principals (Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce) to put ISAC in administratively inactive status. This decision was based on budget constraints, a desire to focus on the next Management Plan and interdepartmental coordination, and the belief that engagement with the broader community can come from other mechanisms without the cost and administrative overhead of a FACA committee. Scott reported that the FY2019 DOI budget for the NISC Secretariat is \$1.2M and DOI contributions will be reduced to \$600K in FY2020.

S. Cameron is actively engaged with pursuing Congressional authorization to allow other departments to contribute to the NISC Secretariat budget, but if the authorization were approved, it does not necessarily imply that other department would contribute funds.

The budget cut will also result in a reduction to NISC Secretariat staff, and concerns were raised by L. Meyerson about how the member departments plan to increase interdepartmental coordination and continue to engage stakeholders outside of the federal government. S. Cameron stated that DOI and the NISC Secretariat would look to various groups, including those within sister agencies, to play a more active role in implementing the next Management Plan. By working closely with NISC members, the Management Plan will represent priorities that those agencies are willing to direct resources toward. The department will wait until June or July 2019 to determine the outcome of the requested budget authority and whether contributions from NISC members will materialize. If no contributions are forthcoming, then the NISC Secretariat and NISC senior leadership will start developing a strategy for engaging non-federal groups at that time.

S. Cameron clarified that the engagement strategy will be based on the 2019-2021 Management Plan, and it will present key issues for coordination. These specific issues will dictate which groups will be engaged. NISC Secretariat staff or representatives from NISC members can attend the regular meetings of these groups to ensure engagement and advancement of the related Management Plan priorities.

On the topic of what will be lost without ISAC, S. Cameron said that former Secretary Zinke (DOI) and Secretary Purdue (USDA) considered the collective cost of FACA committees within their departments and decided to evaluate how those funds might be better utilized to address their missions. This implied more scrutiny of FACA committees and the related costs. This set the tone for deliberations on other agencies sharing the cost with DOI for maintaining ISAC. There was little support from DOC and USDA to contribute to ISAC and both encouraged seeking other mechanisms for engagement.

L. Meyerson stated that the costs of invasive species to the country, as a whole, are substantially more than the cost of ISAC or even the reduction to the overall NISC Secretariat budget. She was concerned that the academic/research community will not contribute to improving federal invasive species actions the way they have through ISAC. S. Cameron responded that he hopes USGS will interact with university and other research partners as occurs with USDA's Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and NOAA's research communities.

## **Consideration of ISAC White Papers**

### *White Paper on Invasive Species and Ticks*

E. Clark reviewed the initial request from Department of Defense (DoD) for the invasive species and ticks white paper. It was important to the task team to broaden the mandate to include other land managers that need to be aware of the tick-invasive connection. It became clear that there is a lot of work being done, but there is too little collaboration from a one-health perspective (human, animal, and environmental health). The purpose of the white paper is to explain the connection between vegetation management, health and tick-borne diseases. He asked the committee to focus their consideration on the introductions and conclusions and evaluate if those are consistent with ISAC's mandate and opinion.

There was general consensus that the recommendations should be moved up within the document, allowing the introduction to serve as an overview with supporting material to follow. The supporting material will be refined and edited for format and clarity but the main recommendations were proposed for approval during the call.

J. McFarland provided some specific comments related to the issue of endangered species, which are relevant to all public lands (not just refuge lands).

W. Hyatt reported on the comments he provided to E. Clark via e-mail. The document needs to recognize the latest work on the interaction of ticks and deer populations and needs to be consistent on this issue. He suggested that there could be a recommendation that federal land managers consider doing some experiments (in well controlled environments, such as some DoD lands) to inform the larger body of work on this issue.

There was consensus that the document could be approved with the modifications suggested during the discussion as well as any minor edits to be submitted before May 8th.

E. Clark made a motion to accept the paper with the suggested modifications. W. Hyatt seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

### *ISAC Retrospective Memorandum*

C. Bargeron summarized a series of edits that were made to the ISAC retrospective memo submitted prior to the teleconference. The memo focuses on recommendations to NISC pertaining to the future functioning of the Council and the NISC Secretariat without ISAC.

L. Meyerson raised concerns that, with ISAC being suspended, the memo, as written, is toothless and ineffective. She questioned whether it would be read or taken seriously, and stated that it makes no strong statement that is either meaningful or useful. ISAC further discussed the intent of the memo and how the language can be made more direct and explicit based on various points that were raised during the discussion. Some of the concerns raised were a lack of funding, lack of coordination, and a tendency toward compartmentalized thinking and functioning amongst the departments and agencies.

S. Franklin moved to approve the memo as submitted with allowance for minor tweaks. The motion was seconded by J. White. Approval of this document would include the proposed edits to the subject line and content, which will remove reference to ISAC being suspended.

ISAC also discussed whether to add a reference to interactions between invasive species and climate change. Concerns were raised that including this might be objectionable to portions of its intended audience.

C. Bargeron called for a vote on the memo with minor edits to be submitted before May 8th. L. Meyerson abstained from the vote, and the motion passed with eight out of the nine members present.

C. Bargeron made closing remarks to thank the members of ISAC for their participation in ISAC. S. Burgiel then summarized “next steps” for finalizing the tick paper and the retrospective memo. He expressed his appreciation for ISAC and noted that if an opportunity to reinstate ISAC emerges it will require a renewed charter and a call for nominations.

**Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**The meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.**