

Focus Area 2: Invasive Species

Participants (not everyone was able to participate in phone call):

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Overall Report Impressions:

Generally, we liked the look of the new action plan and the increased use of graphics and photos. But not at the expense of content and useful information. The report is at such a high level that many important details have been lost.

The measures of progress are too heavy on counting numbers and projects and are not focused enough on measuring things that are more tangible in terms of results. It's fine to count numbers and projects, but we think we need to find more meaningful things to count as well.

We would like to see the impacts of climate change acknowledged throughout the report.

It may be difficult to only measure progress under the GLRI and not include any related programs. For example, the 2015-2019 Action Plan talks about the GLRI preventing the introduction of Asian carp, but non-GLRI funds were also used for this effort.

Overall Feedback on Invasive Species Section (pages 10-15):

Again, we like the increased use of graphics and photos, but not at the expense of details and content. We would accept fewer graphics if it meant that there was more meaningful content.

We like the overall organization of the invasive species section. It moves from prevention, risk assessment, and identifying the highest risk areas to control methods, blocking pathways to reduce risk, monitoring and rapid response, and finally to a focus on controlling Like overall organization of it – Prevention, risk assessment side first, highest risk areas, 2nd control methods, block pathways to reduce risk, monitoring and rapid response, later focus on control of established invasive species.

We would like to see the long-term goals from the 2010-2014 Action Plan incorporated more explicitly into the updated Action Plan.

The objectives in the 2010-2014 Action Plan were much clearer and better articulated what would/could be measured to track progress. Under the new plan, progress could be 1 project, 100 projects or 1 million projects. In many cases, it is impossible to judge success based on what is being set up to be measured in the 2015-2019 Action Plan.

Climate change is likely to make the lakes more vulnerable to invasive species. We would like to see some acknowledgement of this fact in this section.

Principle Initiative: Prevent new introductions of invasive species (pages 10-11):

- The principle initiative should include a statement that the goal is no new introductions of invasive species. Without this, it appears that we are backing off of the 2010-2014 Action Plan.

- Long-term goal from the 2010-2014 GLRI Action Plan – “The introduction of new invasive species to the Great Lakes basin ecosystem is eliminated, reflecting a “zero tolerance policy” toward invasives.”
- Additional measures of progress need to be more specific: Set targets
- How many pathway blocking projects are we aiming to fund? Need to set a target.
- How many early detection monitoring activities do we want/need to conduct? Do we want to compare early detection monitoring activities? Need to set a target.
- How many ANS Management Plans exist? Do all of the states have one? How many tribes have one? If not, then we should have a goal related to ANS Management Plans and rapid response plans.
- How much GLRI funding has gone to education programs? Have they been effective?
- Measures of progress could include the number of students reached by public education, number of anglers reached, number of boaters reached, etc.
- Are the annual targets at the top of page 11 a cumulative count of 40 over five years, meaning eight raid responses or exercise each year?
- The third bullet point under “commitment” at the top of page 10 should be edited to read, “Work with Great Lakes states, **local governments, and tribes** to conduct rapid response action or exercises”

Principle Initiative: Control established invasive species (pages 12-13):

- Under additional measures of progress - How will tributary miles protected be measured?
- Establishments of networks
- Great Lakes Fishery Commission has very specific sea lamprey control targets in three categories of indicators 1. Number of sea lamprey, 2. Numbers of lake trout, 3. Numbers of lake trout that have sea lamprey wounds. This could be a helpful way to think about goals for controlling specific invasive species.
- Page 13, Step 3 – “Provide funding for initial control activities and the assessment of project effectiveness.” Envision this being part of the work of the Science and Information Subcommittee
- Question was raised about who is evaluating effectiveness? Scientific community? Who will collect data, analyze data, reach conclusions and pass that information along?

Principle Initiative: Develop invasive species control technologies and refine management techniques (pages 14-15):

- Measure of progress shouldn't just be the number of technologies and methods field tested, but should also include the number found effective and deployed
- Need a commitment or measure of progress related specifically to ballast water treatment technology approved for the Great Lakes
- Need a better measure of progress for the collaboratives. Not just a number, but rather the number of them doing specific things or achieving specific goals.