

Northwest Florida CISMA Meeting Minutes
23 February 2010

Welcome and Introduction to 2nd NWFL CISMA Meeting. Participants introduce themselves. Participants include:

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NWFL CISMA now has a website through FISP: www.floridainvasives.org/northwest/

TNC received grant from DOD to develop CISMA, and there are deliverables associated with grant, including development of a strategic plan and development of a steering committee. Primary focus of this meeting is advancement of these deliverables.

Overview of what CISMAs are for those not present at first meeting:

CISMAS focus on landscape level management of invasives. 5 basic characteristics- define geographical area (FL counties mentioned, also reps from AL), represent majority of landowners (have land management agencies on board, need to expand to others who have a stake in invasives issues); steering committee, commitment to cooperation, strategic plan. Effectiveness- crossing boundaries, good for public relations, improve management of invasives (BMP, EDDR, combine efforts); provides for funding opportunities through sources that want to support CISMAS; leveraging limited resources, reducing individual costs.

Strategic plan:

Everyone was e-mailed the strategic plan template developed by TNC. The template is intended to serve as a guide to be tailored to NWFL CISMA. Italicized items are viewed as good minimums, doesn't mean that those are the only valuable actions. A goal for this meeting is to have a good discussion about the plan, and to consider what the group wants to keep/omit from the template. If we want to, we can develop committees to develop ideas to bring to next meeting.

Question: how was template developed? Answer: A number of TNC staff reviewed a variety of strategic plans and adapted them into this template.

(group takes 15 minutes to review plan)

Question: Are you envisioning an Ecosystem Support Team model for invasives control, like a Strike Team? Answer: That is for steering committee to decide. In the near future we may look at combining resources to hire contractors for on the ground work.

Question: Would DOD fund this? Answer: Current DOD legacy funding is for the development of CISMA, and does not include funds for contractors.

Question: Can we use FWC Invasive Plant Management Section funding? Answer: The FWC money is only for work on public lands; our CISMA is private and public. However, the CISMA can agree on proposals for work on public land to be submitted to FWC.

Question: Are dates relative to DOD funding cycle? Answer: No. We are hoping to receive another DOD Legacy grant for the CISMA, but we need to pursue other funding sources as well. We need CISMA partners to help develop funding mechanisms.

Comment: Outreach is very important to reach homeowners, and the plan does not have any actions until 2011. We need outreach action sooner, and prioritize education.

Comment: CISMA should coordinate efforts to send the same message to people, so that they will hear it over and over. Do partners have an avenue for distribution? E.g., Eglin has good lobby for distributing information, as does NPS? Answer: Yes.

Question: How old are some CISMAS? Where do they get their funding? Answer: Everglades is several years old, gets money from DOD, USFWS Partners Program; TNC provides in kind services. FWC gives more points to CISMA related project proposals.

Question: What is our CISMA geographical boundary? Answer: 6 counties. Last meeting there was concern about state agencies doing work outside of state.

Comment: FWC has been working with GA and AL to create seamless boundaries. FWC can't fund work in AL, but may be able to leverage funding from states adjacent. CISMA may want to revisit boundaries.

Comment: Education would be a good focus for an ad-hoc committee.

Comment: Need to have CISMA foundation first; need targeted outreach, e.g., with 2-5 species to focus on since there is so much general information.

Comment: Perhaps we should come up with yearly action plans in addition to the five-year plan. It would help to look at other CISMAS to see what they have done within first two years

Comment: The CISMA will be helpful to the Navy in going after grant funding, and by providing ground support. The CISMA will allow Navy to get funds directly from Legacy money, work cross-boundaries to help with issues they have on-site. Eglin was able to get funding through BIPM, used that money as leverage, and the Air Force saw the need to fund invasives management since a state agency thought it was important. Mapping is also very important to know the scope of problem.

Comment: Involving private landowners, especially those adjacent to management areas, is important; really important for federal agencies to work with private landowners.

Comment: It is important to include Alabama. Some partners have land in both FL and AL. We need to revisit the boundaries.

Comment: EDRR is very important; e.g., in NEFL found tamarisk and was able to eradicate. EDDmaps is available. Hopefully UGA representative will be available at next meeting. EDDmaps is a mapping system, FNAI coordinates with EDDmaps. EDDmaps uses Google Maps technology; can put in information about an infestation, and has quality control.

Question: Does AL have an organization that connects with FNAI? Answer: Working on figuring out how to collaborate. EDDmaps is now a good source for data sharing.

Question: Should we include pest and pathogens? Answers: It may be able to tie into IFAS programs.

Comment: CISMAS should target gaps. Maybe a part of the plan is to identify those gaps in all areas.

Comment: MOUs are such an issue, maybe we can use the GCPEP MOU to add the GCPEP partners to the CISMA. Conecuh is already within GCPEP, good reason to extend boundaries.

Comment: It would be easier to comprehend if this list is consolidated into a one year plan, this format is too much. Annual plan would be more functional, then can look at what happened in that year, to be modified at the end of the year to guide the next years' efforts.

Comment: Perhaps we should have an subcommittee for each goal? Maybe each committee can work on gaps, existing research. It seems like the plan is a good foundation.

Boundaries of CISMA:

At the last meeting, the vote was to keep the CISMA within Florida. However, not all partners will be able to come to each meeting, and if the group would like to revisit the issue we may.

Question: Why didn't we include AL at last meeting? Answers: There were worries about state agencies traveling, working out of state.

Comment: For grants, it is good to show multi-state partnerships. We can use video conferencing at Extension offices with polycom.

Question: Are any state agencies concerned about being a part of the CISMA? Answers: State employees can be members of a multi-state partnership, but working on other states' lands can't be done.

Question: What are the benefits of including AL? Answers: Bigger picture strategic planning (such as with cogon grass); improving landscaping material coming into and out of each state; using contractors across boundaries.

Question: Where do you draw line for boundaries? How big is too big? Answer: The CISMA will have to decide that as a group.

Comment: AL is active with management in some counties, and has received stimulus money. If AL is excluded, might be missing chance for the resources they have. Private orgs, DOT, state and county parks.

Vote: Majority votes to include Baldwin, Escambia and Covington counties in CISMA

Committees:

As mentioned at the beginning of the meeting, a deliverable for our DoD grant is the creation of a Steering Committee for the CISMA.

Question: What is the function of the steering committee? Answer: Acts like a board for decision making, endorsing annual work plans, changing boundaries, etc..

How do we include representation of new agencies that may join the CISMA? Answer: As new partners join the CISMA, we will be able to add representatives to the steering committee.

Question: How often would the steering committee meet? Answer: At the last meeting it was decided to have CISMA meetings at least quarterly. Once we establish a steering committee, they can decide how often it is necessary to meet. GCPEP has evolved to only meet once a year.

Question: How many steering committee members do there need to be. Answer: There isn't a set number. GCPEP has two representatives from every partner, but that is just one model.

Comment: Perhaps a good model would be to establish subcommittees based on the template plan's goals 2 through 6, and have each subcommittee elect a head. The heads of each subcommittee would then form the steering committee, which would address goal 1.

Question: Would forming steering committee through subcommittees leave partners without representation? Answers: Justin could e-mail all CISMA participants and ask them to rank the top three subcommittees that they would like to be a part of. Justin can then assign people to subcommittees so that each subcommittee has participants from a variety of partners. Comment: This system could work well for the development of the strategic plan, and then if it needs to be revised we can decide to do so.

Question: Does everyone here feel as though this is a good strategy? Are there any concerns with this strategy? Answer: All participants agree this is a good strategy.

Question: Do other committees need to be added? Eg. Riley mentioned grants? Do we want to establish a standing funding committee? Question: In writing and receiving grants, we need a contact agency that is considered a federal, 501c3, etc. TNC is often the lead agency for GCPEP in getting grants. Will TNC be the lead agency for receiving CISMA grants? Answer: Any agency participating agency is a potential lead for a CISMA related grant. Grant lead will depend on who can receive the funding. Comment: If we establish a funding committee, it will be up to each member to let funding committee know what funding is available. Comment: We should go ahead and develop a funding committee since receiving funding can take a while.

Participants agree to establish 1 funding committee, 5 subcommittees based on goal 2-6, and from those decide on steering committee representatives who will also address goal 1.

Justin has paid time through June to reach out to new members. Participants are welcome to suggest new members.

Lunch break

FNAI Invasive Plants Program Frank Price

FNAI is part of the natural heritage network to collect natural resource data, completely contract funded. The FNAI Invasive Plant Program is funded by FWC, and contributes to the FL Invasive Plants Geodatabase, a collection of invasive plant information to serve as baseline.

What is the value of mapping invasives? As money and chemicals are becoming scarce, mapping helps focus efforts: 6 P's: Pest Plant Prioritization Prevents Pissing away Pesticides;

3 components of project:

1. Create a system to map and monitor invasive species. Goal of creating a uniform collection process, EDDmaps uses same system as FNAI, some NERRS, etc; Approach seems to be pragmatic, can download data dictionary from FNAI, they have field forms, instructions on website.
2. Provide a baseline record of invasive occurrences. FNAI often puts this data into shapefiles. Data is comprised of FNAI field staff and partner submissions. As of December '09 have data on about 90% of Florida's conservation acreage; 139 species; haven't found all FLEPPC category species in conservation lands, which is good, helps to see which species actually make it to conservation areas and are displacing native species.
3. Create a web interface for public access and data entry (iMapInvasives); EDDMaps, in addition to direct data entry from EDDMapS users, also gets data from the individual states on a routine basis. FNAI has shared their data with EDDMapS. FNAI shapefiles are on FNAI website.

How FNAI can help NWFL CISMA: create maps using polygons and points; provide custom summaries of data; can use FNAI staff for reports of data, maps, especially for grants, provide "species to watch" (this is currently difficult to determine because there is no data from Alabama).

Most frequently occurring in NW FL: tallow, torpedo grass, mimosa, Japanese climbing fern, Japanese honeysuckle, Chinese privet, cogon grass, Chinese wisteria, lantana, camphor (based on number of occurrences, also have top 10 species by gross acreage);

Data freely available on website; IMAPINVASIVES.org; email Frank for specific requests. Imaps - used nationally based on FNAI model.

Questions: what about some species that aren't showing up? Answer: FNAI doesn't do comprehensive surveys (only focused on conservation lands).

Natural Areas Association Rook Cleary

Natural Areas Association will have its annual conference in Tallahassee in 2011, and working on having GCPEP involved or CISMA involved. Would like to set up some field trips. GA, AL, FL involved, will be looking at invasive species.

Locations/Date for Next Meeting

Okaloosa County/Crestview Extension Office. May would be a good time. Justin will email participants concerning subcommittee involvement and date for the next meeting.

Comment: Longleaf Alliance Regional Conference in October, poster from CISMA would be a good idea.

Meeting adjourned at 1pm.