

CONTINENTAL DIALOGUE ON NON-NATIVE FOREST INSECTS AND DISEASES

Proposed Action Agenda

*Prepared by the Steering Committee for the
Continental Dialogue on Non-Native Forest Insects and Diseases*

These descriptions are intended to give Dialogue participants an initial picture of a seven-part action agenda to achieve the Vision and Goals. This is simply a draft proposal for Dialogue Participants to react to prior to and at the January meeting. The specifics outlined here are draft ideas only, and have not been specifically endorsed by any members of the Steering Committee or participants in the Dialogue.*

The following Opportunities are described in this document:

1. Import Pathway Protections
2. Slowing Domestic Spread
3. Non-regulatory BMPs and Certification Programs
4. Engage Retail Leaders in Adoption of BMPs and Certification Efforts
5. Development of Legislative Strategy
6. Funding for Existing Programs
7. Development of Marketing and Communications Package

* The content of the January 23, 2007 version of the Action Agenda is the same as the November 6, 2006 version – however the order of the ‘Opportunities’ has changed and some formatting changes have been made to make it easier to track during the Dialogue meeting.

Action Agenda Opportunity #1 – Import Pathway Protections

Achieve the adoption by relevant federal authorities of a level of protection that categorically excludes organisms entering the country incidental to transport of goods; implemented by a set of enforceable pathway standards; with effective monitoring and enforcement. This includes ensuring integration with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) and the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO) as needed.

Explanation:

A clear standard as to what level of protection national efforts are intended to provide against the entry of forest insects and diseases will help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of aspects of that work. Specifically, it will allow objective assessment of adequacy of the network of federal and state programs that provide such protection. It will also provide much greater objectivity in discussion of funding needs and regulatory changes, by providing a clear endpoint that such funding and regulation are intended to reach.

Components:

- Within 10 years, the Dialogue would help facilitate legislation or a policy change implementing a U.S. federal level of protection of less than one new forest pest established to the point of requiring an eradication effort per 30-year period.
- Implementation of this standard should occur through enforceable pathway standards. Specifically, as an outcome of the adoption of these standards, USDA APHIS will revise its phytosanitary measures governing the four key pathways of introduction of forest pests to attain this goal, and will ensure the measures' efficacy through monitoring and aggressive enforcement. Key pathways include (1) wood packaging; (2) imported woody plants; (3) imported logs & minimally processed lumber; and (4) ships' superstructures, and the outsides of containers and some hard-sided imports.
- The Dialogue would also seek to achieve within 10 years a revision of international standards developed by IPPC and NAPPO such that they are consistent with and supportive of the domestic program described above.

Action Agenda Opportunity #2 – Slowing Domestic Spread

Develop, support, and implement as appropriate, a campaign that supports a suite of strategies that will slow the spread of and/or eradicate non-native forest insects and diseases in the US.

Explanation:

While responsibility for preventing introductions of non-native forest insects and diseases is clearly allocated by federal law and integrated with international frameworks, less clarity exists as to responsibilities for eradicating nascent invasions and preventing spread of better established pests. Variation in the priority placed on the issue and in funding and effectiveness of local, state and federal agencies in different parts of the country have produced a patchwork quilt of regulations and programs that restrict the effectiveness of ongoing efforts.

Components:

- The Dialogue needs to articulate a package of policy recommendations to improve current efforts to prevent spread. Such a package might include greater support for existing programs and recommendations for new policies and programs. Specifically, an integrated framework incorporating regulation, voluntary action and outreach, might:
 - Encourage agencies to adopt effective, prompt quarantines over sufficiently large areas so as to prevent spread.
 - Provide incentives for industry to develop and adopt best management practices to reduce spread.
 - Build targeted communications to the public and affected industries in infested areas to build public support for and compliance with necessary measures.

Action Agenda Opportunity #3 – Non-regulatory BMPs and Certification Programs

Encourage the establishment and implementation of non-regulatory Best Management Practice (BMP) programs, and build toward formal certification programs, in collaboration with industries that have the potential to be pathways of introduction.

Explanation:

Interest in social responsibility in the business world in general continues to increase. Business is now seen as a critical partner in improving global environmental practice. Developing, implementing and upgrading forest certification programs tied to non-regulatory BMPs have attracted the engagement of some of the largest forest products companies, publishing companies and retailers in the world. Best management practices, possibly extending to a formal certification program, could lead to substantial reductions in introduction and spread of forest pests via the few pathways that are responsible for the introductions.

Components:

- The Dialogue would work with appropriate industries to determine the scope of initial efforts. This should include discussion as to whether the focus of the effort will be solely on reducing new introductions or will include reducing the spread of currently established forest pests such as emerald ash borer, Asian longhorned beetle, and *Phytophthora ramorum* (Sudden Oak Death). It also should address which pathways will be included, such as solid wood packaging or live nursery plants.
- For each pathway, we would need to engage with the industry to develop necessary and sufficient best management practices, and to demonstrate the efficacy of those BMPs via an implementation and effectiveness monitoring system.
- For each pathway, we would need to evaluate the incentives necessary to make the BMPs appealing to the industries at hand. This might include influencing procurement practices, developing certification systems built on the BMPs, or ensuring improved access to services (such as insurance or regulatory inspections) for firms implementing those BMPs.
- Integration with any existing or proposed regulatory regimes will be necessary

Action Agenda Opportunity #4 – Engage Retail Leaders in Adoption of BMPs and Certification Efforts

Engage retail leaders in encouraging the adoption of Best Management Practices and ultimately voluntary certification efforts by industries that have the potential to be pathways of introduction.

Explanation:

This action opportunity is tied closely to Action Agenda Opportunity 3. Certification systems such as forest certification programs and marine fisheries certification systems have received tremendous boosts when adopted by key retail or wholesale outlets. Procurement policies that mandate “tree-safe” products and shipping could enhance efforts to prevent introduction and spread and help provide an incentive for companies to adopt BMPs and momentum behind future certification efforts.

Components:

- Organize an action team from the Dialogue to address Opportunity #4, composed of Dialogue participants with connections to retail and knowledge of high-risk pathways. The action team should determine which retailers are to be approached and to develop contacts with those retailers leading toward a commitment to support “Tree-Safe” practices.
- As BMP programs identified in Action Agenda Opportunity #3 are developed, recruit receptive retailers to announce they will buy a certain percentage of their products for each risk pathway only from suppliers using “Tree-Safe” practices within 3 years.
- Monitor success and improve via adaptive management.
- Consider upgrading BMP-based approach to a commitment from retailers to support a certification effort.

Action Agenda Opportunity #5 – Development of Legislative Strategy

Develop comprehensive legislation within one year, and then seek enactment by Congress.

Explanation:

This action item envisions the development of comprehensive legislation comprising a number of elements, addressing multiple issues and topics. The legislation could either be introduced as a whole, or serve as a vehicle to promote ideas that could be introduced into other bills. The steering committee recommends that only those elements that are critical and where a high degree of consensus exists among Dialogue groups should be included. Such critical elements would include, for example, areas where federal authority is insufficient and legislation is the most effective and efficient means of supplying it.

The Farm Bill provides one potential avenue for the adoption of such legislation. This is a major piece of legislation, enacted every 5-6 years, which reauthorizes existing farm programs and serves as a vehicle for adding new provisions to ongoing efforts. The next version will be introduced in 2007, with passage expected one to two years later.

Components:

- Organize an action team to propose and draft the sub-parts of needed legislation, e.g., sections on setting a level of protection; beginning incentive programs to motivate adoption of best management practices and/or certification programs; and authorizing a special fund for rapid response programs.
- Develop and implement detailed, multi-year outreach, advocacy, and media campaigns to support the legislative initiatives, e.g., for selecting goals and producing fact sheets and media packages, generating letters of support.

Action Agenda Opportunity #6 – Funding for Existing Programs

Develop shared short- and long-term strategies to obtaining sufficient federal funds to support necessary expansion and improvement of federal and state agency efforts.

Explanation:

Shortages of funding, too narrow of an initial zone of eradication and quarantine, and the mismatch of and timing of available funding with the biology of the target pests all continue to hinder state and federal efforts to prevent and suppress introductions of non-native forest insects and diseases. Dialogue participants wishing to join together to influence federal appropriations may have more influence by agreeing to work together toward common goals.

Components:

- Work on this Action Agenda opportunity includes efforts to influence appropriations for existing programs and to build new funding sources. For existing programs the Dialogue should appoint a committee to:
 - Develop a list of federal programs and funding sources for combating non-native forest insects and diseases (everything from Prevention to Eradication)
 - Track these programs in President's recommended FY 08 appropriations.
 - Develop recommendations for FY 08 bills.
- Based on the work of this committee, those Dialogue participants who want to engage and are able to do so given organizational constraints seek to build our recommendations into FY 08 bills. They could also meet with OMB and agency staff to influence FY 09 recommendations. All components to this point would repeat in future fiscal years.
- The committee should also consider the need for a dedicated funding source and develop a multi-year funding plan for key components of federal and state efforts. These efforts would feed into the development of Action Agenda Opportunity #5.

Action Agenda Opportunity #7 – Development of Marketing and Communications Package

Within one year, develop a comprehensive marketing and communications package that supports the enactment and adoption of all other Dialogue goals.

Explanation:

A broad marketing program is viewed as necessary to support all other components of the action agenda. Public understanding and stakeholder engagement must increase for either best management practices or political strategies to succeed. We need to resolve a number of questions in order to craft a media campaign that can raise awareness in the key necessary groups:

- Type of media
- Geographic scope
- Narrowness of scope of target audience
- Earned vs. paid media vs. both
- Web-based vs. traditional approaches

Components:

- At this time the Steering Committee recommends the development of web-based video ads combined with print or radio ads in specific geographies that steer people to the web site. We expect to present a more detailed proposal at the January 23-24 dialogue meeting.