

**CALIFORNIA INVASIVE SPECIES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CISAC) MEETING**  
**Auditorium, CDFA BUILDING**

Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, July 23, 2014

**Opening:**

The regular meeting of the California Invasive Species Advisory Committee (CISAC) was called to order at 10:05 a.m. on July 23, 2014 in Sacramento, by Committee Chair Bob Atkins.

**CISAC Members Present:**

Bob Atkins, Victoria Brandon, Jim Cranney, Fred Crowder, Andrea Fox, Larry Godfrey, Jay Goldsmith, Doug Johnson, Betsy Peterson, John Randall, Sheri Smith, Helene Wright, Robin Wall

**CISAC Members Absent:**

Karen Buhr, Christiana Conser, Joe DiTomaso, Richard Forster, Marcy Martin, Jeanne Merrill, David Pattison

**California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) Staff Present:**

David Pegos

**California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Staff Present:**

Lisa Corvington, Valerie Cook-Fletcher

**California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Calfire) Staff Present:**

Tom Smith

**CISAC MEMBER UPDATES**

- Betsy Peterson: recently attended a three-day USDA seed summit in Maryland focused on export/import issues.
- Helene Wright: the medfly project is going well, and the release of sterile males will end next month.
- Fred Crowder introduced himself: he is the San Mateo County Agricultural Commissioner and the Chair of the CACASA pest prevention committee, succeeding Vince Guise as CACASA representative on CISAC.
- Victoria Brandon: the Forest Service is sponsoring "Visions of the Wild," a festival in Vallejo September 3-6 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the federal Wilderness Act. The Sierra Club is offering a panel discussion on invasive plants in wilderness, with participation from Cal-IPC, East Lake RCD, and Tuleyome.
- Sheri Smith: there has been a huge increase in forest mortality because of pests combined with drought stress, plus lots of lightning fires too. The Forest Pest Council will have its annual field meeting in San Diego on July 29. The Polyphagous Shothole Borer working group is conducting the first of a series of meetings on July 25.
- Doug Johnson: a bill currently proposed in Congress (HR 3994) would change federal funding rules to leave very little money for administration or research, with

adverse effects on prevention efforts and long term planning. It also contains a NEPA exception that environmentalists oppose. The national invasive plant council is opposing the bill. Cal-IPC has undertaken a review of eucalyptus literature, with participation from Dean Kelch, Joe DiTomaso, and State Parks. A draft was just circulated for comment and 30 form letters objecting to categorizing eucalyptus as invasive have already been received.

- Bob Atkins: there have been a number of Asian Citrus Psyllid finds near packing houses. Neglected and abandoned orchards are a big problem, made worse because of the effects of drought on marginal orchards.

#### **AGENCY STAFF UPDATES**

- Tom Smith: recently surveyed Santa Cruz county for Polyphagous Shothole Borer and found a lot of dead and dying oaks but no positive PSB identification. The USFS is initiating a new grant program for all kinds of forest-related projects, maximum award \$700,000. Details are available on the Western Forestry Leadership Coalition website, <http://wflcenter.org/>
- Valerie Cook-Fletcher: CDFW recently hired a staff member to help implement the mussel prevention grant program; grant applications will be available in early August.. New mussel prevention regulations will go out for comment on August 1.
- David Pegos: there have been no EGVM finds in Napa this year, though there was an isolated find in Sonoma County near the coast that did not trigger a quarantine. There have been several Japanese beetle finds in the Sacramento area, with a public outreach meeting scheduled on July 28. CDFW has been partnering with the Firewood Task Force at the State Fair to do Buy It Where You Burn It outreach.

#### **PRESENTATIONS:**

##### **(a) Sheri Smith, Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle.**

These large beetles attack a variety of palms, particularly the coconut palm. Adults live up to nine months, and each female lays 50 to 100 eggs. They are native to SE Asia, and have been a problem on Guam for several years. They were also discovered on a military base on Oahu just last year, though conjectured to have been in Hawaii for two or three years. The adults cause most of the damage by cutting through developing leaves and feeding on sap. On Guam composting has been encouraged but it creates ideal beetle breeding sites in mulch and green waste. Adults kill trees and larvae feed on dead trees. Working on a variety of traps and lures, and finally developed an effective trap for Guam and Hawaii. Detector dogs have been tried but aren't very effective in wild areas because the underbrush is so thick. A variety of chemical treatments and biocontrol methods have been tried but without much success. Burning debris piles would do a lot to reduce breeding sites but the air board objects.

##### **(b) Valerie Cook-Fletcher, first annual California Invasive Species Action Week, August 2-10.**

The goal is to increase awareness and engage the public by encouraging participation with independent action, organizing volunteer activities and conducting a youth poster contest. CDFW has created a web page (<https://www.dfg.ca.gov/invasives/ActionWeek/>) and partnered with nature centers, the Ag in the Classroom and environmental education program, the Master Gardeners, California Native Plant Society, State Parks, CDFW, National

Park Service, Smithsonian Center, and a variety of non profit organizations and on going volunteer programs. Approximate 40 events have been scheduled and 33 entries in the poster contest have been received. CISAC can help next year by promoting the event within our respective organizations and encouraging them to host events. We could also help develop higher profile events such as an annual invasive species cook off and fundraiser, and arrange for poster contest awards since CDFW can't give gifts.

**Action item:** a subcommittee was formed (Jay Goldsmith, Doug Johnson, Fred Crowder) with assistance from David Pegos to work on the 2015 event.

**(c) Tony Mediati, CalFire Programmatic Environmental Impact Report.**

The PEIR covers vegetation treatment options in the state responsibility area. A draft went out for public comment in May 2012, and is currently being revised before recirculation for another round of comments. Goals are to maintain forest resources, reduce the risk of wildfire, and reduce noxious weeds and other invasive species. The state is divided into 10 bioregions containing 38 million areas that might potentially be treated, but 217,000 acres would be the maximum in any given year. This is a voluntary program involving willing landowners only. Doing the CEQA documentation ahead of time will allow quicker action later. Treatments can be prescribed fire, grazing, herbicides, hand pulling, or mechanical removal. Herbicide use is limited to 10 percent of treated areas, but CalFire currently uses no herbicides whatsoever. Treatments can both help and hinder efforts against invasive plants. We are currently seeing a massive increase in forest pests because of drought, and also seeing more and more exotic pests as time goes on. Invasive species mitigations include requirements that projects have to use weed free mulch, equipment must be washed before entering or leaving a treated area, and grazers must be given weed free forage for four days before entering a treatment area.

**(d) Shakoora Azimi-Gaylon, Delta Conservancy.**

The Delta Conservancy is a state agency created by the Delta Reform Act of 2009 with limited water bond funding, and charged with coordinating conservation efforts in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The goal is to restore the working landscape for the benefit of the region, with focus on ecosystem restoration, education and outreach, and interagency coordination. Coordination is needed for invasive species control in the Delta, which is considered one of the most invaded estuaries in the world. With Department of Water Resources funding they are conducting a pilot program on Arundo control in Cache Slough. The Conservancy is always looking for new partners. Fred Crowder: how do they prioritize invasives? Answer: they look to partners for that. Betsy Peterson: it's important to identify the target outreach audience precisely and tailor the message accordingly.

**(e) David Pegos, Don't Pack a Pest update.**

CDFA has been working with USDA to obtain some funding, and received \$150,000 Agricultural Quality Inspection money. Robin Wall and Helene Wright have partnered with the department. Outreach messaging starts when people apply for visas and includes signage at ports of entry and an interactive Internet component that travelers can access throughout their trip. Artwork and text is being finalized and will be presented for CISAC to review at the October 15 meeting. SFO and San Isidro will get the campaign first, followed by LAX and cruise ships. Oregon and Washington are interested in participating to create a coordinated West Coast effort.

## COMMITTEE BUSINESS

- **Approval of minutes:** Jay Goldsmith moved and Betsy Peterson seconded to approve the minutes from the April 23, 2014 meeting as amended. All in favor, none opposed.
- **Poster Contest.** At the request of Valerie Cook-Fletcher, CISAC members judged the Invasive Species Action Week Youth Poster Contest, and selected first, second, and third place winners in each of the three age groups. It is anticipated that this will become an annual task for CISAC.

## DISCUSSION: member self-assessment survey and ways to improve the committee

Weak points:

- Poor attendance
- Insufficient interaction with ISCC
- Lack of a clear work plan?

Consensus that although the presentations are valuable we should spend more time working on a plan, setting goals, and accomplishing tasks. Jay Goldsmith raised the issue of CISAC's relationship with the Secretaries and ISCC. Victoria Brandon: at the ISCC meeting last fall they committed to appointing liaisons from each agency, but it doesn't seem to have happened. David Pegos: will follow up. We're doing a lot of things right, new member recruitment is being addressed, and attendance will probably improve if concrete accomplishments increase. Doug Johnson: as a rule of thumb we should spend half our meeting time doing things and half the time learning things. David Pegos: we need to hear what we can do to improve CISAC. Doug Johnson: we should review the Framework Implementation Report prepared in 2013. Victoria Brandon: will distribute it to the committee again. Agreement that we could accomplish more if we had funding. Specialty Crop Block Grant requests for applications will go out in a few months, and we should be ready to apply. Last year's application was rejected for technical reasons and can be re-used with few changes.

**Action item:** a subcommittee was formed (Andrea Fox, Victoria Brandon, Robin Wall, Betsy Peterson) to work on the grant application.

## UPDATES

CDFA (David Pegos):

- CISAC vacancies. Solicitations for new members will go out next week, and current members should spread the word. There are four vacancies now, two more current members will term off at the end of the year, and several other chronic non-attenders should be replaced. It would be helpful to prepare an orientation packet for new members.
- Twenty-first Century symposia: three more symposia are planned to complete the series. The planning committee will come together soon, with Dorian Fougères continuing to facilitate. The next session will take place in December 2014 or January 2015.
- The first session of the PSB working group led by the Avocado Commission will take place on July 25. CDFA hosted a well-attended workshop on May 27, and the working group is the result.
- An exotic palm pest meeting was held on July 22, with a briefing for nursery and

date palm grower stakeholders. A system of voluntary protocols for the nursery industry is moving forward.

#### Legislative Updates

- Doug Johnson: AB 2402, sponsored by Cal-IPC and authored by Assemblymember Joan Buchanan, would have restored funding for Weed Management Areas and biocontrol programs. 150 organizations wrote letters of support. The bill is still alive, but the Assembly Appropriations Committee took out the funding. Bob Atkins suggests appointing another subcommittee to deal with the perennial problem of obtaining funding for the WMAs and other invasive plant programs. Doug Johnson: leadership should come from the top, from the Secretaries of Agriculture and Natural Resources: this is an ISCC matter. CISAC has already submitted a policy statement (posted to the CISAC website) and need a response from the Secretaries. Since everyone is a beneficiary funding should come from the general fund, and it shouldn't be taken from other programs. Jay Goldsmith: this is what CISAC is all about, but the decisions have to come from a higher level than CISAC.  
**Action item:** an invasive plant funding subcommittee was formed (Doug Johnson, Fred Crowder, Jay Goldsmith, Bob Atkins). The subcommittee will ask to meet with Secretary Ross and request direction on moving ahead.
- David Pegos: SB 1018 would prohibit agencies from engaging in the production of beneficial organisms when commercially available. It could have a lot of negative impacts and member organizations should consider opposing it.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** none offered

**Next meeting:** The next regularly scheduled CISAC meeting will take place at 10:00 AM on October 15, 2014, in Sacramento.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:50 PM

Minutes taken by Victoria Brandon

Approved by Secretary Christiana Conser