



# WNY PRISM

## Strategic Plan

2025-2029



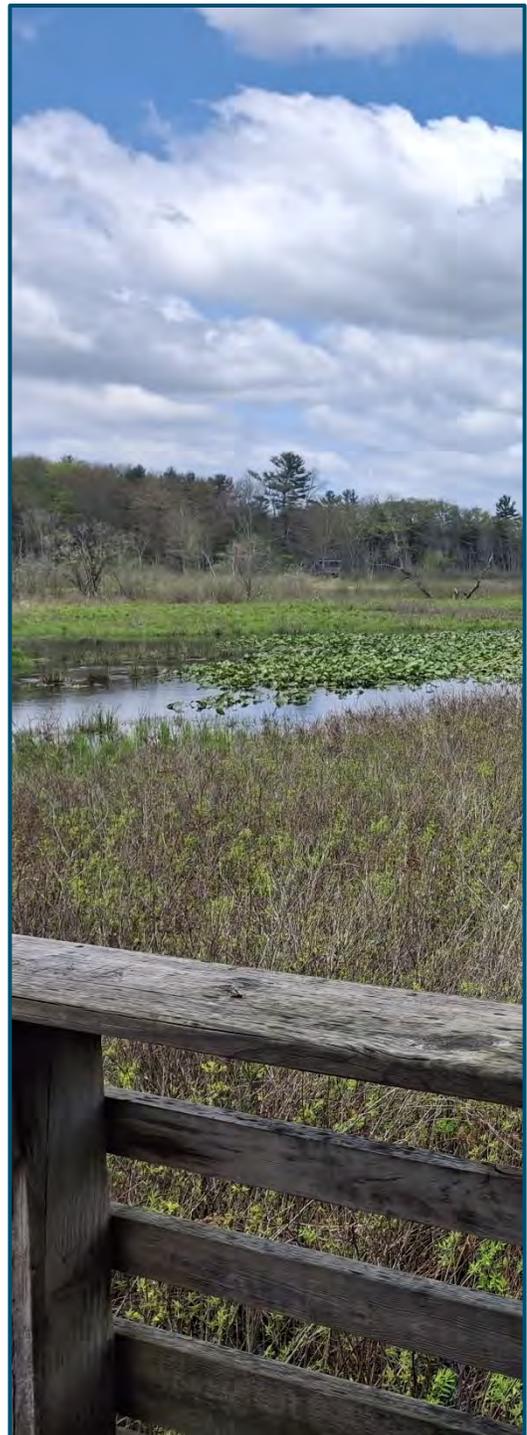
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*Audubon Community Nature Center – Big Pond, Jamestown NY.*

*Funding for WNY PRISM is provided by the Environmental Protection Fund through a contract with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. WNY PRISM is hosted by the Great Lakes Center and is a sponsored program of the Research Foundation for SUNY Buffalo State University.*

## Executive Summary

Western New York Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (WNY PRISM) works to address invasive species priorities using a coordinated partnership network for which we provide leadership, resources and opportunities for collaboration. Our goal is to improve, restore and protect local aquatic and terrestrial resources by improving the effectiveness of invasive species management efforts, engaging partners and community members in taking meaningful action, and increasing awareness of invasive species issues throughout our eight-county region. Invasive species pose a significant threat to the environment, economy and human health. By fostering regional collaboration, the impact of invasive species will be minimized, and the natural resources and beauty of western New York will be preserved.



**PARTNERSHIP FOR REGIONAL  
INVASIVE SPECIES  
MANAGEMENT**  
WESTERN NEW YORK

Based on the scope of work provided through a contract by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), WNY PRISM has been tasked with the coordination of regional invasive species management activities. To achieve this WNY PRISM works with partners and stakeholders from the WNY PRISM region as well as those from across the state, within the Great Lakes Basin, and beyond. Even when considering the combined expertise and capacity which the WNY PRISM Network provides, the broad mandate given to the PRISMs requires significant prioritization efforts as the threat posed by invasive species is too expansive to fully address.

WNY PRISM prioritization efforts focus on invasive species and conservation targets, with additional consideration, in terms of WNY PRISM activities, given to management efficacy, community engagement and building regional capacity. Invasive species priorities focus on Tier 1 and Tier 2 species, or those species either not yet present within the region or present with limited numbers and distribution, and for which eradication is feasible. Conservation target priorities focus on rare, threatened and endangered species, species of concern, rare and unique habitats and natural communities, and areas with low invasive species cover and intact (i.e. functional) ecosystems.

Development of the WNY PRISM 5-Year Strategic Plan (2025 – 2029) began in late 2024 and continued through 2025. The planning process included multiple rounds of review, development, discussion and feedback with Steering Committee members, Working Groups and additional partners. Working from the previous strategic plan, WNY PRISM updated the vision, goals and objectives to better meet regional needs and shifted priorities. Priority actions and key metrics were also developed and presented within this Strategic Plan. WNY PRISM's goals are associated with five core functions: Partnership, Community Engagement, Prevention, Early Detection and Response, and Management and Habitat Restoration.

WNY PRISM would like to thank partners who helped with the development and review of this Strategic Plan. We would also like to thank our many partners who have worked with WNY PRISM over the past eleven years, helping to strengthen the partnership and leading to greater, combined success. Program elements are not exclusive to WNY PRISM staff; multiple strategies depend upon our strong partner network to achieve success and WNY PRISM is looking forward to continuing to grow the partner network and together implement this Strategic Plan.

## Invasive Species

Invasive species are non-native species that cause harm to the environment, economy, or to human health. They are a form of biological pollution, and the rate of invasion is increasing globally. A wide variety of species negatively impact many sectors of our world; our ecosystems, including all natural systems and managed forests; our food supply, including agricultural products and harvested wildlife, fish, and shellfish; our built environments, including landscaping, infrastructure, industry, gardens and pets; our economy, recreation, and human health.

## NYS Invasive Species Program

Responding to the growing threat posed by invasives species, NYS passed legislation in 2003 that created the New York Invasive Species Task Force. The Task Force produced a final report in 2005 presenting twelve recommendations that led to the establishment of the New York Invasive Species Council (ISC), Invasive Species Advisory Committee (ISAC) and several programs including the New York Invasive Species Research Institute (NYISRI), the New York Invasive Species/iMapInvasives Database (iMap), and the New York Invasive Species Information Clearinghouse ([nyis.info](http://nyis.info)). Eight Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management were also created and tasked to help prevent or minimize the harm caused by invasive species.

WNY PRISM was established in 2014 after NYS released a request for proposals to administer the program. The contract was awarded to the Research Foundation for SUNY Buffalo State University in April 2013, with the final approval obtained in November of that year. The WNY PRISM Office was established within the Great Lakes Center and WNY PRISM began operations with the hiring of a dedicated WNY PRISM Coordinator. The initial 5-year contract provided support for the WNY PRISM office through December 2018, and subsequent contracts were awarded in 2018 (2019 – 2023) and in 2023 (2024 – 2028).

Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs) are private/public partnerships created to address threats posed by invasive species across NYS and they are key to New York’s integrated approach to invasive species management. PRISMs coordinate invasive species management functions including partner efforts, recruiting and training volunteers, identifying and delivering education and outreach, establishing early detection monitoring and response networks, and implementing direct control efforts.



*Opening remarks from the 2025 New York State Invasive Species Expo, Saratoga Springs, NY.*

## WNY PRISM

### Regional Description

The WNY PRISM region encompasses the eight western-most counties in New York State (Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, Genesee, Niagara, Orleans and Wyoming) and is the only PRISM region to include two of the Great Lakes: Lakes Erie and Ontario. Shared borders include those with Pennsylvania and Ontario, Canada, and a regional border with Finger Lakes PRISM.

Home to some of New York State's most impressive natural features including Niagara Falls, the Niagara River Gorge, Letchworth State Park, and Zoar Valley, western New York boasts a diverse landscape and, along with the Finger Lakes Region, the highest total endemic species richness in the state (Ricketts, T.H., et al., 1999).

Western New York is home to many rare species and natural communities. The Niagara River Corridor, a globally significant Important Bird Area and home to one of the world's most impressive concentrations of gulls with 19 species recorded, is designated by the United States as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. Rare species found in WNY include the federally endangered *Sistrurus catenatus* (eastern massasauga rattlesnake), federally threatened *Solidago houghtonii* (Houghton's goldenrod), state endangered *Regina septemvittata* (queen snake), and state threatened *Nothonotus camurus* (bluebreast darter).

Western New York's beautiful and unique ecological landscape includes four Level III Ecoregions (Northern Allegheny Plateau, North Central Appalachians, Erie Drift Plain, and Eastern Great Lakes Lowlands) and seven Level IV Ecoregions. Habitats and natural features found within them include northern hardwood and conifer forests, beech-maple forests, coastal plains, wetland communities including bogs and fens, significant riverine systems and glacial landforms such as moraines and kettle ponds. Four major watersheds (Lake Erie-Niagara River, Lake Ontario and Minor Tributaries, Genesee River, and Allegheny River) are found within the region and WNY PRISM is part of both the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Basins. Among the eleven subwatersheds are Buffalo-Eighteenmile Creek, Upper Allegheny, Conewango, Oak Orchard-Twelve-mile, and the Upper and Lower Genesee.



WNY PRISM’s eight-county region is home to 1.56 million people and 6,440 square miles, and urban centers include Buffalo, Jamestown, Lockport and Niagara Falls. Buffalo, the second most populated city in NYS, was first settled in the mid-1700s as a trading post. During the War of 1812, Buffalo served as the American military headquarters on the Niagara Frontier and the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 brought both a boom in population and the economy. Upon its incorporation as a city in 1832, the population was near 10,000. Over the next 150 years, Buffalo and the surrounding area became an economic center focused on manufacturing, shipping and hydropower. The long history of human interaction with the landscape has had a direct influence on invasive species presence, distribution and negative impacts felt across the region. More recently, economic interests have diversified to include medical supplies, pharmaceuticals and wood products, alongside a thriving agricultural market.

**Land Cover, WNY PRISM Region**

Land Cover Class	Acres	%
Developed	569,911	13.70%
Open Water	36,903	0.89%
Barren Land (Rock/Sand/Clay)	9,684	0.23%
Deciduous Forest	1,484,437	35.69%
Evergreen Forest	60,350	1.45%
Mixed Forest	285,043	6.85%
Shrub/Shrub	4,038	0.10%
Grasslands/Herbaceous	7,967	0.19%
Pasture/Hay	809,758	19.47%
Cultivated Crops	554,091	13.32%
Woody Wetlands	316,726	7.62%
Emergent Herbaceous Wetlands	19,962	0.48%
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,158,872</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Land dedicated to agricultural production includes 1.2 million acres divided among 5,877 farms with a median farm size of 72 acres (U.S. Agricultural Census, 2022). The highest volume agricultural products produced in western New York are corn, wheat, oats, soybeans, hay, orchards (including grapes/wine) and cattle. According to a 2007 U.S. Department of Agriculture Report, three western New York counties (Chautauqua, Genesee and Wyoming) ranked among the top 10 in agricultural sales for New York State, with Chautauqua County ranked as the top grape producer.

Additional economic drivers for the region include tourism, recreation and education. In 2024, visitors to western New York spent 4.9 billion dollars (Empire State Development, Tourism Economics). Total State Parks attendance in 2024 was 17 million, including over 9.5 million visitors to Niagara Falls, and 352,214 hunting and fishing licenses were sold for the 2023-2024 season. The region also boasts 24 community colleges and universities.



*Whirlpool State Park, Niagara Falls, NY.*

## Operational Structure

WNY PRISM's operational structure is comprised of our funding agency, host organization, staff, a Steering Committee and partners. WNY PRISM is funded by the Environmental Protection Fund through a contract with the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, is hosted by the Great Lakes Center and is a sponsored program of the Research Foundation for SUNY Buffalo State University.

WNY PRISM staff consists of four full-time staff members, a part-time Director and between 16-22 summer or temporary staff members. Full-time staff members, who are fully funded through the WNY PRISM contract, include a Coordinator and three Program Managers (Terrestrial, Aquatic, and Community Engagement). The majority of funding for temporary staff is also provided through the WNY PRISM contract, however additional funding may come from other sources such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative. WNY PRISM may also take on the occasional student intern.

The WNY PRISM Steering Committee is comprised of a core group of individuals (12-14), including organizations, state and federal agencies, private sector businesses and other stakeholders, that represent the invasive species management needs of the WNY PRISM region. The Steering Committee serves in an advisory capacity and assists with the development of goals and objectives and implementation of strategies identified in this Strategic Plan. Member organizations select individual representatives to serve on the Steering Committee.

WNY PRISM partners include those entities that work collaboratively with WNY PRISM to address invasive species issues and assist with invasive species management efforts. WNY PRISM is a network of public and private entities that share a common interest in the protection of western New York from the harm caused by invasive species and together we represent over 200 different federal, state, and local government agencies, non-profit organizations, universities, businesses, and individuals. More information may be found in [WNY PRISM's Operational Guidelines](#).



## Mission

Proactively identify, evaluate and address invasive species priorities in western New York using a coordinated partnership of local professionals, organizations and community members to improve, restore and protect local aquatic and terrestrial resources.

## Vision

Foster an engaged regional partnership network through use of collaboration and effective communication wherein the threat of invasive species will be minimized and the natural resources and beauty of western New York will be protected into the future.

## Guiding Principles

### Collaboration

Invasive species cause significant harm to the economy, human health and the environment, and represent a landscape issue that can't be addressed in isolation. Working together towards a shared mission is necessary to achieve success. WNY PRISM works to compliment regional efforts by implementing additive, non-redundant programs that bring together the strengths and knowledge of all partners and address invasive species priorities on a regional scale.

### Communication

Effective communication and information sharing is essential for successful invasive species management. WNY PRISM works to ensure the region has the best information and resources available and works to provide an open communication structure, including opportunities for feedback, that meets the varied needs of the partnership.

### Community Engagement

Enhancement of partner and public understanding of invasive species priorities and management will lead to increased opportunities for improved invasive species management efforts, and the transition from knowledge to action will better provide for effective and ecologically significant stewardship within the region.

### Stewardship

WNY PRISM recognizes that effective invasive species management must include not only the spread prevention and removal of invasive species through use of Best Management Practices and adaptive management strategies, but also the restoration of healthy, diverse, and resilient ecosystems. Through use of sustainable management strategies, the risk of losing fragile gains will be minimized.

### Efficacy

The ability to measure and improve success is an essential component for an adaptive program where data collection, long-term monitoring and data analysis provide a basis for actions. The continued evaluation and re-evaluation of outcomes, along with programmatic flexibility to modify strategies, will allow WNY PRISM and partners to achieve greater success.

### Innovation

WNY PRISM supports the development of new and improved Best Management Practices that can be used to improve the efficacy of invasive species management efforts and encourage increased participation.



*WNY PRISM's 2025 Spring Partner Meeting held at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge.*

## Overview of the Threat

Invasive species pose considerable risk to Western New York due to many factors that make the region unique. Western NY is at increased risk for the establishment of new species due to its history as an industrial center and location at the confluence of several pathways of invasion and because it contains a diversity of habitats that provide necessary conditions to support a wide variety of invasive species.

The Buffalo-Niagara region has long been a population center, impacted by human disturbance and development and seeing significant modification to the natural landscape. From urban development to hydrologic manipulation, and creation of shipping canals and harbors, much of the landscape has been altered. In addition, the extensive systems of roads, utilities, rivers and tributaries have allowed for the increased, and too often unchecked, movement of invasive species. While areas with lower invasive species occurrence exist within the region, there are no areas free from invasive species pressure.



*Water hyacinth and water lettuce were removed from Walton Woods as part of WNY PRISM's Early Detection Program in 2025.*

The WNY PRISM region has over 220 confirmed invasive species, as reported in iMapInvasives. Invasive species range from the common, such as *Reynoutria spp.* (knotweed), and geographically restricted, such as *Brachypodium sylvaticum* (slender false brome), to early detection species such as *Oshuna crassipes* (water hyacinth), and *Persicaria perfoliata* (mile-a-minute). Data gaps regarding invasive species presence and distribution persist within the region with species, such as *Rhodotypos scandens* (black jetbead), being under-reported. Species that have not yet established within the region but have clear pathways for

introduction include *Stratiotes aloides* (water soldiers) and *Oplismenus undulatifolius* (wavy-leaf basketgrass).

## Pathways of Invasion

Pathways of invasion refer to how invasive species are introduced and spread through new environments and include both human-aided and natural pathways. Human-aided pathways include all means by which people directly, or indirectly, move invasive species across the landscape while natural pathways include things like weather or streams. Each pathway presents unique challenges and opportunities for improved invasive species spread prevention.

To effectively address the introduction and spread of invasive species, we must disrupt pathways of invasion and the methods for doing so depend on the individual pathway. In general, human-aided pathways are most effectively disrupted using combinations of regulation, education and the removal of barriers that impede people's ability to take effective action. It can be more difficult to disrupt natural pathways as they involve environmental factors that humans are unable to control. However, recognizing

pathways specific to individual species can inform management decisions, such as ensuring that species with windblown seed are unable to flower by mowing them at the proper time.

WNY PRISM has identified four primary human-aided pathways of invasion, including infrastructure, living industries, recreation and transportation that must be addressed to alleviate the pressure of new introductions and spread.

### Infrastructure

Infrastructure refers to multiple pathways involving human development that have fragmented and degraded parts of our natural landscape. Both the construction and maintenance of roads and utility corridors are primary vectors for the transportation of terrestrial invasive species. Construction and mowing equipment can spread seeds and other plant material by deflection, and by the transportation of contaminated equipment from one location to another. Many of our terrestrial plant species also benefit from a competitive advantage over native plants in disturbed areas which are created during construction and maintained as disturbed sites.

### Transportation

Transportation includes pathways primarily, but not exclusively, associated with commerce, which is defined as the interchange of goods or commodities and involves transportation within, into and out of a region. While the movement of invasive species is rarely the intent, they are transported via shipping pallets and containers, through ballast water, on quarried stone, within packing material, or on personal vehicles.

### Living Industries

Many invasive species introductions can be attributed to their inclusion within nursery, landscaping, aquarium and pet industries. Ornamental plants are a common source of invasive species and aquarium plants and animals have too often found themselves released into lakes, rivers and streams. The introduction of invasive pests may also occur in the movement of plants and plant materials, such as within the soil and packing materials, or being transported on infested trees.



*Periwinkle (Vinca minor) is a common groundcover used in landscaping. Here it is seen escaping a garden and invading the understory of an adjacent wooded natural area.*

### Recreation

Recreation is a broad category that includes activities such as hunting and fishing, hiking, camping, and use of ATV's and boats. Seeds and plant material from invasive species can attach to gear used in recreational activities, including boots and pets, and be transported great distances before falling off in a new location. Recreational boating and fishing are important pathways for the movement of aquatic invasive species, and the movement of firewood is a primary vector for forest pests.

## Prioritization

Prioritization is a necessary effort in invasive species management as the resources needed to fully address invasive species across the landscape are far too great. WNY PRISM prioritization efforts focus on several aspects of invasive species management including invasive species and conservation targets, with additional considerations for management efficacy, community engagement and building regional capacity. Balancing these priorities with WNY PRISM's capacity to implement projects and to assist partners and community members often requires additional prioritization efforts.

WNY PRISM uses multiple methods and models to develop regional priorities and bases all programs and management efforts on these established priorities. WNY PRISM recognizes that individual partner and community member priorities may not perfectly match those set by WNY PRISM, and in these situations WNY PRISM works to assist within areas where priorities overlap.

### Invasive Species

The New York State Invasive Species Program has put in place a tier system for invasive species, based on the invasive species curve, to provide strategic management recommendations and prioritization assistance for partners and community members. WNY PRISM conducts comprehensive reviews of species tier assignments on a biennial basis with the assistance of partners and working groups, while also conducting periodic reviews as new information emerges.

Tiers are assigned to invasive species based on several criteria, primarily species presence and distribution within a designated area, such as the WNY PRISM region, and manageability. If a species is only present in small numbers at a single site but there are no identified best management practices, that species may be assigned a higher tier, such as containment (Tier 3) rather than eradication (Tier 2).

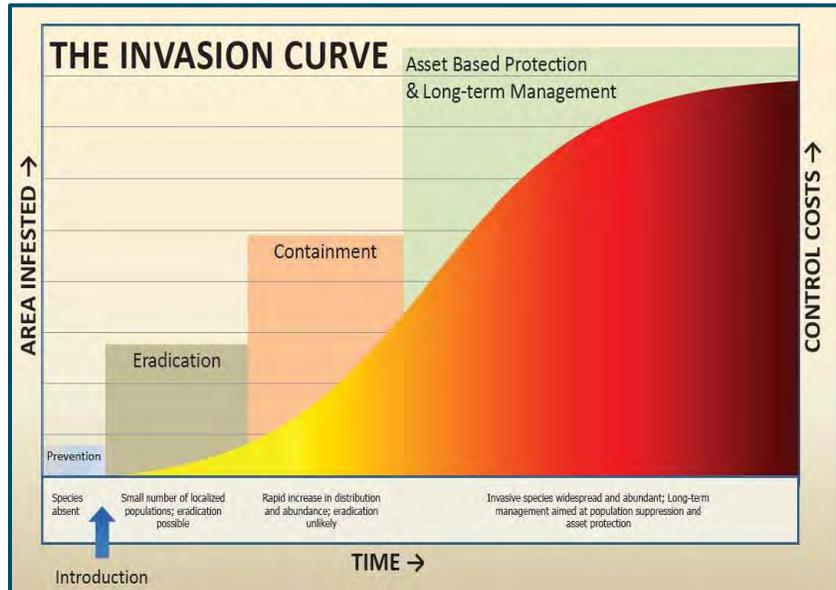
WNY PRISM operates on a landscape scale and as such priorities focus on Tier 1 and Tier 2 species, or those species either not yet present within the region or present with limited numbers and distribution, and for which eradication is feasible. However, the system is scalable, so while WNY PRISM considers the entire 8-county geography that makes up the WNY PRISM



*WNY PRISM priorities: early detection invasive species porcelain berry, federally threatened native species eastern massasauga and rare habitat calcium-rich marl fens.*

region, property managers can assign tiers to species based on their site to help with their own prioritization efforts. For example, a species may be Tier 4 on a WNY PRISM level, but if that species is only present in numbers that allow for site eradication to be feasible, the property manager may assign it as a Tier 2 species for that site.

In addition to the NYS Tier System, WNY PRISM maintains priority species lists for approaching region (Tier 1) and early detection (Tier 2) species, to further assist with prioritizing management efforts. The priority species lists are developed by WNY PRISM staff and presented to the Steering Committee for review and approval. WNY PRISM also selects a rotating list of four species on which to focus survey efforts on within a given year, to improve presence and distribution data within iMapInvasives.



*The Invasive Species Curve is the basis for the NYS Tier System that groups invasive species based on abundance and recommend management strategy.*

### Conservation Targets

In addition to prioritizing specific species, WNY PRISM prioritizes projects that improve, restore and protect rare, threatened or endangered species, additional species of concern, significant natural communities, and some unique geological features. Invasives species have devastating effects on biodiversity, structural diversity and ecological function of natural ecosystems, and without effective management, these rare species and natural features may be forever lost. WNY PRISM works with New York Natural Heritage Program to identify conservation targets.



*Houghton Bog is a natural area protected by the Nature Sanctuary Society of Western New York and is home to several rare species and habitats.*

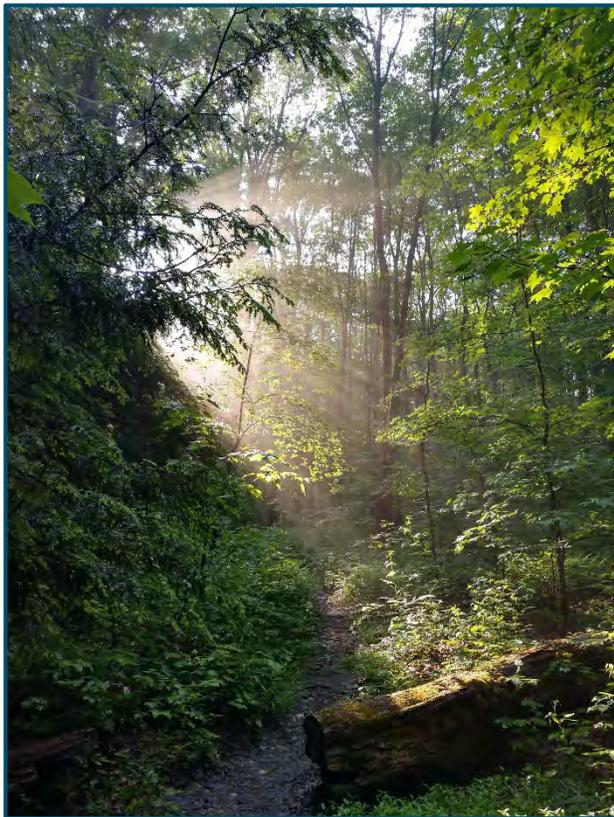
## Strategic Planning

The strategic planning process began in fall 2024 with a comprehensive review of the then current 5-year strategic plan by WNY PRISM staff and Steering Committee members. The consensus upon review was that only minor updates and changes were needed to ensure the strategic plan could continue to effectively support WNY PRISM for the next five years. Areas of interest included improving clarity and ensuring the strategic plan can address potential shifts in WNY PRISM’s priorities and contractual obligations moving forward.

WNY PRISM adopted a planning process that included several rounds of development by WNY PRISM staff, paired with presentation and feedback sessions, with additional opportunities for feedback, for Steering Committee members and WNY PRISM partners. Presentation and feedback sessions were scheduled to align with WNY PRISM’s Steering Committee Meetings and annual Spring and Fall Partner Meetings.

The first step was to approve and finalize WNY PRISM’s mission, vision and guiding principles, which was completed by WNY PRISM staff and Steering Committee members. The WNY PRISM Mission received immediate approval with no changes, while WNY PRISM’s Vision was updated to be more concise. WNY PRISM’s Guiding Principles were updated to provide additional clarity and to better align with WNY PRISM’s current priorities.

WNY PRISM’s Goals were updated by staff and presented to the Steering Committee for initial approval before presenting them for feedback from the additional partners. The most significant change from the previous strategic plan was the removal of the “information management” goal. It was determined that



*Boutwell Hill State Forest, Cherry Creek, NY.*

the objectives and priority actions within this goal were more appropriately split among the remaining goals. Other changes involved simplifying language to improve clarity. The updated goals were presented during the WNY PRISM Spring Partner Meeting in April 2025, and partners were given the opportunity to sign-up for working groups to assist with development of objectives.

In late August 2025, updated Objectives and Priority Actions were provided to WNY PRISM staff, Steering Committee members and partners who had signed up for WNY PRISM Working Groups. A short two-week window was provided for feedback, which was overwhelmingly positive, and most feedback centered on questions about where, or if, certain activities would be included. Feedback was incorporated into the Objectives and Priority Actions, which were then presented during the WNY PRISM Fall Partner Meeting in October 2025. Over 50 partners participated in one or more aspects of the strategic planning process.

## Goals and Priority Actions

### Goal 1: Partnership

Coordinate the WNY PRISM partner network to build and strengthen relationships, to the benefit of all those impacted by invasive species.

WNY PRISM is first and foremost a partnership and it is by working with our partners that we achieve invasive species management success. Communication, collaboration, coordination, information sharing and support are all components of a successful partnership, and it is with these tenets that we best serve our region.

**Objective 1.1:** Provide structure for the sharing of information and resources, for supporting collaboration and increasing partner engagement.

#### Priority Actions

1. Provide opportunities for sharing information through regular meetings and multiple communication channels.
2. Provide mechanisms for partners to report on invasive species efforts and to share information.
3. Promote WNY PRISM and partner programs and achievements.
4. Participate in local, state and regional collaboratives to remain informed and promote further collaborations.
5. Engage with new partners to expand efforts and reach new audience.

**Objective 1.2:** Increase regional capacity for invasive species management and priority projects.

#### Priority Actions

1. Provide assistance for the development of grant proposals and collaborative projects.
2. Provide technical assistance for partners working to grow internal capacity for invasive species management efforts.
3. Provide review and feedback for invasive species management plans and project development efforts.

**Objective 1.3:** Identify and maintain clearly defined regional invasive species management priorities.



*WNY PRISM's Terrestrial Working Group met to provide expert review of invasive species tiers and to update regional priority species lists.*

## Priority Actions

1. Maintain NYS Invasive Tier Rankings with annual review of Tier 1 and Tier 2 species and bi-annual review of full list.
2. Identify and maintain regional priorities for invasive species, conservation targets, research and data needs.

Objective 1.4: Ensure WNY PRISM maintains the ability to successfully implement the strategic plan and address established priorities.

## Priority Actions

1. Complete all contract deliverables and reporting requirements in accordance with associated timelines.
2. Maintain necessary staffing and provide staff with opportunities for professional development.
3. Identify measures of success for all programs and implement associated data collection efforts.
4. Seek additional funding for WNY PRISM to expand ability to address identified priorities and functional needs.
5. Work with host organizations to ensure programmatic needs are met and to provide mutual support.



*WNY PRISM's 2025 Spring Partner Meeting was held at Iroquois National Wildlife Refuge and USFWS staff provided a guided tour along the Headquarters Nature Trail after the meeting.*

Objective 1.5: Work with the NYS Invasive Species Program and broader regional programs on shared goals and priorities.

## Priority Actions:

1. Support and participate in NYS Invasive Species Program meetings and provide information as requested.
2. Support and participate in NYS Invasive Species Program initiatives and educational programs such as NYISAW, Monthly Webinar Series and Expo.

### Key Metric/Outputs

- Partners Engaged
- Partner Meetings
- Established Priorities
- Staff/Staffing
- Annual Work Plan
- Annual Report

## Goal 2: Community Engagement

Engage with the regional community through education and encourage participation in meaningful and effective invasive species management activities.

Effective, landscape scale invasive species management requires a robust community of professionals and members of the public growing and working together towards a common goal. Community engagement combines facets of traditional education and outreach with enhanced engagement strategies to more effectively transform knowledge into action. Whether engaging partners or community members, efforts are aimed at building regional capacity for invasive species management through empowerment.

Objective 2.1: Increase awareness and engagement through educational programming and outreach that addresses priorities and encourages action among partners and community members.

### Priority Actions

1. Identify or develop additional outreach and education materials.
2. Provide for and participate in opportunities for community engagement including outreach events, presentations and walk and talks.
3. Hold workshops and additional learning opportunities to address knowledge gaps.
4. Implement programs aimed at creating behavior change to raise awareness and increase community participation in meaningful action.
5. Provide resources for partners in support of their education and outreach efforts.

Objective 2.2: Coordinate effective community science and volunteer programs to assist with data collection and to support priority invasive species management efforts.

### Priority Actions

1. Coordinate community science programs based on data needs and priorities.
2. Identify additional opportunities for community science as priorities shift.
3. Support partner-led community science programs.
4. Coordinate volunteers and community scientists; provide opportunities for engagement.
5. Hold volunteer workdays and provide volunteer training opportunities.

Objective 2.3: Use online platforms to broaden WNY PRISM's reach and to better engage with and inform partners and community members on invasive species issues and priorities.

### Priority Actions

1. Develop annual social media plan and monthly calendar.
2. Maintain WNY PRISM Listserv and ensure effective email communication for multiple user groups.
3. Ensure the WNY PRISM website remains up-to-date and continues to serve as an effective outreach tool and information portal.

#### Key Metric/Outputs

- Events/Workshops
- Volunteer Hours
- Direct Contacts
- Pledge to Protect Engagement
- Outreach Materials
- Social Media Engagement

### Goal 3: Prevention

Coordinate and support efforts to reduce the likelihood of new invasive species introductions to the region and to limit the spread of established species.

Prevention involves disrupting pathways of invasion to stop both establishment of new invasive species within an identified area and to stop the spread of established invasive species. By focusing on identified pathways and associated community education, WNY PRISM can address multiple species including those that may not yet be on the partnership's radar. Spread prevention is an essential component of an effective, landscape scale invasive species management strategy.

Objective 3.1: Support and implement spread prevention efforts that focus on the identification and disruption of pathways of invasion.

#### Priority Actions

1. Develop protocols and resources that encourage adoption of spread prevention best management practices and behaviors among partners and the community.
2. Ensure availability of best management practices associated with disrupting pathways of invasion.
3. Coordinate regional spread prevention programs.

Objective 3.2: Increase regional awareness and understanding of potential and emerging threats.

#### Priority Actions

1. Maintain priority approaching region species list.
2. Ensure availability of information that supports increased regional awareness of emerging threats and an understanding of high probability areas.
3. Maintain communication with partners on emerging issues and ensure key stakeholders are informed of potential threats.
4. Expand upon the use of remote technologies and tools to assist with identification of species targets and high probability areas for associated prioritization, surveys and monitoring.



*A Boot Brush Station was installed at Letchworth State Park in 2018; 59 Boot Brush Stations have been installed throughout the region as part of WNY PRISM's program.*

Objective 3.3: Successfully coordinate the WNY PRISM Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program and leverage the program to further support invasive species management and education efforts.

Priority Actions

1. Maintain effective regional launch coverage through site selection and ensuring ability to staff selected launches.
2. Ensure high quality of community interactions and survey data through effective hiring, training and supervision of Boat Stewards.
3. Provide effective and consistent communication structure for Boat Stewards, to increase professional engagement.
4. Leverage strength and scope of the Watercraft Inspection Stewardship Program to support additional priority survey, early detection, removal and education efforts.

Key Metric/Outputs

- Resources
- Approaching Region Priority List
- Boot Brush Stations
- Launches Staffed
- Boats Inspected
- Interceptions
- Public Engagement



*WNY PRISM Boat Steward, Teresa Gutierrez, inspected watercraft and discussed spread prevention with visitors to Amherst Veterans Memorial Park.*

## Goal 4: Early Detection and Response

Coordinate, support and implement early detection, assessment and response efforts focused on priority species within the region.

WNY PRISM has developed an early detection, assessment and response framework to provide the region with the structure necessary to address new threats effectively. The framework considers the expertise and capacity of partners throughout the region, NYS and the Great Lakes Basin, and allows for both targeted and landscape level strategies.

Objective 4.1: Implement established early detection and response framework for regional response.

### Priority Actions

1. Maintain up-to-date early detection and approaching region priority species lists.
2. Coordinate early detection reporting, surveys, and site assessments among partners.
3. Facilitate communication and information sharing among partners.
4. Coordinate, or assist with, development of response plans and identify opportunities that will support plan implementation.
5. Ensure availability of species information, including best management practices and high probability areas, for early detection priority species.



*WNY PRISM helped remove mile-a-minute seedlings from Oak Orchard WMA.*

Objective 4.2: Implement early detection site monitoring and maintain database.

### Priority Actions

1. Conduct annual site monitoring in collaboration with identified partners.
2. Implement early detection site monitoring protocol for tracking progress towards site eradication.
3. Ensure early detection site monitoring database includes data to assist with efficacy determination and use of adaptive management strategies.

Objective 4.3: Assist with regional early detection management and removal efforts.

### Priority Actions

1. Provide partners with technical assistance in support of removal efforts.
2. Provide direct removal assistance only when capacity and resources allow.
3. Identify opportunities to expand capacity, for both WNY PRISM and partners, to implement expanded removal activities.

### Key Metric/Outputs

- Early Detection Database
- Collaboratives/Working Groups
- Sites Assessed
- Sites Monitored
- Sites Eradicated

## Goal 5: Management and Habitat Restoration

Provide assistance with management planning and project implementation based on identified priorities focusing on projects that use best management practices to support long-term sustainability of efforts.

WNY PRISM works to build capacity for invasive species management within the region by providing partners with the training and resources they need to implement successful projects. WNY PRISM is able to provide technical assistance and address information needs when direct project assistance isn't possible.

Objective 5.1: Provide support and technical assistance for partner-led removal and restoration projects.

### Priority Actions

1. Develop Best Management Practices and/or technical guides for species, methods and strategies.
2. Provide partners with training and professional development opportunities that improve capacity for management (e.g., working with Crew).
3. Provide removal and survey assistance based on priorities and internal capacity for implementation.
4. Promote habitat restoration strategies that support removal efforts and increase resilience against future invasions.
5. Support partner-led efforts to increase availability of native plant materials.

Objective 5.2: Coordinate Crew Assistance Program based on clearly defined criteria for project selection and prioritization.

### Priority Actions

1. Maintain Crew Assistance Program as a regional resource.
2. Maintain clear program priorities, selection process and responsibilities for partners receiving assistance.
3. Provide summaries and continued management recommendations for all projects.

Objective 5.3: Implement pre-treatment and post-treatment data collection and monitoring in support of adaptive management and increased efficacy.

### Priority Actions

1. Implement projects to help determine the effectiveness of new



*WNY PRISM held a management workshop focused on tree and shrub removal best management practices.*

tools, technology and methods of invasive species control.

2. Implement pre-treatment data collection and post-treatment monitoring protocols to support improved invasive species management efforts.
3. Assess management tools, methods and strategies for efficacy.
4. Ensure pre-treatment monitoring is complete prior to implementing new removal and restoration projects.
5. Finalize post-treatment monitoring protocol and encourage use among partners.
6. Use pre-treatment and post-treatment data to inform continued management actions and to identify information needs.

Objective 5.4: Implement or support projects that help demonstrate or determine the effectiveness of tools, technologies and methods of invasive species management.

#### Priority Actions

1. Participate in select long-term management projects aimed at providing information to improve regional management projects.
2. Implement projects that will aid in the assessment of tools, methods and strategies.
3. Support development and assessment of new tools including biocontrol.

#### Key Metric/Outputs

- Crew Assistance Program
- Acres Surveyed
- Acres Managed
- Plants Removed
- Acres Restored
- Demonstration Projects/Tools
- Protocols



*WNY PRISM demonstrates use of best management practices for the removal of invasive shrubs from a forest understory.*