

The Role of NAWMA in Developing EDRR Capacity for New Invasive Plants across the U.S. and Canada. Randy Westbrooks (U.S. Geological Survey, Whiteville, NC) and Sheilah Kennedy (S-K Environmental, Okanogan, WA).

Currently, there are numerous agencies, organizations, and interagency groups across the U.S. and Canada that are involved with invasive plant management. A number of strategies are employed by such programs to manage widespread invasive plants through population suppression and containment efforts. Even though it makes more sense to prevent the establishment and spread of a new invasive plant in the first place, it has always been a challenge to address new species. Implementation of the principles and practices of Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) for new invasive plants on a single land unit is a rather straightforward process that aims to protect biodiversity or the production capacity of the land (deny further seed production; exhaust the seed reserves in the soil). However, to be effective, efforts to address new invasive plants that occur on multiple land units, and across multiple jurisdictions, typically require the cooperation of numerous agencies as well as potential and impacted stakeholders. Based on experience with numerous single-agency led federal-state weed eradication projects in the 1980s and early 1990s, it became obvious by the mid-1990s that a more systematic approach was needed for early detection and rapid response to new invasive plants in the United States.

The North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) first endorsed the development of a U.S. National EDRR System for Invasive Plants in a position paper in 1998 following a presentation by the senior author on new approaches for EDRR at the 1997 NAWMA annual conference in Manhattan, Kansas. Since that time, NAWMA members have been very supportive of efforts to develop EDRR Capacity in each state – *beginning with the establishment of the Wyoming Weed Team by Roy Reichenbach, Wyoming Weed Coordinator, in June, 1998.* Development of a National EDRR System to address invasive plants on multiple land units was subsequently endorsed by the Federal Interagency Committee for the Management of Noxious and Exotic Weeds (FICMNEW) at its first bi-annual planning retreat in Shepherdstown, WV, in September, 1998.

Conceptually, the U.S. National EDRR System for Invasive Plants is a coordinated framework of interagency partner groups at the state and local level that is designed to prevent the establishment and spread of new invasive plants through **Interagency Coordination** (State Invasive Species Councils; State EDRR Committees); **Early Detection and Reporting** (Trained Volunteers and Agency Field Personnel); **Technical Support**, including Plant ID, Vouchering, Rapid Assessment, and Control Recommendations (Cooperating Scientists); **Archival of New Plant Records in Online Plant Databases** (e.g. Invasive Plant Atlas of New England); and **Rapid Response to Selected New Invaders** [(Cooperative Weed Management Areas, Invasive Plant Task Forces, and Single-Agency-Led Weed Eradication Programs and Projects (e.g., the Carolinas Witchweed Eradication Program)].

As a partner in this ongoing effort, the NAWMA Board of Directors is updating the 1998 NAWMA Position Statement on EDRR, and has established a **NAWMA EDRR Liaison Committee**. The purpose of the committee is to promote EDRR as the preferred management strategy for new weeds, to foster development of State and Provincial EDRR Coordinating Committees, and to assist in developing the state and local elements of the EDRR System. Clearly one person is needed in every state and province to serve as a primary point of contact for EDRR. As professional weed managers who see the problem firsthand, NAWMA members are uniquely qualified to serve in this important coordination role.

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