



Diverse interests convene in DC to address invasive species

New partners and new ideas were the outcome of National Invasive Species Awareness Week, held Jan. 11-14 in Washington, DC.

Organized by a broad coalition of groups, the all-taxa event convincingly linked invasive species with climate change, energy development and biofuels, and the green economy. Briefing papers with recommendations on these topics can be found at www.nisaw.org.

At least 30 states were represented by the 130+ registrants who attended the briefings, presentations, and panel discussions in the mornings. A stimulating combination of science, policy, and opinion were offered by 19 presenters who addressed the topical issues from diverse perspectives. Notably, several speakers reported on the climate change talks they had recently attended in Copenhagen, and Dr. Guy Preston, Director of South Africa's Working for Water Programme, offered a vision of how invasive species management could be tied closely to jobs and social welfare.

Eighteen Special Issues sessions offered by another 34 presenters were featured in the afternoons with topics ranging from marine bioinvasions in the Pacific to state initiatives to Asian carp in the Midwest, wild pigs in the South, and national regulations for pesticide permitting and animal screening.

An evening reception on Capitol Hill provided NISAW attendees an opportunity to mix and mingle with each other and with congressional staffers to exchange information and ideas. Staff from Sen. Harry Reid's office announced that the senator intended to introduce invasive species legislation in coming weeks.

NISAW concluded with a Networking Day during which 25 agencies, organizations, and programs provided five-minute overviews of their interests and activities. The week's final group discussion resulted in a determination to move ahead as a loose, all-taxa coalition open to state and Federal agencies, professional societies, non-profits, businesses, and others with a stake in invasive species issues. Exciting ideas for NISAW 2011 were proposed. Initially, the Weed Science Society of America will continue to lead organizational efforts.

Materials from NISAW 2010 will be posted at www.nisaw.org soon. For more information, contact Lee VanWychen at lee.vanwychen@wssa.net or Janet Clark at janet.k.clark@gmail.com.