

# National Invasive Species Awareness Week Webinar Series Details - February 22-26, 2021

Monday, February 22nd from 1:00 - 2:30 PM central time

Webinar Topic: [Invasive Species Priorities and Opportunities for the Biden-Harris Administration and Members of the 117th Congress](#)

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**Presentation 1 - An Overview of the North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) presented by Belle Bergner, Executive Director of NAISMA**

**Abstract** - The North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) consists of a vast network of professionals who implement management programs to prevent the detrimental impacts of invasive species to North America's lands and waters. NAISMA's mission is to support, promote, and empower invasive species prevention and management in North America. We have members in all fifty states, as well as in Canada and Mexico. For twenty-eight years, NAISMA has been supporting invasive species managers and growing programs that bridge jurisdictional and geographic divides. Belle will provide a brief summary of NAISMA's programming and will highlight Legislative Affairs, which includes a diverse team of experts responsible for staying apprised of legislative and policy issues pertaining to invasive species. NAISMA is the lead organizer for NISAW. Learn more at [www.naisma.org](http://www.naisma.org).



**Speaker Bio** - Belle Bergner has been NAISMA's Executive Director since 2016. Since joining NAISMA, she has grown the organization's budget ten-fold and facilitated the national and international growth of NAISMA's programs, membership, and partnerships. With over 18 years experience in environmental nonprofit management, Belle is a creative problem solver who enjoys connecting ideas and gathering people to solve environmental challenges. Prior to leading NAISMA, Belle coordinated the Upper Midwest Invasive Species Conference for 8 years, did freelance grant writing for environmental organizations, and was an Outward Bound Instructor in Maine. Belle has a Masters in Ecology and Evolution from the University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelors in Biology from Mount Holyoke College. In her free time, Belle enjoys long walks and doing just about anything outside with her family in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

## Presentation 2 - Invasive Species Opportunities in the 117th Congress and the First Year of the Biden Administration presented by Scott Cameron, Former Acting Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Policy, Management, and Budget

**Abstract** - The beginning of a new Administration and a new Congress present numerous opportunities for those interested in the invasive species issue around the country to positively influence the activities of the federal government at the national level. These opportunities vary a great deal in terms of both their chances of coming to fruition and their potential impact were they to become realized. This webinar will provide an overview of these opportunities, and help participants determine where they should focus their time and effort spent on influencing policy makers based on the likely impact those efforts will have on invasive species management.



**Speaker Bio** - Scott Cameron is an experienced executive who has repeatedly demonstrated success in natural resource, agriculture, energy, and environmental policy. He has a uniquely broad governmental perspective, having worked as both a career civil servant and political appointee in the federal government, as staff to the Governor of California, as a Congressional staffer, and as an elected official in local government. In addition, he has engaged on these policies as a corporate executive, as part of a trade association, through industry coalitions, as a management consultant to federal agencies, and in the nonprofit sector.

Scott recently left the federal government, where he had served as Acting Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget at the U.S. Department of the Interior. In that capacity he oversaw Department-wide budget, invasive species, natural resource damage assessment and restoration, environmental compliance and numerous administrative functions of this \$14 billion agency with 65,000 employees. Scott directly oversaw a staff of 2,800 and budget of \$350 million.

In 2014, Scott founded the Reduce Risks from Invasive Species Coalition to educate decision makers in Washington DC on the ecological, economic, and public health impacts of invasive species. In 2015, he was elected a Director of the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, after a successful campaign during which he received the endorsements of both the Sierra Club and the Tea Party. Earlier in his career, Scott worked at the White House Office of Management and Budget, where he oversaw the budget, regulatory activity, and legislation involving large parts of EPA and the Interior Department. In the private sector, he set up the government relations function of a multinational corporation.

Scott is a Fellow of the National Academy of Public Administration, and has a longstanding relationship with the Partnership for Public Service. He earned an MBA from Cornell University, and a BA in Biology from Dartmouth College. Scott is married, has a grown son, and two rescue cats.

### Presentation 3 - The National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species' Recommendations to the Biden-Harris Administration and Members of the 117th Congress presented by Caroline Murphy, Government Relations Manager for The Wildlife Society

**Abstract** - Caroline Murphy will be discussing federal transition priorities as detailed by member organizations of the National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species (NECIS; necis.net). These recommendations include timely suggestions for operational and financial improvements to invasive species prevention and management at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (U.S. Forest Service and Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) and U.S. Department of the Interior (U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service). NECIS member organizations will be working to support the implementation of these priorities over the course of the 117th Congress and Biden-Harris Administration.



**Speaker Bio** - Caroline Murphy, AWB®, is the government relations manager at The Wildlife Society (TWS; wildlife.org), a professional association dedicated to inspiring, empowering, and enabling wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and habitats through science-based management and conservation. She implements TWS' legislative and regulatory policy priorities at the federal level, and coordinates with regionally-based TWS chapters and sections on their implementation of policy correspondence.

Murphy also serves as coordinator of the National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species (NECIS; necis.net), a coalition of environmental organizations and professional societies focused on promoting scientifically sound policies that prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species in the United States.

Tuesday, February 23rd from 1:00 - 2:30 PM central time

Webinar Topic: [U.S. Federal Agency Updates](#)

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### Presentation 1 - The Department of the Interior's Invasive Species Strategic Plan presented by Hilary Smith, Senior Advisory for Invasive Species, The Department of the Interior

**Abstract:** Invasive species pose substantial threats to the lands and waters managed by the Department of the Interior (Interior) and negatively affect the resources, services, and experiences available to the American public. Interior leads extensive efforts to manage invasive species and works closely with other federal agencies, states, tribes, territories, and other partners. This presentation will feature Interior's Invasive Species Strategic Plan. This five-year plan provides a coordinated approach to further align programs and policies across Interior and leverage resources to address this important issue.



Speaker Bio: Hilary Smith is the Senior Advisor for Invasive Species at the US Department of the Interior. She joined Interior in 2014 and provides leadership and coordination on crosscutting invasive species policies, planning, and programs at Interior, working closely with Interior's bureaus, offices, senior officials, and stakeholders.

Presentation 2 - The U.S. Department of Agriculture Invasive Species Updates presented by Phil Andreozzi, Invasive Species Coordinator, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Presentation 3 - The Army Corps of Engineers Invasive Species Updates, including implementation of the 2020 Water Resources Development Act presented by Jeremy Crossland, Program Manager for Land Use and Natural Resources, The Army Corps of Engineers

Wednesday, February 24th from 1:00 - 2:30 PM central time

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Webinar Topic: [Aquatic Nuisance Species Priorities for Prevention and Management](#)

Presentation 1 - The Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force Strategic Plan presented by Susan Pasko, Executive Secretary to the ANS Task Force, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Abstract: The Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Task Force was established by Congress with the passage of the Nonindigenous Aquatic Nuisance Prevention and Control Act in 1990 and reauthorized with the passage of the National Invasive Species Act in 1996. Composed of 13 Federal and 13 ex-officio members, it serves to protect U.S. waters by creating a unified, well-coordinated approach that raises awareness and takes action to prevent and manage ANS. The ANS Task Force is guided by a Strategic Plan, which serves as a blueprint for action and coordination. In November 2019, the ANS Task Force finalized its Strategic Plan for 2020 – 2025. This Plan builds upon previous work of the ANS Task Force by establishing six goals, each with a targeted set of objectives and associated strategies that are intended to be completed during these five years. This presentation will provide an overview of the ANS Task Force Structure and work progressing under its Strategic Plan.

Speaker Bio: Susan Pasko currently works in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Branch of Aquatic Species, serving as the Executive Secretary of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force. In this role, Susan focuses on coordination and planning to ensure that Federal agencies are actively engaged and effectively responding to the threat of invasive species. She holds a Bachelor degree in Marine Science from the Richard Stockton College of New Jersey and a PhD in Aquatic ecology from Kent State University.

## Presentation 2 - The Updated Recommendations for the Quagga Zebra Action Plan for Western U.S. Waters (QZAP 2.0) presented by Elizabeth Brown on behalf of the Western Regional Panel on ANS

**Abstract:** Zebra and Quagga mussels are among the most destructive and expensive invasive species in North America. Through the Western Regional Panel (WRP) on ANS, the west has invested considerable time and energy over the last decade to develop institutional capacity and cross-jurisdictional coordination to prevent and manage the spread of these and other aquatic invasive species. Elizabeth will present the recently published *Updated Recommendations for the Quagga Zebra Action Plan for Western U.S. Waters (QZAP 2.0)*. The purpose of the QZAP 2.0 is to provide a systematic and unified approach to prevent the spread of zebra and quagga mussels into and within the western U.S. in the future. These recommendations are intended to inform decision-making to provide increased capacity and clear direction that empowers the further implementation of a collaborative multi-jurisdictional regional strategy to prevent the spread of quagga and zebra mussels in the West. The original QZAP, the 2019 Status Report, and QZAP 2.0 can be found in the resources section of the WRP's website at <https://westernregionalpanel.org/>.



**Speaker Bio:** Originally from the Chicago area, Elizabeth Brown has over twenty years of experience in the field of invasive species. She has been in Colorado since 2001 and has spent most of her career with the State Department of Natural Resources as the Stewardship Coordinator and Invasive Species Coordinator within Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Elizabeth also worked in the Department of Agriculture's Noxious Weed Program as the Early Detection and Rapid Response Specialist. Currently, Elizabeth is the Legislative Affairs, Professional Development, and Certified Weed Free Products Program Manager for NAISMA. Elizabeth also serves as Advisor to the Colorado Weed Management Association's Board of Directors and as Advisor to the Western Regional Panel's (WRP) Executive Committee. Elizabeth was Chair of the WRP from 2012-2020 and has played a leadership role in QZAP implementation and coordination. Elizabeth has four small children and spends her free time playing at parks and enjoying the great outdoors with the family.

## Presentation 3 - Containing Quagga Mussels in Lake Powell to Protect Utah and the Uninfested West presented by Nate Owens, Aquatic Invasive Species and Boating Access Programs Manager, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

**Abstract -** Quagga mussels were first detected in Lake Powell in 2013 and there have been thousands of adult quagga mussels found attached to canyon walls, the Glen Canyon Dam,

boats, and other underwater structures. Adult mussel populations have expanded rapidly in the last few years. Utah and the National Park Service, and their partners, have implemented a containment program for watercraft to prevent the movement of invasive mussels into Utah and the large multi-state uninfested area of the Western U.S. Containment of infested waters is a shared responsibility that must be done in tandem with prevention consistently across jurisdictions to avoid new infestations. Lake Powell is a multi-jurisdictional water that crosses two states, with multiple federal, state, tribal, and local governing entities. Nate will describe the containment program in place at Lake Powell along with the prevention program throughout Utah, and the importance of collaboration, communication, and long-term federal funding and implementation capacity.



Speaker Bio - Nate joined the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources' Aquatic Invasive Species Program six years ago and has served as the statewide program coordinator for five years. During that time, he led the effort to transfer the statewide watercraft interdiction program to the Law Enforcement Section, coordinated research to address regional priorities, and served on the Western Regional Panel's Executive Committee for two years. Nate's current areas of focus are exploring regional approaches to invasive mussel management, identifying appropriate applications of eDNA testing to early detection monitoring efforts, and dreaming up ways to best leverage new technology to stop invasive mussels in their tracks!

#### Presentation 4 - Implementing the National Asian Carp Management Plan presented by Amy McGovern, Aquatic Invasive Species Program Supervisor, Upper Midwest-Great Lakes Region, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Abstract - Federal funding to support Asian carp prevention, management and control in the Upper Mississippi River Basin, the Ohio River Basin, and the Great Lakes has been appropriated to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service annually since 2012. Funds are awarded to state agencies to conduct priority work and are complemented by the federal capacity of the Service. FY20 was a pivotal year due to the support for funding National Plan implementation across all major sub-basins of the Mississippi River Basin at the recommended level of \$25M. The level of coordination and support at a national level is unprecedented and the Service is working internally, with MICRA and state partners, to implement the highest priority actions in each sub-basin that support the overarching goals of the National Plan.



Speaker Bio - Amy McGovern is the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Aquatic Invasive Species Program Supervisor in the Upper Midwest-Great Lakes Region. She also serves as the agency's National Asian Carp Coordinator and Great Lakes Sea Lamprey Program Manager. Amy is based in the Midwest Regional Office in the Twin Cities, Minnesota.

## Presentation 5 - Building Toward Long Term, Sustainable Fisheries in the Mississippi River Basin presented by Brian Schoenung, Asian Carp Specialist, State of Indiana, and Chair of the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA)

**Abstract** - The Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association (MICRA) has served the interjurisdictional fisheries and invasive species needs of the 28 member states and federal agency partners since its formation in 1989. The association is dues based and is organized at the sub-basin level with state delegates (usually fish chiefs) serving as voting members. Issues are addressed by the MICRA Executive Board and various Technical Committees. MICRA member agencies played a key role in development of the Asian Carp National Plan and through continued outreach with Congress and stakeholders, has helped drive support for full funding of the National Plan. MICRA's sub-basin structure and federal agency representation makes the Association the perfect vehicle to coordinate state and federal agency Asian Carp control strategies. The Association seeks to expand upon these successes through the formation of a Mississippi River Basin Fishery Commission.



**Speaker Bio** - Brian Schoenung is former Fish Chief and current Asian Carp Specialist for the State of Indiana. Brian has represented the Ohio River Fish Management Team on the MICRA Executive Board since 2003 and was nominated MICRA chair in 2020.

Thursday, February 25th from 1:00 - 2:30 PM central time

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Webinar Topic: [Science, Policy, and Solutions for Invasive Species](#)

## Presentation 1 - The Illinois Invasive Species Council: Past and Present presented by Tricia Bethke, Illinois Forest Pest Outreach Coordinator, The Morton Arboretum

**Abstract:** (Re)starting an invasive species council is rewarding, challenging, and doable. Join this presentation to learn how a dedicated group of volunteers worked together for over two years to develop an all-taxa invasive species council for the state of Illinois.



**Speaker Bio:** Tricia Bethke is the Illinois Forest Pest Outreach Coordinator. Her position is funded through a cooperative grant with USDA APHIS and The Morton Arboretum. Tricia's responsibilities include statewide education, training, and outreach to key stakeholders on the USDA APHIS Hungry Pests program, forest pest identification, high-risk pathways, regulations and quarantines, and reporting protocols. Tricia also coordinates and instructs the

general public on forest pest detection, and tree health monitoring. Tricia has a Masters of Science in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences (NRES) at the University of Illinois.

## Presentation 2 - The Impacts of Insects and Disease on Carbon Sequestration presented by Brendan Quirion, Cornell University

**Abstract:** Major efforts are underway to harness the carbon (C) sequestration ecosystem service that forests provide to combat global climate change. However, disturbances by forest insects and diseases (both native and non-native) can reduce this capacity. In a recent analysis (currently in review), collaborators from Cornell University, the United States Forest Service, the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, Purdue University, and The Nature Conservancy quantified average annual changes in live tree C sequestration capacity associated with insect and disease disturbances utilizing remeasurement data from National Forest Inventory plots in the contiguous United States. Strengthened international trade policies and phytosanitary standards as well as improved forest management have the potential to protect forests and their natural capacity to contribute to climate change mitigation.



**Speaker Bio:** For the past decade, Brendan worked for the Nature Conservancy's award-winning Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program; first as Terrestrial Project Coordinator and then as Program Director. Through this experience he developed a keen interest in evaluating whether commonly applied natural resource management practices sufficiently meet ecological and societal objectives. In fall 2019, he transitioned to Cornell University to advance research related to promoting improved outcomes and accountability in invasive species and white-tailed deer management.

## Presentation 3 - Tree-Smart Trade: How to Prevent Invasive Forest Pests and Pathogens From Entering the U.S. presented by Gary Lovett, Senior Scientist Emeritus, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Science

**Abstract:** Invasive forest insects and diseases imported through international trade are the most severe and urgent threat to forest health in much of the U.S. They can decimate an entire tree species in a matter of a few decades. They also cause substantial economic damage in both cities and forests. The most effective way to reduce the threat of forest pests is to prevent them from entering the country. The main pathways for entry are known—live plants imported for the nursery trade, and wood packaging such as crates and pallets. To reduce the entry of new pests and pathogens via these pathways, we must strengthen our defenses, improve our surveillance systems for new pest outbreaks, and clean up international trade. In this webinar I will discuss several actions that the government and private companies can take to reduce the importation of new pests and diseases, and will highlight recent progress on this problem.



**Speaker Bio:** Dr. Gary Lovett is a Senior Scientist Emeritus at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, NY. He received a bachelor's degree in biology from Union College and a Ph.D. in biology from Dartmouth College. Gary's research focuses primarily on the effects of air pollution, climate change and invasive insects and diseases on forests. He is the author of over 140 scientific publications and editor of two books, and has been elected a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and a Fellow of the Ecological Society of America. He recently convened a group of leading scientists to study the ecological and economic impacts of invasive forest pests, and to recommend policy options to reduce pest importations in international trade. He has been actively engaged with federal agencies and private companies to address this issue.

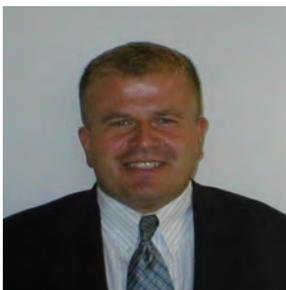
Friday, February 26th from 1:00 - 2:00 PM central time

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Webinar Topic: [Show Me The Money!](#)

**Presentation - Show Me the Money: Moving from Authorization to Appropriations presented by Lee Van Wychen, Executive Director of Science Policy, Weed Science Society of America**

**Abstract:** The U.S. federal agencies responsible for invasive species management in aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, in general, have sufficient legislative authority from Congress to manage invasive species. However, federal invasive species programs remain extremely underfunded. In FY 2020, the Department of Interior estimated it spent \$143 million to manage invasive species for 400+ million acres of public lands. That's roughly 35 cents per acre for all invasive species research, prevention, EDRR, management and restoration. As invasive species stakeholders, we need to seek full appropriations as authorized for these programs. This webinar will review the new leaders and members of the appropriations subcommittees in the House and Senate that have jurisdiction for invasive species funding. We will discuss key invasive species program funding within the Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, and the Army Corp of Engineers.



**Speaker Bio:** Lee Van Wychen earned his M.S. and Ph.D. in Weed Science from the University of Wisconsin and Montana State University in 1998 and 2002, respectively. Following his graduate work, he worked for two members of Congress in Washington DC on agricultural and environmental policy issues through a Congressional Science Fellowship. Since 2005, he has served as the Executive Director of Science Policy for the Weed Science Society of America (WSSA), the Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS) and four regional weed science societies (NCWSS, NEWSS, SWSS, and WSWs).

His main responsibilities include working with Federal Agencies, Congress and other non-governmental organizations to promote research, education, and awareness of weeds in managed and natural ecosystems.