

VI. Rapid Response

Group Members: George Beck, Robert Eplee, Cynthia Boettner, Mike Carrol, Jack Edmundson, Fred Lamming, Steve Manning, Neil Ogg, Tim Playford, Craig Searle, Jennifer Vollmer

I. INTRODUCTION

II. GROUP DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

I. INTRODUCTION

After a new plant to the country or to a region where it had not been found before, the next step is to develop a system to utilize invasive plant specialists from around the country to determine how, when, and where to rapidly respond. The specific charge to Working Group Four was to conceptualize and outline an coordinated local/state/national interagency framework that will:

- ❖ Identify the roles of state weed teams or state invasive species council, and other interagency groups (FICMNEW, ANSTF, etc.) in coordinating the interagency efforts;
- ❖ Identify they types of local, state and national specialists who could provide expertise in conducting or provide technical expertise in rapid response and eradication efforts.
- ❖ Develop strategies for involving impacted stakeholders in on-the-ground rapid response efforts
- ❖ Develop guiding principles and strategies for eradication, including Quality Assurance and Quality Control
- ❖ Identify potential funding mechanisms for rapid response activities

[TOP](#)

II. GROUP DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Within a rapid response system three primary assumptions were made:

1. **All the necessary information for a response has been forwarded** from the Rapid Assessment group to the Rapid Response Teams.
2. **Adequate and timely funding will be available for Rapid Response** with fire response units and FEMA as examples.
3. **All decisions and actions will be made at the most appropriate, lowest level.** In cases where the control or containment is handled at the local level, the species invader information and the actions taken would still be reported to the state level. If possible, resources available at local level would be used. When not available, funds would be requested from the state. If not available at the state level, funds would be requested from the national level.

A Rapid Response system would be composed of a number of different entities which would interact at the local, state and national levels.

State Invasive Species Council (SISC) - In order for Rapid Response to be successful, it is necessary to form a community of invasive plant management experts into an efficient network on a state-to-state basis. The state invasive species councils already established can serve as a template for states which have no current organization of land managers. One suggestion is that the Governor appoints the Council. Members of the Council could include, but not be limited to State and County agencies, state offices of Federal agencies, Academia, private landowners, industry stakeholders, and conservation organizations.

The SISC's can be organized into Regional groups as well as a national level committee. In this manner, consultation with surrounding states can be easily effected, as well as discussion of issues of national significance.

The Rapid Response Committee is a group of experts within the SISC with the primary purpose of being the recipient and actor upon information received from the Rapid Assessment group. The team should have experts on on-the-ground management of invasive plants. The make up of the teams may vary between states, depending on the patterns of land ownership, infrastructure or philosophies within each state. This committee will utilize the resources available to plan a control or eradication program for species identified as high risk by the Rapid Assessment committee. The Chair has the final responsible for making the initial implementation decision and guidance for the state. If the committee cannot agree upon a management recommendation, it should be referred to the Regional or National levels.

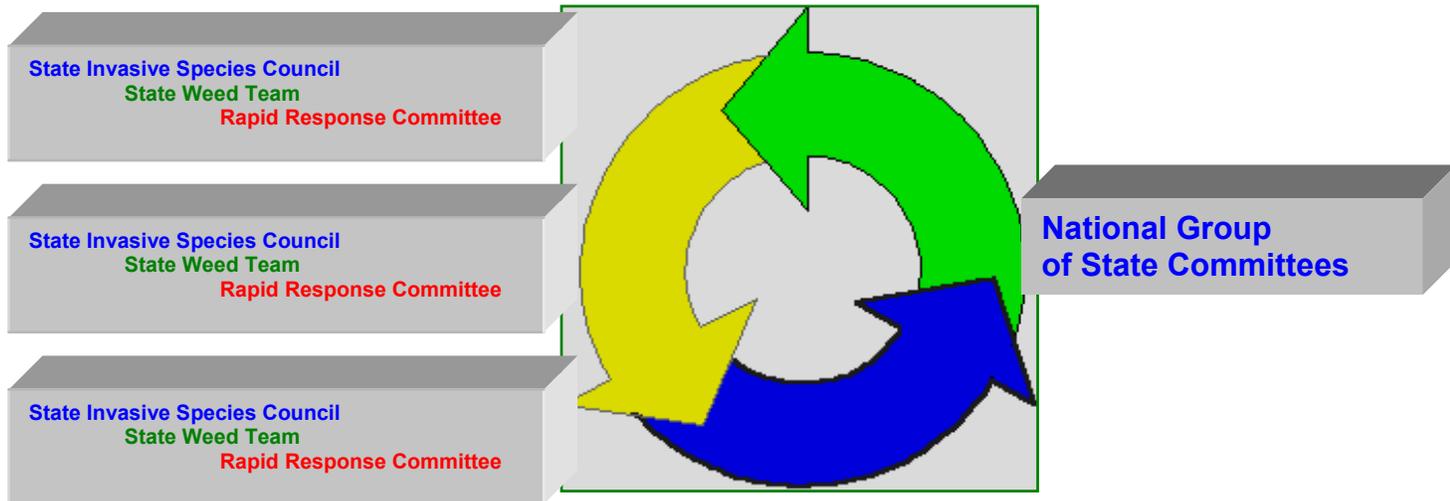
The RRC will recommend one of the following strategies:

- Containment – allowing for rapid research focused on managing the current population.
- Eradication – to obtain control before further expansion can occur (i.e. seed set), analyze the cost/benefits of control measures on crop, ecosystem, area or resource.

Funding - The Rapid Response Team should have a process for accessing funds from the State or National level emergency fund, using the Fire or FEMA analogy. Another option is the HAZMAT analogy, where the entity responsible for introducing the species is responsible for all or part of the control costs. Funding should be justified on the basis of vital protection of the ecosystem as well as economic protection.

Barriers and Stumbling Blocks were identified. There are a number of stumbling blocks to rapid response in emergency situations, especially for Federal agencies. There may be a delay in emergency response because it is necessary to complete site-specific NEPA documentation. Because of the site specificity requirement, it may be difficult to share NEPA documentation between jurisdictions. There may be a dilemma of which should have the higher priority for protection, endangered species vs. endangered ecosystems with each having their own advocates within the community. The most efficient chemical for the control action recommended by the RRC may not be labeled for the requested use and thus not available to Federal agencies. The Environmental Protection Agency timeline for review of emergency labeling once an invasive species population is identified, is not sufficiently rapid to control the species before reproduction occurs. On a state level, there may not be state legislation to encourage or allow control of invasive plants and thus legal authority is often not available in a form that would not threaten private landowners. Jurisdictional boundaries across Federal, state and private lands may be problematic in taking emergency actions.

Overview:



[TOP](#)

III. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- ❖ *Develop a National Association of State Invasive Species Councils.*
- ❖ *Develop criteria and protocols for implementation of a Rapid Response Plan that utilizes recommendations from the State Rapid Assessment Group.*
- ❖ *Select a Regional Rapid Response Coordinator to work with the State Rapid Response Coordinators, and to serve as a liaison with the National Early Warning Coordinator*
- ❖ *Develop State Invasive Species Councils*
- ❖ *Establish a State Rapid Response Committee under the State Council*
- ❖ *Select a State Rapid Response Coordinator to Chair the State Rapid Response Committee*
- ❖ *Establish a central fund for rapid assessment and rapid response initiatives*

[TOP](#)