

Biodiversity and Invasive Species

a position paper of



Biologically diverse, native ecosystems are critical to human health and sustainable economies. North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) supports the conservation of North America’s native biodiversity and recommends the prioritization and implementation of legislation, policy, and funding that reduces threats to biodiversity resulting from invasive species.

Nearly one fifth of the Earth’s surface is at risk of plant and animal invasions, impacting native species, ecosystem functions, economies, and human health. The rate of introduction of new invasive species is higher than ever before and shows no signs of slowing.

Invasive species cause biodiversity loss and can weaken habitat resilience. Preventing and stopping the spread of these harmful non-native plants, animals, and pathogens is critical to conserving biodiversity and protecting high-value areas. Because invasive species cross boundaries, effective prevention efforts demand coordinated action across international, federal, tribal, state, local, and private jurisdictions, along with sufficient resources to implement science-guided strategies.

The members of NAISMA comprise the only international organization solely focused on empowering the management of invasive species. NAISMA is uniquely positioned to help land and water owners or managers to work together across jurisdictional boundaries.

U.S. federal agencies are directed by Section 7. (a) of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to carry out “programs for the conservation of endangered species and threatened species.” (Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. 1531-1544, U.S.C. § 7 (1973). Since invasive species directly and indirectly harm endangered species and critical habitats, their prevention and control are aspects of the work of multiple federal agencies. However, federal

agencies alone cannot protect biodiversity. They must also have effective working partnerships with numerous and diverse natural resource managers. Adequate resources are critically needed to support efforts.

NAISMA can help foster working partnerships by assisting with joint planning, collecting data, leading interjurisdictional “cross-training” exercises, providing networking and professional development opportunities, raising public awareness, and other services. Importantly, NAISMA members can also take direct on-the-ground action.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Appropriate funding for invasive species as authorized in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (PL 117-58).
- Conserve and protect water infrastructure, aquatic resources, and outdoor recreation by supporting policy and funding that aims to stop the spread of invasive mussels.
- Enhance the nation’s biosecurity by cosponsoring and advancing Lacey Act Amendments.
- Improve invasive species provisions within the Farm Bill for the protection of domestic food and water supplies.
- Include invasive species in climate change legislation, policy, management, and research.
- Increase funding for the Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force, Regional Panels, State ANS Plans, and Species Management Plans as authorized in the National Invasive Species Act (1997).
- Create and fund an Office of Invasive Species within NOAA headquarters that can serve as the Co-Chair of the ANS Task Force and fully engage in coordination nationwide.
- Maximize efforts through the Water Resources Development Act for watercraft inspection and decontamination, aquatic plant management, early detection monitoring, and rapid response by streamlining internal procedures for implementation and reducing grant match requirements for recipients.
- Protect our nation's biodiversity by cosponsoring and working to advance the Recovering America’s Wildlife Act.
- Provide critical funding for invasive species by cosponsoring and working to advance the STAMP Act.
- Take action to protect forests by cosponsoring the Invasive Species Prevention and Forest Restoration Act.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Adopt model legal frameworks and facilitate cross-jurisdictional implementation of science-based standards that minimizes risk associated with high priority pathways for invasive species spread including live aquatic bait, watercraft inspection and decontamination, and certified weed free products.
- Implement standardized training for invasive species professionals and federal land and water managers to ensure the readiness of employees for prevention, early detection, rapid response, control, monitoring, outreach, and enforcement.
- Increase collaboration between the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure consistent and prioritized enforcement at our nation's borders to enhance biosecurity.
- Promote best management practices for integrated pest management and restoration.
- Reduce invasive annual grasses that contribute to catastrophic wildfires and support invasive species management activities related to the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).
- Support the implementation of mandatory watercraft inspection and decontamination (WID) and other cross-jurisdictional containment and prevention strategies to stop the spread of zebra and quagga mussels and other aquatic invasive species (AIS) from overland dispersal via recreational watercraft.
- Support for biocontrol research and implementation to minimize impacts associated with the long-term management of established invaders.