



Continental Dialogue on Non-Native Forest Insects and Diseases  
October 5-6, 2010  
At Brandeis University  
Waltham, MA

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

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Earlier this year, the Continental Dialogue Steering Committee shared their decision to move toward a more issue-driven approach to accomplishing the work of the Dialogue – and called them Initiatives. Over the past six months, 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-federally-Quarantine Pests (NFQP) Initiative
- Explore Citizen-Based Pest Surveys Initiative
- Engage Industry on Communications and Education Initiative
- Enhance Federal Funding Initiative
- Success Stories Initiative
- Promote, Maintain, and Expand the Don't Move Firewood (DMF) Website Initiative

### A. Prevent Introduction of New Pests and Diseases Initiative

The Group divided into two subgroups: one focused on plants for planting, the other on wood packaging material. The Plants for Planting subgroup developed a Dialogue sign-on letter providing detailed comments on a draft international standard that will govern trade in plants for planting. APHIS rulemakings and other anticipated action will provide opportunities for Dialogue engagement in the coming year. The Wood Packaging subgroup has sought data sources and other ways to complement others' efforts to evaluate the efficacy of the international standard governing movement of wood packaging (ISPM#15). New information about the standard's efficacy will be made available during the Dialogue meeting, thus providing impetus for future action.

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

The Initiative is interdisciplinary and oriented towards problem solving, with a focus on preventing damage from *Phytophthora ramorum*, and other *Phytophthora* pathogens, to U.S. forests, wildlands, and nurseries. In its first six months, the Initiative focused on issue identification and fostering collaboration. The Initiative will host a breakout session to evaluate possible threats from *P. ramorum* to the eastern United States. For 2011, the Initiative will evaluate possible regulatory changes, management, and response to and prevention of waterway infestations. With more than 35 members, this is the largest of the Continental Dialogue Initiatives.

## **C. Address Non-federally-Quarantine Pests (NFQP) Initiative**

The Group has sought to provide mutual assistance to local coalitions working to prevent spread of several pests that are not (yet) subject to federal quarantine. Because of the importance of firewood to movement of some of these pests, the Group developed a Dialogue sign-on letter asking USDA APHIS to tighten regulations on firewood imported from Mexico and (in more limited situations) Canada. The Group also exchanged information on USDA APHIS development of a process for states' obtaining recognition of their quarantine programs as "official control". We are seeking strategies through which to encourage states and businesses to take effective action to curtail movement and mitigate the impacts of pests not yet addressed by federal programs.

## **D. Explore Citizen-Based Pest Surveys Initiative**

This year has been a time of investigation for the Explore Citizen-Based Pest Surveys Initiative. Recruiting citizens to act as first detectors for invasive species in their own communities ensures sustained interest, buy-in, and heightened awareness of the issues while genuinely assisting state and federal programs. Citizens are often intrigued by the idea of participating in science-based programs that have real value to their communities, and the number of these activities in communities throughout the nation has risen exponentially in the last few years. We have spent the six months examining some of the most successful of these programs and will use this year's meeting to determine and lay out a plan for implementing the group's goals and direction.

## **E. Engage Industry on Communications and Education Initiative**

The Initiative has been slow to get off the ground but has recently had some exciting breakthroughs. Working with USDA APHIS, the Dialogue has recently resumed its explorations with the Retail Industry Leadership Association regarding potential work on retail sustainability. The team also developed a proposal for funding to allow greater engagement on this issue by the Dialogue.

## **F. Enhance Federal Funding Initiative**

The Group prepared letters to relevant House and Senate subcommittees supporting increased funding for key APHIS and US Forest Service programs. These letters were endorsed by 9 Dialogue participant groups.

## **G. Success Stories Initiative**

The goal of the Success Stories Initiative is to gather examples of invasive species programs that have successfully mitigated a significant threat to North American forest resources and to turn these stories into one page flyers detailing those achievements. These flyers will use a common template and will give a background to each story, highlight the factors that made each project successful and the states affected by the problem in question. The long term goal of this group is to build a library of these success stories that can be used to educate legislators and potential funders about the importance of providing adequate resources to battle invasive species. To date, the group has developed a general template for use in the stories and has finalized three case study documents detailing the eradication of the plum pox virus from Pennsylvania; the suppression of pink hibiscus mealybug populations in California, Florida, Texas, and Louisiana using biocontrol agents; and the prevention of a significant range expansion of the hemlock woolly adelgid into Michigan. The Initiative's next step is to encourage Dialogue members to submit their own stories of success to the group for the creation of additional case studies.

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

Capitalizing on the strength of Don't Move Firewood's (DMF) experiences in 2009, the Dialogue based educational campaign took some running leaps in 2010. Through the course of the year, we partnered with state agencies all over the nation, including a new three-state education and research campaign that veritably blankets Idaho, Oregon, and Washington with Don't Move Firewood billboards, postcards, and campground giveaways. We also conducted our first ever integrated on-the-ground campaign, an innovative project designed to protect Western Massachusetts from forest pests. By combining a private donation with Recovery Act funds, Don't Move Firewood was able to hire two interns that then traveled throughout the CT-MA-NY area, attending numerous festivals and farmer's markets and talking to over fourteen thousand individuals. Coming up this fall, we'll be placing banners within an NBA arena- yes, that NBA- with funding provided by a partner through the Farm Bill.

We are also proud to highlight a few accolades that we have received this year. In January, the book "Design for the Greater Good" by HarperCollins Publishers mentioned Don't Move Firewood as a stand-out example of web development for a good cause. In March, DMF had the honor of being officially recommended by the interagency National Firewood Task Force. Lastly, just a few weeks ago DMF won the 2010 WebAward for "Outstanding Achievement in Web Development."

### **Update on Firewood Movement Efforts**

When the Initiatives for 2010 and beyond were identified coming out of the 2009 Dialogue meeting, one was focused on tracking the USDA Firewood Task Force process. While the Initiative tracked the Task Force process, with the publication of the recommendations in late March 2010 the Steering Committee felt firewood activities were already well represented across other Dialogue Initiatives. At present, several of the Initiatives are working on firewood related issues – the Don't Move Firewood work group; the Non-Federally-Quarantined Pest Initiative, the Address *P. ramorum* Initiative, the Engaging Industry Initiative, and those working on development of additional documentaries and videos.

## II. Steering Committee Activities

### A. Exploring Compensation

To address the challenges that nursery-owners currently face on finding a potential quarantine pest or disease on their land or in the nearby area the Dialogue has commissioned a study of the potential for compensation options and programs. Initial results of this study will be presented at the Dialogue meeting as part of discussions on potential farm bill recommendations.

### B. Promoting *Lurking in the Trees*

The Continental Dialogue and The Nature Conservancy with support from USDA APHIS and the USDA Forest Service produced a half-hour documentary on the Asian longhorned beetle infestation in Worcester, MA. This documentary has shown on dozens of public and commercial television stations around the country, including WGBH (Boston) and WNET (New York). It has already won 4 film festival awards and is submitted to dozens more. This past summer an integrated on-the-ground, web, print, and Facebook campaign helped spread *Lurking in the Trees* and the Don't Move Firewood message to more than 13,000 people in person and 17 million in total.

### C. Exploring and Producing New Documentaries

This summer the Dialogue engaged Martin Hamburger (director of *Lurking in the Trees*) to begin developing scripts for four more half-hour documentaries. We have a major funding proposal pending, and depending on the outcome of that proposal we will be able to swiftly launch these new films. These documentaries would focus on core themes supportive of the Dialogue's mission and goals: don't move a pest, recognize the importance of early action and the risks of inaction, be aware of trees in your community, and support science-based solutions to pest problems.

### D. Developing a Letter to President Obama and Key Agencies to Encourage Action on Invasive Species

The Continental Dialogue membership has been asked to sign on to a letter to President Obama, the cabinet heads of the National Invasive Species Council, and Congressional leaders that recommends five priority actions to be taken now by federal agencies. The recommended actions are achievable in the next two years, relatively inexpensive, and leverage existing programs and efforts. The two-year time frame will provide focus/priority for 2008-2012 National Management Plan as well as an important foundation for future work. The five recommended actions are:

- Federal agencies should partner with states to support the recommendations by the National Firewood Task Force to ensure the safe movement of insect and disease-free firewood.
- Ensure that local or treated firewood is available at federal campgrounds.
- Establish a December 2010 deadline to implement amendments to Quarantine 37 to temporarily restrict risky plant imports that have not been evaluated through a pest risk assessment process.

- Expand citizen-based pest surveys through survey mechanisms and programs initiated by USDA - APHIS PPQ.
- The National Invasive Species Council should continue to encourage the use of federal expenditures in a coordinated manner for Invasive Species programs, to ensure that the various agency efforts are collaborative, rather than being overlapping or insufficient.

**E. Engaging on Development of Domestic Solid Wood Packaging Regulations – Ken Rauscher**

Solid wood packaging has been shown to be a significant access route for exotic, invasive wood boring and forest pests. Likewise, domestic movement of wood packaging provides a risk of moving regulated pests to uninfested areas. This is a very complex issue that involves regionalization of transportation activities, manufacturing capabilities and changes, and potential creation of winners and losers along the continuum. In 2009, USDA APHIS PPQ published an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking concerning actions the Agency might take to reduce the risk in moving wood packaging. To this date, USDA has not moved beyond this notice. However, the issue of domestic movement of pests by way of wood package remains a serious threat and is being actively considered by the National Plant Board.