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Response to Perrings et al. 2002. "Biological invasion risks and the public good: an economic perspective"

Monitoring and Enforcement Must Back Any Policy Incentive Pertaining to Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Management

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- [Responses to this Article](#)
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The article by Perrings et al. (2002) provides a theoretically informed overview of the problem of biological invasions and the need to address this problem using economic solutions. It is certainly critical that "The modeling of invasive alien species (IAS) should incorporate the human behavior...." (Perrings et al. 2002). One solution to the problem is, as the authors suggest, that "IAS control requires not just the provision of information but also the development of incentives to the people whose behavior is the proximate cause of the problem." However, the mechanism that creates incentives fails when they are not enforced. For example, the United States has a well-developed system of property rights for land ownership. The spread of invasive weeds across property boundaries is a major concern. Even though there are national, state, and local laws and ordinances recognizing specific invasive weeds as noxious and even though property owners (both public and private) are required to control their weeds, these regulations have done little to prevent the spread of invasive species. Inadequate monitoring and enforcement have rendered the policy virtually useless. As a result, individuals have little incentive to manage their weeds and weed control efforts are less than socially optimal. A critical component for IAS management will be a system that provides both the incentives to property owners to manage species at a socially optimal level and the enforcement necessary to achieve the desired goal.

RESPONSES TO THIS ARTICLE

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LITERATURE CITED

Perrings, C., M. Williamson, E. B. Barbier, D. Delfino, S. Dalmazzone, J. Shogren, P. Simmons, and A. Watkinson. 2002. Biological invasion risks and the public good: an economic perspective. *Conservation Ecology* 6 (1): 1. [online] URL: <http://www.consecol.org/Journal/vol6/iss1/art1>

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