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Overview of NISC & ISAC

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"Overview of NISC & ISAC" (2006). *National Invasive Species Council materials*. 21.
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Overview of NISC & ISAC

Executive Order (EO) 13112 defines invasive species as species that are non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration and whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm, or harm to human health. Invasive species can be plants, animals, or pathogens. Scientists and resource managers recognize the extensive and persistent economic and environmental harm caused by invasive species. EO 13112 issued in February 1999 charged all federal departments and agencies to prevent and control invasive species.

Only a small proportion of non-native species are invasive in a location. Many non-native species provide food, fiber, environmental, and recreation resources.

EO 13112 specifies that the federal role in this complex problem is to “prevent the introduction of invasive species, provide for their control, and minimize their impacts.” To help achieve this, EO 13112 created the National Invasive Species Council (NISC). NISC is co-chaired by the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce. NISC members include the Secretaries of State, Defense, Homeland Security, Treasury, Transportation, Health and Human Services, the U.S. Trade Representative, as well as the Administrators of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NASA, and the U.S. Agency for International Development.

ISAC: Invasive species prevention and control requires cooperation with many non-federal partners. Therefore, EO 13112 called for the establishment of a group of non-federal stakeholder representatives to advise NISC. This group of not more than 32 advisors is called the Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC), and it is chartered under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). ISAC includes representatives from subject areas such as environmental conservation, natural resource science, agriculture, State and Tribal governments, and industry. ISAC members have a detailed understanding of many regions, taxa, and constituencies.

Individually, ISAC members are involved in a variety of invasive species activities. They may testify before Congress, speak at conventions, participate in working groups and task teams, respond to media inquiries, and conduct other actions as representatives of their constituencies.

As a group, ISAC meets at least twice each year. They work on specific issues and provide recommendations to NISC. ISAC meeting agendas are developed by their steering committee and officers. Since NISC was formed in 1999, ISAC has met seventeen times. ISAC meetings include presentations and discussions concerning successes, lessons learned, program updates, possible approaches to challenges, and technical advances. Representatives of NISC member departments and members of the public also attend ISAC meetings. Information is shared and formal minutes of the meetings are kept.

Federal Advisory Committee Act: FACA became law in 1972 and defines how federal advisory committees operate. As a FACA chartered committee, ISAC must comply with all FACA guidelines governing the membership, establishment, operation, and termination of a Federal advisory committee. FACA is administered by the General Services Administration (GSA), and it requires open meetings, chartering, opportunity for public involvement, and full reporting. Before ISAC can meet or take any action, its charter must be filed with GSA. In addition, FACA requires that the U.S. Congress and public are informed of the members, meetings, purpose, activities, and cost of advisory committees.

FACA committees have a Designated Federal Official (DFO) that oversees their operations. The Executive Director of NISC is the DFO for ISAC.

ISAC Charter: The ISAC charter is subject to amendment every two years and was amended and re-filed in March of 2004. The Secretary of the Interior serves as the administrative lead for member selection and provides administrative support for ISAC and NISC.

ISAC provides advice concerning NISC's mandate to:

1. Coordinate State and Federal agency activities concerning invasive species;
2. Revise and update the National Invasive Species Management Plan;

3. Encourage planning and action at local, Tribal, State, and regional levels;
4. Develop recommendations for international cooperation in addressing invasive species;
5. Develop, in consultation with the Council on Environmental Quality, guidance to federal agencies pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) on invasive species matters;
6. Facilitate development of a coordinated network to document, evaluate, and monitor impacts from invasive species;
7. Facilitate the coordinated of information sharing.

ISAC Subcommittees: ISAC is authorized, in consultation with the DFO, to convene work group or task teams if needed. All of their activities are also conducted in compliance with FACA, and they report directly to the full ISAC. ISAC/NISC subcommittees may contain both federal and non-federal members.

Membership of ISAC: Members of ISAC are appointed by the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the other NISC members. The members of ISAC are selected based upon their ability to represent important subject discipline areas, regions, viewpoints, and constituencies that are involved with invasive species. Members may serve two consecutive three-year terms. The Secretary of the Interior may replace any ISAC member who resigns or who misses three consecutive ISAC meetings.

Members of ISAC may represent communities of interest such as:

- Weed Science
- Fisheries Science
- Rangeland Management
- Forest Science
- Entomology
- Plant Pathology
- Veterinary Medicine
- Farming
- Agricultural Industries
- Biodiversity Issues
- Invasive Species Law and Regulations
- Invasion Biology
- Plant/Animal Genetics
- Community Ecology
- Conservation
- Environmental Economics
- Ecosystem Restoration
- Risk Assessment
- Biological Control of Invasive Species
- Public Health/ Epidemiology
- International Trade
- Environmental Education
- Ecosystem Monitoring
- Natural Resource Database Design

Members of ISAC should have experience in one or more of the following areas:

1. Representing sectors that are significantly threatened by biological invasions or whose routine operations may pose a risk of new or expanded invasions;

2. Developing management plans on regional scales that address invasive species issues;
3. Integrate science and the “human dimension” into solutions to complex environmental issues;
4. Complying with NEPA and other federal requirements.

More information is available at www.invasivespecies.gov.

March 2006