



Continental Dialogue on Non-Native Forest Insects and Diseases
October 5-6, 2011
At the Millennium Harvest House
Boulder, CO

TO: October 2011 Dialogue Meeting Participants
FROM: Dialogue Initiative Leads and RESOLVE Staff
SUBJECT: Update on Initiative and Steering Committee Activity Progress Since October 2010

Following the October 2010 meeting, the Continental Dialogue Steering Committee shared their decision to move toward a more issue-driven approach to accomplishing the work of the Dialogue – and renamed them Initiatives. Over the past year, Dialogue participants have been engaging in efforts to move each of these forward. In addition to the Initiatives, the Steering Committee itself proposed to focus on five other areas of interest in the coming year. Below are updates on each Initiative and Steering Committee activity.

I. Dialogue Initiatives

- **Prevent Introduction of New Pests and Diseases Initiative**
- **Address *Phytophthora ramorum* (Sudden Oak Death Pathogen) Initiative**
- **Address Non-Federal Quarantine Pests (NFQP) Initiative**
- **Citizen Science Curriculum Initiative**
- **Citizen Science Survey Programs Initiative**
- **Engage Industry on Communication and Education Initiative**
- **Enhance Federal Funding Initiative**
- **Promote, Maintain, and Expand the Don't Move Firewood (DMF) Initiative**
- **Firewood Outreach Coordinating Initiative**

A. Prevent Introduction of New Pests and Diseases Initiative (Nursery and Wood Packaging)

The Initiative developed extensive comments on USDA APHIS' proposal to require wood packaging entering the country from Canada to be treated in accordance with the international standard (International Standard on Phytosanitary Measures) #15. This letter was endorsed by 30 organizations – many of which had not previously engaged in Dialogue efforts.

B. Address *phytophthora ramorum* (Sudden Oak Death Pathogen) Initiative

The Initiative convened the “Workshop on APHIS/National Plant Board *P. ramorum* Regulatory Program Review and USFS Framework for Sudden Oak Death in Wildland Forests” on February 16-17, 2011, in Washington DC. Approximately 50 representatives from state and federal agencies, private business and industry, academia, and non-governmental organizations participated. A number of substantive activities were identified

during the meeting and are being undertaken by groups including the Initiative (sharing Workshop content and outcomes with the National Plant Board); USDA Forest Service (revisions to the draft SOD Framework); and the Nursery Industry group (evaluate the use and effectiveness of best management practices and critical control points in the nursery industry to inform a general set of best management practices. The findings could be used to refine a retail nursery protocol).

The co-leads, along with the Workshop Planning Group, have continued to discuss activities and next steps for a number of parties coming out of the Workshop. A poster highlighted topics discussed and activities coming out of the workshop was developed and presented at the National Plant Board meeting in Denver in early August. Even more recently, the Initiative convened a webinar/conference call for participants to hear an update from USDA APHIS on a “white paper” on some of the major regulatory structural changes APHIS envisions may be needed to address *P. ramorum* (this was first shared at the NPB meeting mentioned earlier); and an update on development of a guidance document on addressing positive *P. ramorum* finds in wildlands. The call was well attended and appreciated – additional opportunities may be explored in the future.

C. Address Non-Federal Quarantine Pests (NFQP) Initiative

Individual participants in the Initiative have carried forward actions aimed at preventing spread of significant forest pests that are not (yet) considered to be quarantine pests by USDA APHIS.

Regarding **thousand cankers diseases** of walnut, APHIS informed stakeholders at the end of February that it would not regulate movement of logs or other vectors, but it would continue to assist states with surveys and evaluate possible treatment options. Steve Jarvis of the Missouri Forestry Association apparently persuaded APHIS to expand these efforts; thus, APHIS will help conduct surveys in residential and industrial areas of 11 states (IL, IN, KS, MI, MO, OH, OK, PA, TN, VA, WI) and evaluate such widely used or potential treatments as vacuum steam heat, methyl bromide fumigation, kiln drying, and debarking.

Efforts by a US Forest Service scientist to develop a lure continue to show promise; but the lure is not yet useful for detecting infestations at low densities.

Faith participated in a meeting of experts focused on breeding resistant trees, where first steps were taken to explore breeding resistance into black walnut (host of thousand cankers disease).

In the meantime, TCD continues to be detected at additional sites in eastern states

Regarding **goldspotted oak borer**, Faith Campbell (and other Dialogue partners) are participating in the work of the San Diego-county–based steering committee, which is focused on outreach. Faith has met with the National Park Service to encourage adoption of nation-wide guidance on firewood policy – with a special emphasis on National parks in California because of the GSOB danger. Faith also provided information on the potential threat to the southeast to the Southern Plant Board for its recent meeting.

Regarding **laurel wilt**, Marc Hughes and Jason A. Smith at the University of Florida have been studying surviving redbay trees in hopes of finding natural resistance to the disease. Clones of 9 putatively resistant individuals have been chosen for field experiments.

Regarding `ohi`a rust, Lloyd Loope is working with an expanding coalition including experts from Hawai`i, Australia, Brazil, and US Forest Service to demonstrate that the damaging rust (*Puccinia psidii*) has numerous strains with varying levels of virulence on varying hosts; and thus to support efforts by the Hawai`i Department of Agriculture to adopt regulations restricting the importation of plants in the Myrtaceae family (the host of the rust).

Taking a broader approach to pathways by which non-quarantine pests are moved, Faith is participating in the Engage Industry Initiative, particularly its outreach to large retailers who utilize wood packaging and sell plants and firewood. Faith also submitted detailed comments to USDA APHIS on its draft strategic plan; in response, APHIS Deputy Administrator Rebecca Bech has promised to take a new look at how APHIS responds to insects or pathogens that are native to one part of the United States but threaten naïve hosts growing in other parts of the country.

Faith worked with the Minnesota and Missouri Departments of Agriculture to inform participants in the annual meeting of the American Woodturners Association about the risk of moving wood while carrying out their hobby. Laurie Reid made a similar approach to the International Society of Wood Collectors.

D. Citizen Science Curriculum Initiative

This Initiative originated as a subgroup of the former Citizen-Based Pest Survey Program Initiative, but has since become its own Initiative. Jodie Ellis recently stepped down as the Initiative lead, due to the time constraints of her new position; Caroline Kuebler of the American Forest Foundation (AFF) is now leading this Initiative.

The Initiative intends to create, enhance, and/or support structured educational programs about invasive forest pests and pathogens for volunteer groups, such as student and civic organizations, youth groups, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, conservation groups, etc.

Initiative participants are researching existing educational programs about forest pests and pathogens and discussing how to review these programs, assess regional and national needs, and identify initial opportunities for partnership with citizen volunteer groups.

E. Citizen Science Survey Programs Initiative

This Initiative originated as a subgroup of the former Citizen-Based Pest Survey Program Initiative, but has since become its own Initiative. Jodie Ellis has recently stepped down as the Initiative lead, due to the time constraints of her new position; Leigh Greenwood (TNC) is now leading this Initiative.

Initiative participants identified several core objectives, including:

- Identify opportunities for citizen engagement in forest pest survey and detection and formulate strategies for increasing effective engagement.

- As appropriate, provide existing volunteer survey programs with program management advice and recruitment assistance.
- Raise the public's awareness of invasive forest pests and responsible ways for addressing them by encouraging citizen involvement in existing, organized, voluntary survey programs.

Initiative participants are considering developing a white paper or article focused on the special challenges and considerations involved in conducting a citizen-based pest survey program. The group is currently reviewing relevant research.

F. Engage Industry on Communication and Education Initiative

In May, on behalf of the Initiative, three participants participated in a conference call with Wal-mart/Sam's Club to discuss possible opportunities for Wal-mart, Sam's Club, and the Dialogue to collaborate on forest pest issues. Although the representatives from Wal-mart and Sam's Club expressed signs of interest in Purdue University's pest training program for warehouse employees, they have not responded to follow-up efforts from Jodie or to an invitation to the 2011 Dialogue Meeting.

Initiative participants are interested in developing a white paper on best practices for wood packaging use and management. A subgroup is working to develop an initial outline.

Building from the experience with Wal-mart, the Initiative is interested in working with other retailers to see if they are interested in evaluating and improving wood packaging use and management. During its next call, the group will discuss developing a generic "pitch package" for use when reaching out to various retailers. The group will also talk about ways to identify and reach out to relevant industry contacts.

G. Enhance Federal Funding Initiative

The Initiative developed consensus letters supporting maintaining current funding levels for key forest pest programs managed by the USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and Forest Service. 15 organizations endorsed the letters for APHIS and another 15 organizations (many the same, but not exact overlap) endorsed the letters for the US Forest Service. Initiative lead Faith Campbell is now setting up meetings with staff of the House and Senate Appropriations committees – she welcomes your engagement! Contact Faith at 703-841-4881 or fcampbell@tnc.org.

H. Promote, Maintain, and Expand the Don't Move Firewood (DMF) Initiative

Don't Move Firewood continues to grow and expand its reach. With a very substantial upcoming grant from USDA-APHIS, DMF will be able to continue to fulfilling the needs of their many state cooperators, build a database of all firewood materials, and create an online document system that will make custom posters and other goods. The DMF program is experiencing rapid growth and is very grateful for the cooperative agreement that will allow continued expansion.

Current outreach efforts are very widespread. In July alone, over a dozen products were developed for state cooperators including California, Tennessee, Michigan, Colorado, and

more. DMF has been approached by the Interior West states (a block of 10 from Idaho to the Lakes, and South from there) to participate in their three-year USFS Redesign grant, and by the entire SE Region (a block of 13 other states) to design and guide their Farm Bill funded firewood outreach efforts for the next few years. Online reach has tripled through the last year, with huge gains in Facebook and YouTube viewership.

Finally, the Continental Dialogue is now host to the Firewood Outreach Coordinating Initiative (FOCI). This Initiative dovetails with the work of Don't Move Firewood and serves as a central communications hub for professionals and agency staff all over the continent that are seeking advice, examples, and aid with their own firewood outreach needs. Leigh Greenwood and Ann Gibbs are the co-leaders of the FOCI.

I. Firewood Outreach Coordinating Initiative

With the assistance of Paul Chaloux, Keith Douce, Jodie Ellis, Bernie Hubbard, and Scott Pfister, the co-leads are navigating the effort from an exploratory topic to a full-fledged Initiative with funding for the first year being provided by USDA APHIS. The group developed a concept paper which was shared with the Steering Committee for review and comment. Subsequently, TNC and RESOLVE finalized a formal workplan with APHIS and secured the funding necessary to convene the group.

The first of four annual calls of the group took place in late June. The call was an opportunity to introduce the approximately 20 participants (there are more individuals interested in the effort, but they could not attend the first call) to the FOCI in more depth; answer questions about the Initiative's goals, objectives, and approach; identify possible additional participants; and lay out a schedule for the rest of the year. The call also served as an opportunity for Wisconsin's DNR to provide an overview of their firewood outreach program. Following the call, the Planning Group and APHIS shared a survey with the FOCI participants to gather information on the types of outreach underway already and new areas of interest for exploration. The results are being assessed at present and will be shared with the FOCI on the next call. The next two calls are scheduled for early September and early December.

II. Steering Committee-led Activities

A. Exploring Compensation

The Compensation White Paper was finalized by Tom O'Brien in December based on Steering Committee conversations in October and final review by a subset of Steering Committee members. The document was then utilized by the Exploring Farm Bill Opportunities group (see below) as a background paper for a conversation with the Forests in the Farm Bill Coalition.

B. Exploring and Producing New Documentaries

As of July 2011, we have secured funding from APHIS to produce one additional documentary focusing on core themes supportive of the Dialogue's mission and goals. The current main invasive pest stories being considered are: Laurel Wilt, Thousand Cankers

Disease, ALB (focus of Ohio), and the Citrus longhorn beetle. Topic and script development is expected to begin in earnest in fall 2011.

C. Exploring Farm Bill Opportunities

The group considered a number of options early in 2011. American Forest Foundation, a Steering Committee member and one of the co-leads for the Forests in the Farm Bill (FIFB) Coalition, helped arrange an opportunity for Faith and Lin, along with Tom O'Brien, to meet with the FIFB Coalition in mid-February to share the Compensation White Paper and some of the other ideas the group had for possible items to include in deliberations about the Farm Bill. The FIFB incorporated some of the recommendations into its package.

The Continental Dialogue membership was presented a sign-on letter to Congress that advocates maintaining funding for Sections 10201 and 10202, and consideration of ways to incentivize nurseries to take a more pro-active approach to pest detection and management. Eighteen organizations ultimately signed onto the letter, which was submitted to the House Committee on Agriculture and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry on September 15, 2011.

D. Exploring Funding Opportunities in Support of Dialogue Efforts

Several Steering Committee members are exploring opportunities to diversify funding for the Continental Dialogue and its activities.

E. Making Choices: Guidelines for Decision-making

A Decision Making Guide for Invasive Species Program Managers emerged from the ad hoc work group established at the Fall 2011 annual meeting and multiple versions were shared with the Steering Committee as it was being developed. The group recognized the document was not a typical Dialogue product (e.g., position papers; letters to Secretary) that necessarily needed Steering Committee approval. Rather, the document's purpose was to provide context, based on many years of experience and lessons learned from Dialogue members, to assist individuals in making the best management decisions possible. The Steering Committee discussed how best to use the document to advance efforts in fighting invasive species during their May conference call and the final version was subsequently shared with the full Dialogue participant list in early June.

An accompanying document – a series of four case studies (Hemlock woolly adelgid, Gypsy Moth, Emerald ash borer, Asian long-horned beetle) – was also developed. The Steering Committee agreed that the case studies needed some discussion as the majority were prepared by Jerry Boughton (US Forest Service) and there may be additional case studies (e.g., Laurel wilt incoming) and useful perspectives on key questions for each case study. One application might be linking the case studies with the guide in appropriate forums. The Dialogue could actually host these at their annual meetings or urge others (e.g., USFS/APHIS frameworks) to use this approach.