

Recommendations from the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC) to the National Invasive Species Council

INVASIVE SPECIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE¹
ADOPTED OCTOBER 23, 2024

The National Invasive Species Council posed a series of four questions to the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC) for input and advice to support efforts to develop and implement a National Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) Framework. The questions were considered by a joint subcommittee of ISAC and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. This document contains a combined response adopted by ISAC to questions three and four (the answers to questions one and two were adopted on May 2, 2024).

Question 3:

How should outreach and engagement with non-Federal entities be structured going forward, and with whom, for Framework planning and implementation to be effective and inclusive, given the legal restrictions, such as the Federal Advisory Committee Act, that may apply in some cases?

Question 4:

How can we ensure that nonagricultural terrestrial interests are well represented in the Framework? Is there a complementary structure needed at a national level for nonagricultural terrestrial species where gaps exist, and, if so, what would that look like?

¹ The composition of the Invasive Species Advisory Committee is listed in the Acknowledgments section.

In response to the questions above, the ISAC recommends that the National Invasive Species Council member agencies implement the following recommendations.



RECOMMENDATION 1

Establish a National EDRR Task Force as recommended in Safeguarding America's Lands and Waters from Invasive Species (U.S. Department of the Interior 2016). The Task Force would be composed of Federal entities and representatives of states, tribes, and regional initiatives that would serve as a standing body to facilitate nationwide coordination and communication among and between Federal agencies and non-Federal partners in existing and new early detection and rapid response efforts. The Task Force would play a key role in the identification and assessment of priority invasive species, identification of critical EDRR tools and technologies, drafting of protocols and other guidance, and determination of priorities for emergency response and preparedness activities. The Task Force would also help identify roles and responsibilities of various entities and develop decision-making criteria within the context of the EDRR Framework.

An effective EDRR Framework requires focused coordination across the range of Federal and non-Federal entities to fund and implement preparedness, early detection, rapid assessment, and rapid response activities. That coordination requires an organizational structure with well-defined roles and responsibilities, as well as the means to ensure that those roles are implemented. ISAC reviewed existing groups and determined that a new group was necessary to bring together the range of Federal and non-Federal entities engaged in invasive species preparedness and rapid response across the entire range of invasive species interests. The intent of the group is to facilitate preparedness and rapid response in a coordinated structure with well-defined roles and responsibilities with Federal and non-Federal partners working hand in hand.

Members may include representatives or their designees from:

- Federal entities such as U.S. Department of Agriculture, Department of Interior, Armed Forces Pest Management Board, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Army Corps, U.S. Coast Guard, and the Environmental Protection Agency
- National Plant Board
- Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- National Association of State Foresters
- Native American Fish and Wildlife Society
- Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force

There was significant discussion around including representatives from the following entities:

- Eastern Plant Board, Central Plant Board, Western Plant Board, and Southern Plant Board
- Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Northeast Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, and Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- Southern Group of State Foresters, Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance, and Council of Western State Foresters
- Great Lakes Regional Panel, Western Regional Panel, Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel, Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Regional Panel, Mississippi River Basin Regional Panel, and Mid-Atlantic Regional Panel
- Western Weed Coordinating Committee
- National Plant Diagnostic Network
- American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
- National Association of Conservation Districts
- North American Invasive Species Management Association

Ultimately the decision was made to only keep single national representatives from some of these organizations to keep the national Task Force a reasonable size, but additional consideration should be given to representing regional interests in a national Task Force or on suggested subcommittees. Once the Task Force is formed, an appropriate organizational structure should be developed to achieve outlined objectives.



RECOMMENDATION 2

Compile and disseminate a list of Federal, state, tribal, and territorial entities who have resource management and/or environmental protection authorities based on various jurisdictions and species types. The output will facilitate communication between and among these entities, enable inclusive implementation of the EDRR Framework, and identify regulatory gaps.

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RECOMMENDATION 3

Fund and facilitate additional state, tribal, territorial, or regional rapid response tabletop preparedness exercises for nonagricultural species detections in order to build on and enhance current USDA efforts. Tabletop exercises should work through authorities, roles, and responsibilities and include relevant jurisdictions and collaborators to identify and address gaps in response efforts.

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RECOMMENDATION 4

Create a subcommittee of the National EDRR Task Force focused on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliant processes, environmental impact analyses, pre-permitting, and other regulatory compliance issues to support and achieve rapid response. Designate agency teams within each Federal region to create NEPA compliant environmental assessments, environmental impact statements, categorical exclusions, and template permits for rapid response actions. Develop incidental take permit templates for Endangered Species Act species in advance of potential response actions.

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RECOMMENDATION 5

Create a subcommittee of the National EDRR Task Force focused on communication. Generate mechanisms to promote reporting, early detection, and rapid response by ensuring we are using cutting-edge communication methods, utilizing consistent communication messages and campaigns, and employing experts in communication and marketing. Communication should include both information about the EDRR Framework to practitioners and partners and on EDRR in general to the public.

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RECOMMENDATION 6

A subcommittee of the National EDRR Task Force focused on data sharing should be created. The subcommittee should work to improve, encourage, and support data sharing among existing databases, including databases containing occurrences, horizon scans, risk assessments, models, experts, species information, taxonomy, species lists, and regulations.

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RECOMMENDATION 7

Funding for the EDRR Framework should continue beyond the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, including the expansion of the Rapid Response Fund for Aquatic Invasive Species to include terrestrial species. The Task Force should be utilized to prioritize the focus and use of funding.

The above recommendations were a product of multiple discussions and the development of a logic model. The output of the logic model is available upon request to invasive_species@ios.doi.gov.

References:

The U.S. Department of the Interior. 2016. Safeguarding America's lands and waters from invasive species: A national framework for early detection and rapid response, Washington D.C., 55p.

Acknowledgments

This white paper was initially developed by a joint subcommittee of ISAC and the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. The ISAC subcommittee included the following members: Charles T. Barger, IV, University of Georgia (Subcommittee Chair); Leah Elwell, Invasive Species Action Network; Jiri Hulcr, University of Florida; Steven H. Long, National Plant Board; Mitzi Reed, Native American Fish and Wildlife Society; LeRoy Rodgers, South Florida Water Management District; Lizbeth Seebacher, University of Washington; William Simshauser, National Association of Conservation Districts; Christie Trifone Millhouse, North American Invasive Species Management Association; and Paul Zajicek, National Aquaculture Association.

ISAC subsequently deliberated on and adopted this paper. ISAC Voting Members included: Charles T. Barger, IV, University of Georgia; Laura Brewington, Arizona State University/East-West Center; Leah Elwell, Invasive Species Action Network; Slade Franklin, Wyoming Department of Agriculture (Chair); Leigh Greenwood, The Nature Conservancy; Jack Hicks, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma; Jiri Hulcr, University of Florida; Christy Martin, Coordinating Group on Alien Pest Species/University of Hawai'i (Vice Chair); David Pegos, California Department of Food and Agriculture; LeRoy Rodgers, South Florida Water Management District; Lizbeth Seebacher, University of Washington; and Paul Zajicek, National Aquaculture Association. Advisory Members included: Nicole Angeli, Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies; Steven H. Long, National Plant Board; Mitzi Reed, Native American Fish and Wildlife Society; William Simshauser, National Association of Conservation Districts; and Christie Trifone Millhouse, North American Invasive Species Management Association.