



Strategic Plan

2016-2020

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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 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 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

Informed, coordinated, collaborative, and adaptive invasive species management across Yukon.

3 Mission Statement

Prevent the introduction and manage the spread of invasive species in 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.

Organization of the Yukon Invasives Species Council

Key challenges of maintaining a functional council include:

1. Establishing 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. Create and 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. Copies of these appendices are available from YISC upon request.

- *Appendix A - Complete List of Major Goals, Objectives and Specific Actions. 2016 update.*
- *Appendix B - YISC 2007 Strategic Plan*
- *Appendix C - YISC 2010 Strategic Planning Session Summary*
- *Appendix D - 2011-2015 Strategic Plan.*

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 Yukon by creating the Invasive Species Interdepartmental Working Group (ISIWG).

7.1. Strategy 1 – Maintain a functional Council

Task 7.1.1: Promote board and membership participation

Maintain active board and council membership

Actions:

- Promote board membership at YISC events and through social media.
- Hold the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in conjunction with a YISC community event to reach a larger interested audience.
- Attend non-YISC events to promote council membership, raise awareness of invasive species and their management, and engage people to actively stop their introduction and spread. (e.g., Fireweed Market, Agricultural Fair)
- Communicate with YISC's membership to keep them informed about IS in Yukon, and allow them to actively participate in YISC's mandate.
- Conduct online survey of membership to identify needs and interests.

Establish funding

Actions:

- Identify new funding partners and establish partnerships with these groups.
- Establish long-term, annual funding.
- Identify and apply on project-specific funding.
- Make joint applications to funding with partners.

Task 7.1.2: Raise awareness about YISC

Promote media exposure

Actions:

- Use 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.

Develop partnerships with organizations with related interests

Action:

- Identify target groups (such as YESAB, First Nations, Renewable Resource Council, Yukon Agricultural Association, Yukon Research Centre, and Centre for Innovation and Mining).
- Engage target groups to participate in joint activities and events.
- Capitalize on user groups or associations that approach YISC to collaborate.

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

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

Programming

Actions:

- Maintain the Spotter’s Network 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.
- Maintain the Walk your field program, which assists landowners in identifying invasive species on their property to help stop their spread.
- Maintain public Weed-pulls, which stop the spread of invasive species by actively removing them while engaging of our membership.
- Place project related advertising in local media to inform targeted groups about YISC initiatives and events.
- Develop an aquatic species specific program.

Educational Resources

Actions:

- Maintain and update existing brochures.
- Develop a variety of subject-specific public displays (agriculture, industry, schools, etc).
- Develop material on aquatic invasive species.
- Initiate interpretive signage for the public.

Provision of Services

Actions:

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

Media and advertising

Actions:

- Develop a Communication Strategy, including the following actions:
 - Maintain brand awareness of YISC in Yukon.
 - Use different types of media to promote messaging.
 - Put into place project related advertising.
 - Maintain website content and redesign site to optimize for new technology.
 - Explore and develop 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: Collaboration

Enhance collaboration with partners

- Identify IS management partners and establish partnerships with these groups.
- 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 (e.g., Yukon Conservation Society) and jurisdictions (e.g., Borders North).
- Participate in the Canadian Council on Invasive Species.
- Organize workshops and events with partners.
- Develop information publications specific to particular user groups, 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, Why Should I Care? brochure.

Task 7.3.2: Surveying and Monitoring

Information gathering and collection

Actions:

- Repeat the Roadside Survey (reference: 2007 Roadside Survey; Line et al. 2007).
- Build a distribution map within the City of Whitehorse and expand to other communities.
Action: Compile data collected from citizen science programs, such as Spotter's Network, Walk Your Field, Web App.
- Identify possible future threats (i.e., high priority species, aquatic invasive species, climate change etc.)
- Update the list of high priority species.
- Maintain and update the priority list for the current state of affairs Environment report.
- Develop recommendations to manage the introduction of invasive species.
Define YISC's role in the EDRR Plan.
- Facilitate EDRR tasks with appropriate agencies (e.g., ISIWG).
- Identify gaps in IS research in the north and develop list of research topics that require further investigation.

Invasive species tracking

Actions:

- Develop monitoring protocols (eg. Roadside survey, aquatic invasive species).
- Optimizing and expand the existing reporting system.
- Partner with a data sharing application (example Akepic).

Task 7.3.3: Manage the spread of invasive species

Coordinated approach for early detection and rapid response (EDRR)

Actions:

- Develop, educate and train invasive species program participants (e.g., Spotter's Network, Walk Your Field, horticulture, professionals, schools, regulators and Web App).
- Develop a reporting system (evaluate the current reporting form and a Web Application).
- Advertise and promote invasive species reporting.

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.

