

A Statewide Strategic Plan for Invasive Species

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Invasive species harm our environment, cost billions of dollars annually across the nation, and threaten core business sectors such as agriculture, tourism, forestry, and energy. The list of invasive species “knocking at our door” continues to grow—Asian carp are moving towards Wisconsin from both the east and west up the Mississippi River watershed; numerous forest pests such as the emerald ash borer are threatening our urban and rural forests; and the fungus that causes white-nose syndrome is quickly approaching our state with the potential to eliminate most of our native cave dwelling bats.

The network of partners who prioritize, coordinate, and carry out invasive species prevention and control is growing and citizens are recognizing the serious threat invasive species pose across the state. In 2002, state agencies joined with private partners in forming the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council (Council) as directed by s. 23.22, *Wisconsin Statutes*. In 2011 and 2012 the Council hosted discussions that formed the framework for the first statewide strategic plan on invasive species. The Council held five sessions focused on invasive species economics, prevention, detection, rapid response, and control. Thirty-two speakers representing more than fifteen organizations described both current efforts and what is missing in the work to successfully manage invasive species. These discussions of both our strengths and gaps laid the foundation for the statewide strategic plan.

THE TOP FIVE PRIORITIES TO IMPROVE OUR WORK THAT EMERGED FROM THESE DISCUSSIONS WERE:

1

Improve education and outreach about the impacts of invasive species and what citizens and lawmakers can do to make a difference.

2

Prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species through new and existing pathways.

3

Improve detection of invasive species by growing networks of partners, supporting the use of information technology, and leveraging current research.

4

Create a dedicated fund for rapid response to new invasive species in Wisconsin.

5

Secure adequate long-term funding to control established invasive species including coordinated, competitive aid to support local actions and partnerships.

The impacts of invasive species in Wisconsin have spread across core economic sectors such as agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, and tourism. Creative partnerships across the state, involving non-profit, university, and agency staff, are already working to combine limited resources to manage invasive species and their impacts. This statewide strategic plan points out cost-effective ways to improve our work by preventing new introductions and controlling existing invasive species. Through increased collaboration, we can better address the financial impact of invasive species, protect local ecosystems, and protect human health.

RESPONDING TO INVASIVE SPECIES

Funding is limited, but there are gaps that can be filled now with existing resources and areas where small investments can create measurable and lasting improvements in invasive species management. By focusing on the priorities outlined in this plan we can improve invasive species management statewide. It is crucial to both continue the financial support for state agencies such as the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, and the Department of Transportation and find new funding sources to support invasive species management. The Council believes that legislative support and action are necessary for effective invasive species prevention and control programs. Therefore, it is very important our legislative leaders understand the high stakes involved with invasive species management and provide support. Education and outreach need to be conducted to increase awareness and understanding of the breadth of the potential negative impact to Wisconsin's environment, agriculture, tourism, and overall economy.

This statewide strategic plan is organized around four primary topics: prevention, detection, rapid response, and control. The goals, objectives, and actions listed under each topic were identified during discussions with experts in the field. Throughout, engaging the public and partners through education and communication and supporting research to better manage invasive species are key actions. Each topic is discussed in more depth in a series of companion summaries which also includes a discussion on the economics of invasive species.

The Council recommends that state and federal agencies and all local partners adopt these priority objectives to make cost-effective improvements in invasive species management in Wisconsin.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVES 2013 – 2016

PREVENTION

DETECTION

RAPID RESPONSE

CONTROL

To view the full strategic plan, go to: <http://invasivespecies.wi.gov/>

This plan was prepared in cooperation with the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council and approved by the Department of Natural Resources on February 6, 2013.

The Wisconsin Invasive Species Council brings together state agencies, industry stakeholders, and nongovernmental partners working to control invasive species. The Council is advisory to the DNR and helps coordinate invasive species actions for state agencies.

Wisconsin Invasive Species Council: <http://invasivespecies.wi.gov>

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources: <http://dnr.wi.gov> keyword: "invasive"

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