

National Firewood Task Force  
Overview, Membership and Timeline  
October 2009

What is it?

The National Firewood Task Force (NFTF) is a coalition of State and Federal agriculture and natural resource officials that is identifying the key elements of a national strategy to prevent the movement of invasive forest pests in firewood. The ultimate objective of the NFTF is to provide a series of recommendations to State and Federal leaders in spring 2010 that outline what steps should be taken to achieve this goal.

How was it formed?

At the National Plant Board (NPB) meeting in August it was recommended that a State-Federal Task Force be convened to develop recommendations on the firewood issue. Following the meeting, APHIS worked with NPB, the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), the U.S. Forest Service and the National Parks Service to identify task force representatives.

Overview

Government agriculture and natural resource agencies recognize that firewood may provide an efficient pathway for the transport of invasive forest pests and poses a significant threat to the health of forests nationwide. As such, State and Federal agencies have individually and jointly taken some actions to mitigate the movement of forest pests, including quarantines of firewood for specific pests, state-level firewood regulations, and broad public outreach campaigns. So far, however, there has not been a coordinated response by these agencies to address the related regulatory, voluntary and outreach aspects of firewood movement at a national level.

To coordinate such a response, interested State and Federal agencies have come together through the NFTF. Formed in fall 2009, the NFTF is charged with two primary tasks: 1) the collection of stakeholder ideas regarding the best comprehensive strategy for addressing firewood as a pest pathway; and 2) the development of recommendations for State and Federal officials, Industry and the Public on how to best achieve such a strategy.

In developing its recommendations, the NFTF will focus its work on three primary areas of action: regulatory, voluntary and outreach. By looking at the issue of firewood movement simultaneously from these multiple perspectives, the Task Force is expected to identify opportunities for collaborative responses across the range of government agencies and stakeholders that might not otherwise be possible.

Task Force Objectives:

- To *obtain input* from stakeholders on potential strategies to mitigate the movement of invasive species in firewood. Stakeholder groups the Task Force intends to reach out to include, among others:
  - Firewood producers and distributors

- Campground operators
- Parks officials
- The public
- The Task Force will review comments received from these groups in order to:
  - *Identify actionable items* relating to regulatory, voluntary and outreach-based strategies to mitigate the movement of invasive forest pests in firewood;
  - *Identify the key players* needed to implement these action items; and
  - *Make recommendations* about what steps should be carried out, in which order, and by whom.

### Task Force Membership

#### *State Plant Regulatory Officials*

- *Ann Gibbs (ME)*
- *Phil Marshall (IN)*
- *Wayne Dixon (FL)*
- *Dan Hilburn (OR)*

#### *National Association of State Foresters*

- *Ron Murray (MI)*
- *Chris Assaro (VA)*
- *Les Koch (WY)*

#### *Federal*

- *APHIS PPQ: Scott Pfister, Paul Chaloux, Julie Twardowski, Sherry Sanderson, Craig Kellogg, Paula Henstridge*
- *APHIS LPA: Jake Hegeman*
- *National Park Service: Carol DiSalvo*
- *U.S. Forest Service: Gary Mann*

#### *Facilitator*

- *Ken Waters (APHIS)*

### Initial Timeline for Action

#### **Phase 1: Involve stakeholders in discussions about firewood issues:**

##### August 2009:

- National Plant Board Listening Session
- August 27 Public Listening Session in Washington, D.C.

##### September 2009:

- Task Force organized

October 2009:

- Initial Task Force conference call
  - o Subgroups formed around regulatory, voluntary and outreach issue areas. Subgroups will develop white papers on each issue that will be revised based on stakeholder input
  - o Outreach opportunities identified and method of participation selected
- Continental Dialog

November 2009:

- NRRS Fall Forum
- California Forest Pest Council
- Additional stakeholder events as identified
- Subgroups work on draft white papers outlining recommendations for State/Federal action

December 2009

- Subgroups continue development of white papers
- Additional stakeholder events as identified
- Information from initial stakeholder events compiled and distributed to task force

## **Phase 2: Develop and share recommendations**

January 2010:

- Task Force meets (location TBD) to review notes and draft white papers in order to identify priority recommendations
- Recommendations compiled into preliminary report and distributed to Task Force for review and comment.

February 2010:

- Update on Task Force provided at NASDA mid-year meeting
- Recommendations revised based on task force input

March-April 2010:

- Final Task Force recommendations released
- Recommendations presented at regional plant board meetings.
- Task Force evaluates need for its continuance

### Questions for Continental Dialog Members

The Task Force would like to get your thoughts on what a national strategy for firewood would look like. The task force believes that three primary areas of action lie in the

regulatory, voluntary and outreach spheres and would welcome your thoughts on what specific items within these, or other areas should be taken into account in developing such a strategy.

Below are the broad questions that were posed at the August 2009 National Plant Board Meeting and the subsequent public listening session. These are meant simply to prompt your thinking on the matter. We realize that you will likely have thoughts and ideas on this issue that are more than can be captured at the Continental Dialog so we have created an email address where you can send your comments: [firewood@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:firewood@aphis.usda.gov). This site is monitored daily and your comments will be provided to the Task Force as it begins development of its final recommendations. Please feel free to send comments, questions, or concerns on the firewood issue to this site at any time. Thank you for your help on this important issue.

- What needs to be done to prevent the spread of invasive forest pests on firewood?
- Who needs to be involved? Who should lead these efforts?
- How will these steps be carried out?
  - o What are the regulatory, voluntary outreach components you see as critical?
    - Are there other components we should be taking into account?

For more information or to submit comments:

Please email the task force at [firewood@aphis.usda.gov](mailto:firewood@aphis.usda.gov)