

**CONTINENTAL DIALOGUE ON NON-NATIVE FOREST INSECTS AND DISEASES  
JANUARY DIALOGUE MEETING**

**JANUARY 23-24, 2007  
THE EMORY CONFERENCE CENTER  
ATLANTA, GA**

**Meeting Summary**

**I. Overview and Background**

On January 23-24, 2007 a diverse group of representatives from state, federal and municipal agencies; private business and industry; academia; and non-governmental organizations gathered at the Emory Conference Center in Atlanta, Georgia for the January meeting of the Continental Dialogue on Non-Native Forest Insects and Diseases (the Dialogue). The meeting was convened by the Dialogue Steering Committee, a cross-section of stakeholders with an interest in protecting forests from the threat of non-native insects and diseases (see Attachment A for a list of meeting participants).

The January meeting built upon the initial Dialogue meeting convened in June 2006 at the Bolger Center in Potomac, Maryland where participants: 1) shared information on the status of the threat of non-native forest insects and diseases, the challenges to reducing those threats, and potential strategies for overcoming those challenges; 2) provided input on a common vision and goals for potential collaborative action; 3) explored specific strategies by which a common vision and goals could be implemented; and 4) charted next steps toward potential collaborative action. A key outcome of the meeting was a revised Action Agenda that will guide the work of the Dialogue moving forward (see Attachment B – Action Agenda Notes). The process leading up to this document is described below.

Following the June meeting, the Steering Committee and participants engaged in an interactive process to finalize the vision, goals, and objectives of the Dialogue (see Attachment C). During this process the steering committee also developed a proposed Action Agenda to give January Dialogue participants an initial picture of potential action opportunities to achieve the vision and goals (see Attachment D). The proposed action agenda focused on the following seven opportunities:

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 goal of the January Dialogue meeting was to cultivate collaboration around actions to address the threat of non-native forest insects and diseases. Specific objectives included: 1) identification of action agenda opportunities that participants were ready and willing to advance; 2) creation of teams of Dialogue participants willing and able to move action agenda opportunities forward; and 3)

development of detailed strategies for advancing action agenda opportunities, including short-, mid-, and long-term steps and objectives.

## **II. Day One – Tuesday, January 23**

### Welcome and Opening Remarks

Following a welcome and introduction of all participants, Tommy Irvin, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Agriculture, gave opening remarks. Mr. Irvin described, from an agriculture commissioner's perspective, the many threats posed by non-native insects and diseases. This perspective emphasized the need for a coordinated collaborative group like the Dialogue to create protocol and procedures for efficient quarantine in the event of an outbreak (such as the avian bird flu procedures for rapid quarantine and depopulation) and the need to work proactively to prevent outbreaks. Frank Lowenstein, Director, Forest Health Programs, The Nature Conservancy, followed with a detailed overview of the need for the Dialogue and its overarching mission to develop partnerships and encourage cooperation to prevent future catastrophic events and reduce the risk to forests from non-native insects and diseases.

### Taking the Next Steps and Overview of the Action Agenda

Bob Fledderman, Manager, Environment and Regulatory Assurance, MeadWestvaco, provided an overview of activities to date that resulted in the Dialogue vision and goals (Attachment C) and led to development of the draft proposed Action Agenda (Attachment D). A series of brief presentations were then made to introduce each of the Action Agenda opportunities (see Attachment E for a copy of the slides).

### Discussion of Action Agenda Opportunities

The rest of the day was spent in plenary and breakout groups developing a better understanding of the Action Agenda opportunities and addressing ways to turn the opportunities into reality. Discussion of each Action Agenda opportunity was organized around the following two questions:

- What are the changes/outcomes needed with respect to the opportunity?
- What do we need to accomplish in the next three years to achieve those changes/outcomes?

(NOTE: Flipcharts for all of the following Day 1 discussions are included as Attachment F – Opportunity Development.)

### Action Agenda Opportunities #1 and #2

The first two Action Agenda opportunities, import pathway protections (#1) and slowing domestic spread (#2), were addressed in plenary discussion.

### Action Agenda Opportunities #3 - #6

These opportunities were addressed in breakout groups after lunch. Participants were asked to address either non-regulatory BMPs and certification programs (#3) and engage retail leaders in adoption of BMPs and certification efforts (#4) or to address development of legislative strategy (#5) and funding for existing programs (#6). Based on the participants' selections, there were two small group sessions discussing opportunities 3-4 and two small group sessions discussing opportunities 5-6.

### Action Opportunity #7

In the late afternoon, the full group reconvened for discussion of the development of a marketing and communications package opportunity (#7). To begin, Martin Hamburger, from Laguens Hamburger, Kully, Klose, and David Metz, from Faribank, Maslin, Maullin & Associates, provided a presentation on “Focus Group Results and What Marketing can Offer the Dialogue.” Plenary discussion was again organized around the two primary questions noted above.

### Evening Presentation

Following dinner John Hieftje, Mayor of Ann Arbor, Michigan, gave a presentation detailing the impact of non-native insects and diseases on local communities. Mayor Hieftje’s presentation focused on the Emerald Ash Borer’s devastating impact on community safety, environment, and quality of life in Ann Arbor. The presentation described the need for a coordinated, collaborative, and preventative effort.

## **III. Day Two – Wednesday, January 24**

Frank Lowenstein opened day two with a welcome and a description of resources available to the Dialogue for implementing the Action Agenda and other activities. Participants were then divided into breakout groups to discuss strategy development related to the seven Action Agenda opportunities. (Based on preferences provided by participants the previous night, the facilitation team and Steering Committee members determined the groups.) Each group identified steps (short, mid-, and long-term), people, and resources needed to implement the opportunity, and designed a strategy for moving the opportunity forward. Following lunch, the Dialogue reconvened in plenary for presentations from each of the following breakout groups (NOTE: All Day 2 flipchart notes are included as Attachment G – Strategy Development):

- Opportunity 1 – Import Pathway Protections
- Opportunity 2 – Slowing Domestic Spread
- Opportunity 3-4 – BMPs and Certification Efforts
- Opportunity 5 – Development of Legislative Strategy
- Opportunity 6 – Funding for Existing Programs (Discussed by an informal group over breakfast)
- Opportunity 7 – Marketing and Communications

Following the breakout group presentations, the participants indicated next steps should include: 1) prioritizing among the Opportunities, in particular for the short-term activities; and 2) ensuring redundancy between the Opportunities was addressed. Frank Lowenstein thanked the participants for their hard work and indicated the Steering Committee would continue to meet to take the input provided by all Dialogue participants and develop a proposal by mid-February for prioritizing which opportunities to address first. The proposal, as distributed to the full Dialogue on February 16, can be found in Attachment B – Action Agenda Notes.