

CONTINENTAL DIALOGUE ON NON-NATIVE FOREST INSECTS AND DISEASES**Proposed Vision, Goals and Objectives
for a Collaborative Effort to Reduce the Threat
of Non-Native Forest Insects and Diseases****Vision**

Urban and rural forests cover one-fourth of North America, sustaining biological diversity and providing clean air and water to hundreds of millions of people. Forest products and related industries employ more than 1.6 million people and contribute \$231.5 billion to our nation's economy. Forests also provide enjoyment to millions of hikers, campers, hunters, anglers, and other recreational users, in the process contributing tens of billions of dollars more economic activity. Perhaps most importantly, our forests – urban, suburban, rural, and wild – are part of the core foundation of our national heritage, providing beauty and shade to our homes, and are integral to the American spirit. The well-being of our forests is inextricably bound to the well-being of our citizens.

In spite of their vast importance, our forests are needlessly being lost to non-native forest insects and diseases introduced as a byproduct of international trade and travel. These invaders represent one of the greatest threats to our forests and shade trees. Without countering these threats, the American landscape will change drastically and, probably, irreversibly.

We envision a future when such threats sharply decline. Then, healthy forests will sustain and enrich biological diversity; provide not just clean air and clean water but also contribute to a stable climate; and supply other ecosystem services in abundance. Our forests will provide new and substantial economic, recreational, and inspirational opportunity for all Americans. The public will recognize that non-native insects and diseases pose a threat to US forests that must be addressed – and they will create a strong demand to do so. Stronger national policies will result, along with supportive actions by businesses, states, individuals, and many others.

We join together as non-profit organizations, for-profit corporations, government agencies, landowners, and academic scholars to improve our nation's efforts to address this critical threat to our forests. Our Dialogue will create real and lasting change, by seeking out those areas where we have unique leverage, credibility, and opportunities. We will organize our efforts around programs to prevent non-native insects and diseases from arriving, surviving and thriving on the continent. We see the Continental Dialogue as an important way to move toward our larger vision. We look forward to a time when its formation will be seen as a pivotal moment in the history of conserving American forests.

Goals and Objectives

Goal I: Improve federal, state, and provincial programs so as to virtually eliminate any new introductions of non-native forest insects and diseases to the continent by the year 2015.

Objectives:

- Establish a level of protection at which any residual rate of new introduction does not pose a threat to forest resources.
 - In order to block pathways of introduction, build a stronger and integrated system of private and public action that: (a) addresses activities that pose the greatest risk of introduction, (b) provides failsafe systems of prevention, and (c) continuously evaluates this system's ability to meet a specific, high level of protection.
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Goal II: Improve, to effective levels, detection and eradication systems to prevent the survival of newly introduced non-native forest insects and diseases on the continent by the year 2015.

Objectives:

- Establish effective prediction and monitoring systems to rapidly detect all newly introduced non-native forest insects and diseases.
 - Develop long term funding and standardized planning frameworks that allow detection, monitoring and eradication efforts to move forward swiftly, effectively, and without interruption.
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Goal III: Minimize the ability of established populations of non-native insects and diseases to thrive on this continent by the year 2015.

Objectives:

- Achieve significant reductions in the human-assisted transport and spread of pests within United States.
 - Support development and implementation of effective programs to reduce the density, slow the spread or otherwise lessen the expansion and impacts of established pest populations.
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Goal IV: Increase engagement by all the key constituencies affected by non-native forest insects and diseases or that play a role in their arrival and establishment by the year 2015.

Objectives:

- **Develop marketing and communications efforts to raise awareness of the issue in key stakeholder groups.**
 - **Develop voluntary incentive-based programs to reduce rates of introduction, survival and establishment, including consideration of expanded certification systems.**
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