



# Washington Invasive Species Council 2025-2030 Strategic Plan



WASHINGTON STATE  
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION OFFICE  
Washington Invasive  
Species Council

# Council Organizations

The council is comprised of members from state, federal, local, regional, and Tribal government agencies; non-governmental organizations; and industry groups. The council meets quarterly and provides a venue for regular communication among its members, partners, and the public. This ongoing coordination results in consistent statewide priorities, efficient management approaches, and common messaging to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species in Washington State.

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Administrative services are provided by the Recreation and Conservation Office (rco.wa.gov).

If you need this information in an alternative format, please call 360-902-3000 or dial 711.



# Washington Invasive Species Council

## 2025-2030 Strategic Plan

**“Invasive species”** include non-native organisms (terrestrial and aquatic plants, animals, wildlife diseases, and insects) that cause economic or environmental harm and are capable of spreading to new areas of the state. “Invasive species” does not include domestic livestock, intentionally planted agronomic crops, or non-harmful exotic organisms.

### Mission

The council provides policy level direction, planning, and coordination that will:

- Empower those engaged in the prevention, detection, control, and eradication of invasive species.
- Include a strategic plan designed to build upon local, state, and regional efforts, while serving as a forum for invasive species education and communication.

### Vision

Sustaining Washington’s human, plant, and animal communities and our thriving economy by preventing the introduction and spread of harmful invasive species.

### Purpose

Established by the Legislature in 2006, the council is tasked with providing policy level direction, planning, and coordination for combating harmful invasive species throughout the state and preventing the introduction of others that may be harmful. The council is tasked with improving coordination of state invasive species activities to ensure the investments made today are the right investments for the future.

### Key Strategic Areas

- Leadership and Coordination
- Innovation and Research
- Education and Outreach
- Prevention
- Early Detection and Rapid Response
- Containment, Control, and Eradication



# Leadership and Coordination

## Key Priorities

- 1 Statewide leadership and information sharing
- 2 Coordination and partnerships
- 3 Coordination and response structures and processes
- 4 State and federal policies and programming
- 5 Tribal and municipal collaboration
- 6 Unified industry, government, and research

## ▼ Key Objectives

- **Function as a statewide and regional hub** for leadership and information sharing across all jurisdictions.
- **Develop new and strengthen existing statewide, regional, and local partnerships** and processes with industry, government, Tribal, and non-governmental organizations to address key invasive species issues.
- **Collaboratively leverage federal funds for state, Tribal, and local programs** where there is a cross-cutting need beyond the charge of one individual organization.
- **Build, reinforce, and systematize connections** among researchers, managers, industry, and policy makers to address shared challenges.
- **Advocate for adequate and sustained resources, policies, and programs** at the federal, state, Tribal, and local levels.

**Before the Invasive Species Council, there was no statewide forum for addressing broad invasive species concerns. The council has helped bring the right people to the table to find balanced solutions to these important challenges.**





## ▼ What We Will Achieve

- **Documenting impacts and building momentum** towards the council's reauthorization or permanent authorization in 2032.
- **Informed policy makers that understand the threats of** invasive species and the benefits of prevention, detection, response, control, containment, and eradication.
- **Collaboratively developed communication frameworks and efficient processes** to support Tribal and municipal governments and for enhanced information sharing.
- **Strengthened coordination among managers, researchers, and industry** in project development and planning, with the council leading cross-cutting projects on behalf of multiple organizations when appropriate.
- **Advocacy for adequate and sustainable invasive species resources, policies, and programs** at the federal, state, and local levels through collaboration with organizations such as the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, Western Governors' Association, Council of State Governments West, Western Regional Panel on Aquatic Nuisance Species, Western Plant Board, Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, and Northwest Power and Conservation Council.





# Innovation and Research

## Key Priorities

1

**Vulnerable species and resources, resilient landscapes, and sustainable development and infrastructure**

2

**Vibrant communities and human health**

3

**Industry partnerships in prevention**

## ▼ Key Objectives

- **Advocate for prioritization and integration of invasive species prevention** and management into watershed and species recovery, forest health, wildlife, development, and climate adaptation, and other relevant plans.
- **Increase support and resource allocation for resilient native landscapes that** are more resistant to invasive or nuisance species establishment.
- **Identify and forge new connections and relationships** with industry and commerce, transportation, and human health that furthers prevention and management efforts.
- **Engage experts and researchers** to enhance horizon scanning and habitat suitability prediction.
- **Identifying and addressing the gap in understanding how invasive species affect** human wellbeing and healthy communities, and strengthen the nexus between ecological management, economic vitality, and resilient communities.

**New threats are always looming. By strengthening our processes, procedures, and research, we can be better prepared for what lies on the horizon.**



## ▼ What We Will Achieve

- **Integration of invasive species prevention, management, and strategic actions** into federal, regional, and state plans, including watershed management, species recovery, forest health, wildlife, climate adaptation, and broader landscape resiliency efforts.
- **Expanded sharing of invasive species prevention and management best practices and lessons learned**, statewide and regionally, with emphasis on those that pose significant risks to Washington's economy and environment.
- **Continuation of the industry advisory panel, with expanded collaboration** and information sharing between panel members, the council, and key sectors such as commerce, transportation, and human health to advance prevention and management efforts.
- **Convening of a science advisory panel** to provide the council with timely, evidence-based recommendations on emerging or cross-cutting invasive species issues, ensuring decisions are informed by the best available science and expertise.
- **Convening of a work group to examine the connections between invasive species and human health** on both the individual and community levels. The group will provide recommendations to the council that members will bring back to their own organizations to guide broader, equitable distribution of education, outreach, and resources across the state.





# Education and Outreach

## Key Priorities

**1**  
Public awareness  
and mobilization

**2**  
Policymaker  
awareness

**3**  
Youth and adult  
community  
science

**4**  
Professional  
development and  
cross-training

**5**  
Formal  
and informal  
education

**6**  
New partnerships  
and proactive  
involvement

## ▼ Key Objectives

- **Raise awareness and mobilize the public** and whole community.
- **Collaboratively develop messaging and campaigns** to address emerging problems.
- **Harmonize messaging across organizations** to better address existing problems.
- **Improve statewide first detector capabilities** by cross-training professionals.
- **Engage both youth and adults** through formal and informal education.
- **Expand and enhance the council's online presence** to both new and existing audiences.
- **Strengthen and expand education for** key policy makers to increase their understanding of invasive species threats and the importance of prevention and management.
- **Incentivize and strengthen professional partnerships** through new certification opportunities.
- **Celebrate and highlight success stories** with stakeholders, partners, policymakers, and the public to inspire positive action.

**We must sustain and elevate awareness about invasive species challenges, while inspiring the next generation to take action and lead these efforts.**





## ▼ What We Will Achieve

- **Statewide leadership and promotion of Invasive Species Awareness Week** in Washington State in partnership with the Governor's Office and state agencies to raise public understanding and engagement.
- **Collaboration with agencies to promote statewide events** such as Tree Check Month and Clean Drain Dry Week, amplifying regional and national messages, while adapting the content to meet Washington's state and local needs.
- **Development and deployment of new campaigns** and messages with state, regional, and national partners.
- **Development and continuation of formal and informal education for all ages** through existing and new curriculum and programming.
- **Maintenance of the [InvasiveSpecies.wa.gov](https://www.invasivespecies.wa.gov) website** as the central statewide information hub, with the council evaluating and guiding improvements to the Washington Invasives mobile app to ensure they both meet user and council needs.
- **Creation of invasive species prevention and management certifications** tailored to different professions, industries, and entities, in collaboration with regulatory agencies, to foster new partnerships, enhance professional development, and recognize the contributions of mindful private cooperators.
- **Continuation of the development and execution of an annual outreach plan** and year-end report, with council review and active participation to assess, improve, and optimize outreach initiatives.
- **Enhancement of our online presence and public awareness** by leveraging webinars, events, and workshops.
- **Continuation of the existing first detector programming** and investigation of opportunities to expand the network through partnerships with other existing networks to leverage these resources to achieve our objectives.





# Prevention

## Key Priorities

1

Potential and  
existing impacts  
mitigation

2

Risks and  
invasion pathway  
evaluation

3

Response  
readiness

4

Prevention  
protocols and  
public adoption

## ▼ Key Objectives

- **Improve understanding of the risks posed by emerging and expanding** invasive species and their potential ecological, economic, and community impacts.
- **Effectively communicate the scope of economic impacts** to local, state, regional, national, and international stakeholders and decision-makers.
- **Quickly analyze risks, pathways for introduction, and spread** of newly introduced invasive species and determine priority.
- **Work collaboratively with industry and organizations** to address risks and pathways and advocate for response preparedness and readiness.
- **Harmonize agency prevention protocols** and encourage public participation in prevention.
- **Advocate for and support national, regional, state, and local prevention programs** such as plant nursery, watercraft inspection, pet retailer, regulated shipping, and public and business awareness initiatives.



## ▼ What We Will Achieve

- **Improved species assessment tools to evaluate both potential and existing risks and impacts, supporting council prioritization and strategic focus.** These tools also will be promoted to partners and local organizations to help prioritize actions and guide management at site-specific and local levels.
- **Convening of an economic impact technical committee to update and enhance the 2017 Economic Impact of Invasive Species Report,** providing stakeholders with clear, actionable information on the importance of prevention and informed decision-making.
- **Advocacy for international and domestic pathway analyses** and response readiness activities.
- **Prevention protocols and best practices** actively implemented and adopted by government agencies and the public to reduce the spread and impact of invasive species.
- **Advocacy for and assistance to existing prevention programs** and exploration of opportunities for additional protection at the local level.
- **Outreach, trainings, tools, and equipment** that empower the public and recreators to implement prevention protocols.

**Prevention is the most cost-effective tool in the toolbox. If we prevent the introduction of new invasive species, we avoid thousands, if not millions in management costs and economic losses.**







# Early Detection and Rapid Response

## Key Priorities

- 1 Early detection capabilities
- 2 Emergency funding
- 3 Diagnosis and notification
- 4 Response plans and exercises
- 5 Response resource sharing and optimization

## ▼ Key Objectives

- **Support increasing the capacity and capabilities** of state, Tribal, and local governments for early detection, leveraging resources and expertise across organization to maximize effectiveness.
- **Support the development, expansion, access, and use of diagnostic centers and pest detection technologies** for early detection and response readiness efforts.
- **Streamline and integrate incident notification systems** and processes to ensure timely and coordinated response actions across agencies, stakeholders, and the public.
- **Advocate for and support requests for state emergency funding** for rapid response actions, while assisting agencies in leveraging federal resources to address invasive species emergencies effectively.
- **Identify and refine processes and procedures** for early detection and rapid response, and promote resource sharing among agencies and stakeholders to enhance effectiveness.
- **Practice and enhance response plans** through workshops, drills, and exercises.
- **Facilitate the development and improvement of response plans, and provide input** informed by best practices, experience, industry perspective, site specific knowledge, or other expertise.

**When prevention isn't possible, early detection and rapid response minimizes the ecological, economic, and community impacts of invasive species.**





## ▼ What We Will Achieve

- **Expanded access and application of the Incident Command System** and related resources, and encouragement of its adoption by council organizations and partners, where appropriate.
- **Early detection monitoring enhancements** to address gaps in monitoring and surveillance, improving coordination, data quality, and timely response across agencies and partners.
- **Advocacy for invasive species diagnostic centers** and adoption of new technologies and resource sharing to enhance early detection, accurate identification, and informed management decisions.
- **Streamlined notification systems** that improve upon the notification process for agencies with jurisdiction, partners, and the public to ensure prompt notification and initiation of response actions.
- **Improved response planning** through coordination and involvement of the council to ensure effective and timely response to invasive species incidents.
- **Strengthened response capabilities and action** through promotion and participation in workshops, drills, and exercises.
- **Consultations to agencies** with jurisdiction during invasive species emergencies and advocacy for federal support to enhance response efforts.
- **Participation in Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC) Groups** and aid incident command staff as requested.
- **Outreach to local organizations that can help** with early detection and response efforts.





# Eradication, Control, and Containment

## Key Priorities

1

Adequate and sustainable funding

2

Data collection, sharing, and mobilization

3

Evaluation and optimization of response operations

4

Protection of natural and economic assets

## ▼ Key Objectives

- **Advocacy for adequate and sustainable funding** to support the achievement of management goals for established invasive species.
- **Analyze and document current funding** and operational activities to identify gaps, unmet needs, and opportunities for improvement.
- **Advocate for achievable management goals and the evaluation of ongoing operations** using adaptive management principles informed by new science, best practices, changing population dynamics, and effectiveness of interventions.
- **Advocate for and support operational optimization** by promoting resource sharing, cross-training, and public engagement to enhance cross-agency and partner coordination.
- **Promote and facilitate data collection, sharing, and mobilization** among local, state, regional, and national organizations to establish a common situational awareness and support coordinated management efforts.
- **Analyze regulatory invasive species classifications,** management goals, and operational practices, and propose reevaluation or adjustments as needed to ensure effectiveness and alignment with best practices.
- **Promote and support response strategies** that prioritize the protection of the most at-risk species and resources, mitigating both economic and environmental damages.



## ▼ What We Will Achieve

- **Adequate and sustainable funding that meets the management objectives** of lead organizations.
- **Cross-organizational work groups that analyze regulatory classifications** at the state and federal level, and advocate for updates and changes when appropriate to improve effectiveness.
- **Collection and sharing of data and execution of mobilization campaigns** to address data gaps.
- **Facilitation of sharing and cross-hosting of data sets** as appropriate to support research, analysis, and coordinated action across agencies and partners.
- **Workshops and symposia that share current research** and best practices supporting science-based strategies for managing both established and emerging invasive species.
- **Advocacy for adaptive management principles and support to lead agencies in setting and evaluating data-driven management goals** ensuring effective, science-based management of established invasive species.

Once we know an invasive species is detected, rapid and aggressive eradication, containment, and control provide a fighting chance to stop its spread and make sure we won't be spending millions of dollars to battle this species for decades to come.



AMERICAN  
BULLFROG  
(*Lithobates*  
*catesbeianus*)

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