

## INVASIVE and ENDANGERED SPECIES

### Session Summary

#### **Dr. Bruce Leopold, Executive Director Center for Human Wildlife Conflicts**

In the United States there are 50,000 non-indigenous species. Many of these are responsible for disrupting ecosystems, displacing native species, creating economic hardships, and some pose human health threats. Invasive species are responsible for \$137 billion in economic losses. In agriculture invasive weeds are responsible for 12% in production losses, and the industry also loses \$33 billion to plant diseases.

Dr. Leopold talked extensively about the problems with wild hogs. The hogs cause \$1.5 billion in damages annually in the 27 states with established hog populations. Hogs present numerous challenges because of a high reproduction rate. A pair of wild hogs can produce 14-16 piglets twice a year, within 10 years you could end up with 600 hogs. But they present other issues than just the destruction of the environment. They are known to carry 45 diseases, 11 of which are contractible by humans, and 3 can cause death. He would like to see states change their thinking about hogs and categorize them as a pest and not treat them like a game animal.

#### **Jordan Smith, National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition**

The National Endangered Species Act Reform Coalition is dedicated to improving and updating the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Since 2011 there has been a dramatic increase in the number of species that could potentially be listed as Endangered Species. This is not the result of these species suddenly all facing declining populations it is the result of a court settlement that requires the US Fish and Wildlife service to act faster on the petitions to list species. Since October of 2011, 251 species have been candidates for listing and 150 of them have been listed and 60 are still in review. This is an issue that affects all 50 states, as every state has at least one candidate species, with many having multiple.

The Coalition is focused on helping to prevent the listing of endangered species by looking at things that can be done to help species that have the potential to be included on the Endangered Species list before they get to a point where they need to be listed. They believe that a cooperative approach prior to listing will be better for the species and is cheaper in the long run. They are also working on ESA reform that would prevent lawsuits and some of the funding available to groups who exist solely to sue the government to force them to take action and then receive federal funding to cover their costs.