

Recommendations from the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC) to the National Invasive Species Council (NISC) *From the meeting held March 2-3, 2004 at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Resort in Honolulu, Hawaii.*

Preface to Recommendations 1-3

By identifying a subset of important invasive species issues as “cross-cut initiatives,” NISC is automatically drawing attention to these issues both individually and as a portfolio of issues. Furthermore, NISC’s intention to keep this list largely unchanged for several years (in order to track performance of these multi-agency projects) makes the justification of them very important. The issues on the list will become symbols of the Federal Government’s efforts.

1. An introduction and re-packaging of the list of FY06 cross-cut initiatives would make it a more effective vehicle for communicating overall NISC priorities.

A rationale for the choice of the ten projects should be provided. The rationale should describe how the ten projects were selected, and how they relate to the portfolio that reflects the nine priority areas of the National Management Plan on Invasive Species: 1) Leadership and Coordination; 2) Prevention; 3) Early Detection and Rapid Response; 4) Control and Management; 5) Restoration; 6) International Cooperation; 7) Research; 8) Information Management; and 9) Education and Public Awareness. Without any explanation, the current list appears too heavily weighed toward reaction (e.g., species-specific control projects), and not oriented strongly enough toward prevention.

2. NISC should use cost-avoidance as a performance measure for initiatives.

ISAC believes that a continuing difficulty in promoting and investing adequately in prevention is the quantification of ecological, social and economic costs avoided. If the costs avoided by prevention actions were rigorously quantified, the cost-effectiveness of prevention would be obvious and support for prevention would increase.

3. NISC should urge all the agencies involved in invasive species to commit more resources to screening of intentional introductions.

This is a central and urgent component of prevention. In addition to expertise that exists in DOI, USDA, and NOAA (agencies listed as part of the cross-cut budget initiative), other experts in risk assessment should be consulted. Such experts should include EPA (which has a long history of environmental risk assessments), and from outside the Government. The initial goal for NISC should be to define a common general approach to risk assessment for invasive species that all federal agencies could follow. Such an approach should follow the recommendation of the 2002 NRC report that species risk assessments should be transparent, quantitative, and repeatable.

In addition, current and developing approaches in identifying geographic areas where species could thrive, and screening species for the traits that cause invasiveness should be incorporated. Only after the best available general approaches have been defined, should NISC proceed to define more specific approaches tailored, as necessary, to different taxonomic groups and specific agency authority.

4. NISC should request all Federal agencies to identify existing grant programs, cooperative agreements and other mechanisms that are potential sources of funds for invasive species projects.

Training opportunities should be sponsored so that personnel from state, federal and local governments, non-government organizations (NGOs) and the public are aware of these opportunities. The catalogue of funding opportunities should be updated annually and shared on the website at www.invasivespecies.gov. Once the catalogue is completed, NISC should identify areas of the National Invasive Species Management Plan where there are no grant programs in place, and urge Federal agencies to establish such grant programs.

5. Federal agencies should initiate grant programs and cooperative agreements to the States to enhance and expand on-going surveys in freshwater, costal and marine areas to address non-native and invasive species management needs. This could be incorporated in FY05 Performance-based Cross-cut Budget Strategy 8.3: *Surveys of Costal and Marine Areas.*

6. ISAC recommends to NISC that an “Invasive Species of the Month” public information/education program be implemented.

The main products would be a series of monthly press releases to appropriate media outlets and an addition to the homepage of the invasivespecies.gov website (with concomitant links to that site from other federal, state, and local agency invasive species websites). The project would be implemented by NISC staff in coordination with the Federal Department principals and the various federal agencies involved in invasive species activities.

ISAC was tasked by NISC with developing the concept of an “Invasive Species of the Month”. The subject has been part of the agendas of two joint meetings of ISAC’s Communication, Education and Outreach (CEO) and Information Management Subcommittees, as well as the ongoing enhancement of the invasivespecies.gov website. *See attached supporting documents.*

7. Encourage the NISC Policy Liaisons to attend the next ISAC meeting and present strategic plans for their respective agencies.