



# **Strategic Plan**

## **2021-2025**

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# 1 Introduction

The Yukon Invasive Species Council (YISC), formed on December 18, 2009, began as an ad-hoc committee in 2004 to address issues surrounding invasive species in Yukon. An invasive species is an organism (plant, animal, fungus, or bacterium) that is not native to an ecosystem or region and has negative effects on the economy, the environment, or ecosystem health. Not all species introduced from other places have detrimental impacts. The term “invasive” is reserved for the most aggressive species that reproduce rapidly and cause major changes to the areas where they become established.

As defined in the YISC constitution, the purposes of the Council are:

- To prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species in Yukon.
- To inform, educate and advise the public and professionals about invasive species and their risk to ecosystems and economies through activities such as workshops, seminars, and newsletters.
- To collaborate with other jurisdictions on invasive species issues.
- To coordinate invasive species management in Yukon.
- To encourage, promote and support research on invasive species that will contribute to the achievement of the social and economic goals of the people of Yukon.

YISC’s diverse membership includes municipal, territorial, federal, and First Nation governments, non-profit organizations, industry, and private citizens. The Council aims to keep membership open and facilitate discussion between different individuals, groups and governments in the Yukon and those in other jurisdictions. This open forum promotes YISC’s mandate as successful management of invasive species requires cooperation across these many stakeholders. YISC provides a forum to discuss and carry out cooperative and innovative solutions.

In Yukon, invasive species are proportionally not as widespread or abundant as in most other North American jurisdictions. This unique position likely results from the limited human footprint on the landscape, yet this footprint is increasing. YISC believes that these landscape changes can be managed effectively to limit or stop the introduction and spread of invasive species. Climate change is also driving the spread of invasive species. Establishing a coordinated system of early detection and rapid response (EDRR) of invasive species will be essential to restricting their impacts and spread.

Key challenges to advancing invasive species management in Yukon identified by YISC include:

- Territory-wide leadership and funding to coordinate among all levels of government, landowners and land users.
- Increased public awareness. There is a lack of recognition of the possible impacts of invasive species if they are not properly managed or controlled.
- Development of legislation and guidelines on the introduction, spread and control of invasive species, policy, mandates, and strategies, and the coordination of actions to fulfill them.
- Continued monitoring efforts of invasive species.
- Coordinated research to increase knowledge and awareness about invasive species biology, ecology and management options and ecosystem restoration.

YISC can provide the necessary leadership, expertise, and support; a forum to engage, collaborate and enable; and action on invasive species issues to keep them from becoming problematic in Yukon.

## 2 Vision

Yukon Territory's citizens, ecosystems and resources are protected against invasive species impacts.

## 3 Mission Statement

Prevent the introduction and manage the spread of invasive species in the Yukon through coordinated outreach and awareness.

## 4 Guiding Principles and Values

The YISC strategic plan is developed to:

- Improve territory-wide guidance on invasive species management;
- Complement, support and develop ongoing activities in invasive species management;
- Protect Yukon's environment and economy by minimizing the negative impacts caused by the introduction, establishment and spread of invasive species.

## 5 Purpose of this updated Strategic Plan

To establish a base for further development of the council by prioritizing and organizing actions for the next five years. This 2021 strategic plan represents the fourth developed by YISC.

## Organization of the Yukon Invasives Species Council

Key challenges of maintaining a functional council include:

1. Maintain regular, long-term funding for council operations and projects
2. Recruiting new board members
3. Engaging membership to participate in outreach and management activities

## 6 Goals

The overarching goals of the organization are to:

1. Maintain a functional council
2. Raise awareness through education and outreach
3. Prevent the introduction and manage the spread of invasive species

*The goals, objectives and actions are built upon earlier work completed in previous Strategic Plans and work sessions and are available upon request.*

## 7 Strategy

Strategies for this updated plan were based on the priorities of the first strategic plan but reflect changes to the invasive species work in the Yukon with the creation of the Yukon government's Invasive Species Interdepartmental Working Group (ISIWG) and with the achievements of previous goals.

### 7.1. Strategy 1 – Continue to Maintain a functional Council

#### Task 7.1.1: Promote board and membership participation

##### Maintain active board and council membership

Actions:

- Continue to promote board membership at YISC events and through social media, posters and other advertising methods.
- Attend non YISC events to promote the council and IS issues
- Raise awareness of IS and their management and engage people to actively stop their introduction and spread. (e.g., Fireweed Market, Agricultural Fair, CDD program)
- Communicate with YISC's membership to keep them informed about IS in the Yukon, and provide opportunities to actively participate
- Engage with the membership to identify needs and interests.
- Make funding available for professional education/training for board members
- Create opportunities for the board to plan activities and to update the strategic plan
- Develop an onboarding process for new board members
- Target the University for participation

##### Maintain adequate funding

Actions:

- Identify new funding partners and establish partnerships with these groups.
- Maintain long-term as well as annual funding.
- Identify and apply on project-specific funding.
- Look for opportunities to make joint applications for funding with partners.
- Look for sponsorships (ex. In industry)

#### Task 7.1.2: Raise awareness about YISC

##### Promote media exposure

Actions:

- Maintain relationship with the media including promoting awareness on local projects
- Continue social media to reach the public with key messages about YISC's mandate and promote council membership.
- Develop seasonally relevant ads in print media, including local newspapers and magazines such as North of Ordinary, Up Here magazine, and What's Up Yukon.
- Conduct radio interviews.
- Update and advance the communication plan (2018) to make it more specific

## **Develop partnerships with organizations with related interests**

### **Action:**

- Identify Foster relationships with target groups such as YESAB, First Nations, Renewable Resource Councils, Yukon Agricultural Association, Yukon Research Centre, and Centre for Innovation and Mining.
- Engage target groups to participate in joint activities and events.
- Capitalize on collaboration with user groups and associations that approach YISC.

## **7.2. Strategy 2 – Coordinate education and outreach on invasive species**

### **Task 7.2.1: Educate on IS in the Yukon and increase participation in YISC initiatives**

#### **Provision of Services**

##### **Actions:**

- Hire an outreach coordinator
- Respond to inquiries by maintaining email and phone contacts.
- Assist with IS identification requests.
- Provide advice on IS management questions.

#### **Programming**

##### **Actions:**

- Maintain the Spotter's Network program (which is now an online program), which educates people on how to identify, report and remove invasive species.
- Maintain the Be Plant Wise program, which educates gardeners on how gardening choices can help stop the introduction and spread of invasive species.
- Continue public Weed-pulls, which raises awareness and stops the spread of invasive species by actively removing them while engaging our membership.
- Place project related advertising in local media to inform targeted groups about YISC initiatives and events.
- Maintain an aquatic species specific program. Maintain the Clean Drain Dry (CDD) program. Consider partnering in "don't let it loose" program (targeting aquarium trade)
- Maintain an informal school program
- Maintain Play Clean Go (PCG) program
- Consider partnering in the Squeal the Pig program
- Participate in Burn it where you buy it Program (develop a partnership with Forestry)

#### **Educational Resources**

##### **Actions:**

- Maintain a current website
- Maintain and update existing brochures.
- Develop a variety of subject-specific public material
- Initiate interpretive signage for the public.
- Develop and produce public educational videos

- Look for opportunities to incorporate first nation language in programs, educational material or the website
- Continue to strive to provide services in French language as opportunities, resources and demand occur.
- Maintain the spotter's on-line course
- Host a video library on the website with YISC content
- Produce an IS workshop/forum every two years

## **Media and advertising**

### **Actions:**

- Maintain and update the Communication Strategy, including the following actions:
  - Maintain brand awareness of YISC in the Yukon.
  - Use different types of media to promote messaging.
  - Put into place project related advertising.
  - Promote and monitor online interactive tools (example weed app) for the Yukon.

## **7.3. Strategy 3 - Prevent the introduction and manage the spread of invasive species**

### **Task 7.3.1 Advocacy**

#### **Actions:**

Advocate for a risk assessment that contributes/leads to noxious species legislation

Support the development of the legislation

Advocate for development of best practices/guidelines for agricultural and horticultural activities (example: Eurasian pigs, wildflower mixes)

Advocate for the development of an EDRR plan by YG

### **Task 7.3.2: Surveying and Monitoring**

#### **Information gathering and collection**

##### **Actions:**

- Obtain funding to Repeat the Roadside Survey (reference: 2007 Roadside Survey; Line et al. 2007 and Rosie 2016).
- Build a distribution map within the City of Whitehorse. Action: Compile data collected from previous projects, citizen science programs, such as Spotter's Network, Walk Your Field, iNaturalist App. and look for other projects to continue collecting data to working towards a distribution map.
- Consult with partners to update YISC's list of high priority species.
- Hire an IS technician (subject to funding)
- Develop recommendations to manage the introduction of invasive species.
- Perform research on issues/topics as they are applicable to projects

#### **Invasive species tracking**

##### **Actions:**

- Refine monitoring protocols that have been developed (eg. Roadside survey, aquatic invasive species).
- Advocate for an accessible data sharing portal.
- Promote the use of iNaturalist

### **Task 7.3.3: Collaboration**

#### **Enhance collaboration with partners**

- Work closely with ISIWG
- Maintain and encourage new IS management partners.
- Identify information and specialist knowledge gaps (e.g. entomology, pathology) and develop collaborations with specialists in these fields to fill gaps.
- Share invasive species data with partners.
- Participate in programs with other organizations.
- Participate in the Canadian Council on Invasive Species.
- Organize workshops and events with partners.
- Develop information publications specific to particular user groups, as needed. Such as backcountry recreationalists, ORV users, 4H agricultural youth, City of Whitehorse mapping, Walk Your Field program, Spotter's Network, Mining and natural resources sector.

### **Task 7.3.4: Manage the spread of invasive species**

#### **Coordinated approach for early detection and rapid response (EDRR)**

Actions:

- Continue promotion of exciting training and reporting programs (e.g., Spotter's Network, iNaturalist)

#### **Integrated management**

Actions:

- Maintain list of invasive species infestations and prioritize highest concern species.
- Maintain a list of invasive species requiring management.
- Provide invasive species management recommendations.
- Organize and promote weed-pulls
- Participate in seed collections
- Implement specific site monitoring and restoration.

