

## 2025 Lower Hudson PRISM Action Plan

### ***Goal 1- Prevent: Prevent and minimize the introduction and spread of invasive species***

The strategies for achieving this goal include creating and implementing strategic focal group educational campaigns that target primary pathways of introduction, installing prevention awareness signage and decontamination stations like bootbrush stations at strategic locations, and delivering effective prevention awareness education and outreach to the general public.

#### **Objective 1.1:** Raise public awareness about how to prevent the spread of invasive species.

##### *Priority 2025 Actions*

- Highlight and direct attention to action step resources, guidelines and programs that are focused [on spread prevention on newly redesigned LH PRISM website](#).
- Continue to educate the general public on the mechanisms through which invasive species spread through a combination of digital and in-person workshops and events.
- Work to prevent the spread of high priority regional forest pests and pathogens by promoting firewood spread prevention education; provide access to resources from helpful prevention websites like [Don't Move Firewood/Buy it Where you Burn it](#) and [NYS firewood guidance](#).
- Promote LH PRISM community science surveys in early detection counties for high priority emerging invasive species.

#### **Objective 1.2:** Implement prevention education actions that target specific focal group audiences associated with priority pathways of spread.

##### *Priority 2025 Actions*

- Mitigate spread via the movement of heavy equipment through targeted outreach and communication of best management practices to public works and transportation sectors; provide access to resources found at helpful campaigns like [WorkCleanGo](#).
- Support listing additional species in [Part 575](#) and remain involved in update process when public comment period begins.
- Conduct outreach and education to horticulturalists, gardeners, turf and landscape professionals, and arborists with message about selecting non-invasive species and early detection of pests.
- Leverage Trail Conference's Trail Steward program to promote and synergize use of [PlayCleanGo](#) and [Leave No Trace](#) messaging at popular trailheads in LH PRISM region
- Help partners to install boot brush stations at a minimum of 3 locations in LH PRISM region (note two station locations have already been identified with permissions in place) through the help of subcontracts and guidance of LH PRISM working groups.
- Support [Clean.Drain.Dry](#) and aquatic invasive species prevention initiatives through LH PRISM subcontract work and through in-person and digital educational events.
- Reconvene the Priority Conservation Area and Invasive Species Prevention Zone Working Group with goal of drafting at least one partner ISPZ proposal in 2025 (we have begun this process for one partner in 2024).

***Goal 2- Detect and Monitor: Understand the distribution and impact of invasive species as well as the effectiveness of invasive species management on native ecosystems.***

To effectively address invasive species, we work to understand the distribution of invasive species, as well as the native species and communities we are protecting, through survey and monitoring. Invasive species surveys detect new introductions and fill data gaps that support a strategic and cost-effective response. Native and invasive species monitoring, or detecting changes in populations over time, is essential for understanding the impact of invasive species expansions as well as the effectiveness of treatment efforts. LH PRISM strategically deploys a large volunteer network and empowers partners to increase regional early detection and monitoring capacity.

**Objective 2.1:** Build the LH PRISM's early detection capacity.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Recruit and train volunteers to identify and detect emerging invasive species in our region.
- Train volunteers to use iMapInvasives to record, report and confirm data.
- Support the early detection survey efforts of partners through offering trainings and helping with data collection, reporting and processing.
- Create, distribute and/or highlight available species spotlight materials to partners, volunteers and general public for identifying Tier 2 species as appropriate and relevant to communications campaigns and survey needs.
- Encourage partners to set up iMapInvasives alerts for Tier 2 species.

**Objective 2.2:** Conduct monitoring to understand the impacts of invasive species on native habitats and assess the effectiveness of treatments.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Monitor recovery of select sites where invasive species are managed by LH PRISM staff through conducting native vegetation surveys and post-management invasive species surveys.
  - Site selection for post-management monitoring of staff-led projects will be determined in consultation with LH PRISM staff and ISCS, as appropriate.
- Identify partners and volunteers who can assist with vegetation assessment surveys following treatment at select sites.
- Train and deploy volunteers to engage in partner and staff supervised long-term monitoring projects at select management sites.

**Objective 2.3:** Explore innovative detection techniques to improve survey and monitoring efficiency and effectiveness.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Continue to pilot and evaluate innovative techniques to expand detection and monitoring capacity (e.g., conservation dogs, eDNA, new survey techniques, use of volunteers and community science).
- Share information about innovative techniques with partners and the public via digital and social media as well as in person tabling events and presentations, as appropriate to communications.
- Investigate ways that community science data can help support academic research and priorities of NYS PRISM partner institutions and agencies.
- Organize coordinated, targeted surveys for lingering and pest-resistant tree species in areas that have undergone heavy pest and pathogen pressure in our region (e.g., hemlock, beech, ash).

***Goal 3- Prioritize: The LH PRISM network plans, prioritizes, and adapts its work on invasive species to optimize our collective resources and continually improve our effectiveness.***

The LH PRISM prioritizes invasive species detection and response in several ways. First, we identify areas of high conservation value where we can focus prevention, detection, and response efforts. Second, we use species distribution and abundance data to select appropriate management responses that optimize resource efficiency and protect conservation targets. Third, LH PRISM works with partners to develop models and tools to help managers decide which invasive species management efforts will have the best outcomes and where to direct conservation resources.

**Objective 3.1:** Anticipate new introductions and reassess species Tier categorizations and priority species for survey and monitoring each year.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Review and update, as necessary, Lower Hudson PRISM species Tier categorizations for terrestrial plants, aquatic species, and forest pests. Submit categorizations to NYNHP by end of November 2025.
- Use a horizon scanning approach to predict and prioritize potential Tier 1 species in winter 2025. This work will be accomplished by the Terrestrial Invasive Species Coordinator with guidance from the LH PRISM Species Categorization Working Group.
- Integrate new R/T/E-invasives intersection tool from iMapInvasives into invasive species survey and management efforts where R/T/E species overlap.
- Review and revise target species list for our community survey program with guidance and advice from ISCS, NYNHP and LH PRISM steering committee.
  - Continue to include early detection species in community science survey efforts.
  - Continue to include forest pests and pathogens (e.g., spotted lanternfly, beech leaf disease and hemlock woolly adelgid) in survey efforts.

**Objective 3.2:** Prioritize species and locations for PRISM rapid response and restoration efforts.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Utilize invasive species distribution and abundance information to annually select management projects that address emerging invasive species, protect highly valued conservation areas, and prevent spread into un-invaded natural areas.
  - The majority of LH PRISM staff-led project selection accomplished by mid-April 2025.
- Identify species for coordinated PRISM network response (e.g., spotted lanternfly and beech leaf disease) by end of March 2025 with flexibility built in for emerging issues throughout year.
- Continue to give sufficient weight to subcontracted projects that will benefit conservation targets in the LH PRISM subcontract proposal evaluation process.
  - Review and revise evaluation rubric by end of January 2025.
- Regularly review priority conservation areas that protect the rich, native biodiversity of the Lower Hudson region.
- Solicit applications for Priority Conservation Area (PCA) and Invasive Species Protection Zone (ISPZ) designations.
  - Highlight PCA and ISPZ designation process in January 2025 partner meeting.
- Use LH PRISM data and expertise to identify management sites that will be candidates for active or passive restoration. Restoration sites for staff-led projects selected by mid-April 2025.
- Modify management plans to protect rare, threatened, endangered species and significant natural communities at proposed Invasives Strike Force Crew sites based on current adaptive best management practices.

***Goal 4- Respond and Restore: Minimize the impacts of invasive species and promote recovery of native species through strategic management and restoration***

LH PRISM uses a strategic approach to management, putting more effort into responding to new and emerging invasions, as well as controlling more widespread species populations where rare, endangered, or special concern species would benefit from invasive species management. Post treatment, we promote native species recovery that is appropriate to site conditions in terms of employing active or passive restoration techniques and herbivory control.

**Objective 4.1:** Build the PRISM's capacity to rapidly respond to priority invasive species.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Promote educational materials on website and digital media that enhance partner organizations' knowledge and awareness about [Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 species and prioritization/mapping tools](#).
- Deploy PRISM staff, crew, and volunteers to remove priority invasive species populations based on holistic management project ranking criteria.
  - Criteria released during project application and review period in January/February 2025.
- Work collaboratively with PRISM partners and collaborators to target high impact, emerging invasive species on a regional scale by conducting projects to treat populations of select Tier 2 species across the region.
  - Maintain ongoing list and metrics of selected projects for inclusion in quarterly and annual report.
- Minimize the impact of widespread invasive species by conducting management projects that suppress Tier 3 and 4 invasives species that are encroaching on conservation targets, cultural resources, or historic resources.
  - Maintain ongoing list and metrics of selected projects for inclusion in quarterly and annual report.

**Objective 4.2:** Support partner response to their priority invasive species populations.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Encourage partners to complete Tier 2 species management on lands they manage.
- Update strategic guidance and best management practices on LH PRISM website for addressing invasive species populations on as needed basis.
- Share best management practices in a user-friendly way appropriate to the target audience (e.g., videos, training, guidance documents).
  - Highlight [newly redesigned website's best management practice \(BMP\) format](#) and promote publication of 2025 non-chemical BMP document (a 2024 subcontract product deliverable from Hudsonia, Inc. to be published in January 2025).
- Encourage partner submissions during the open Request for Control Project application period to engage the Invasives Strike Force Crew for help with control projects on partner properties.
  - Application announcement released in early January 2025.
- Solicit subcontract applications that target Tier 2 species and/or Tier 3 and 4 species that threaten conservation targets to increase capacity of LH PRISM partners and participant's capacity to respond to invasive species threats on native habitats.
  - Application announcement released in late January 2025.

**Objective 4.3:** Apply adaptive management principles to invasive species response and restoration work.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Work with partners to test emerging and innovative invasive species control methods, including chemical, manual/physical, weed torching and biological/biocontrol approaches, especially where current best management practices are either incomplete or not fully effective.
- Assess management tactic efficacy on recurring ISF Crew projects, research alternative methods if previous management was unsuccessful, and request research if alternative methods are not available.
- Reconvene Native Species Protection Working Group that will compile and create resource repository for best management practices for invasive species removal in habitats associated with key conservation targets.
- Investigate emerging management techniques and promising restoration practices to address the threats of priority forest pests.
  - Consolidate lessons learned and best management practice strategies employed to address the threats of priority forest pests and pathogens like SLF, HWA and BLD.
  - Tailor education and outreach and management advice towards different interests (e.g., homeowner, protection of agricultural and economic resources, land manager and municipalities).

**Objective 4.4:** Coordinate partner and staff response to priority, high impact invaders in the LH PRISM region.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Facilitate working groups for specific high priority, high impact forest pests and pathogens (e.g., beech leaf disease, hemlock woolly adelgid).
- Organize and disseminate educational and identification and management materials for these high priority, high impact species including seasonal, timed alerts.

**Objective 4.5:** Promote native species recovery at treated sites.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Provide educational resources on recommended herbivory control and native plant recommendations and sourcing to partners.
- Incorporate climate change considerations and climate resilient plants into management and restoration plans.
- Incorporate herbivory control measures into management plans as appropriate
- Utilize LH PRISM Forest Pest, Native Species Protection Working Groups and BLD Coalition to consolidate resources and determine potential management sites that will be candidates for either active or passive restoration.

**Goal 5- Engage: Build engaged communities that support the PRISM's efforts to address invasive species and are empowered to take action.**

The Lower Hudson PRISM reaches out to new audiences and engaged community members to convey the positive impacts of invasive species management on ecosystems. The Lower Hudson PRISM offers clear steps for action on personal and community levels. Part of our work involves finding creative ways to increase our public visibility using digital tools, including our website, social media, and online videos.

**Objective 5.1:** Increase the public visibility of LH PRISM as the go-to place for regional invasive species information.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Update/maintain our newly redesigned LH PRISM website as a user-friendly hub for information sharing among partners and the public.
  - Encourage partners to join and utilize [newly created partner portal](#) for sharing of documents and communications across working groups
- Use social media strategically to disseminate information to a larger audience.
  - PRISM staff, primarily the Education and Outreach Coordinator, will be main contact for posting and sharing partner posts on LH PRISM Instagram, Facebook and YouTube accounts.
  - Encourage partners to follow other's accounts and share other partner's posts.
  - Encourage partners to provide content for at least one post. Send content to [invasives@nynjtc.org](mailto:invasives@nynjtc.org) or tag @Lower Hudson PRISM.
  - Continue to grow Instagram account following.
- Create videos and interactive online content to increase public awareness on topics ranging from species ID to prevention techniques.
  - Organize and advertise YouTube video library of existing species spotlights and best management practice technique videos.
  - Cross-pollinate created videos across all digital formats when appropriate (Instagram, YouTube, newsletter, website).
- Continue to use Stewardship newsletter to share upcoming invasive species-related partner events, news and notes.

**Objective 5.2:** Promote programs and events that raise public awareness and engage priority and new audiences.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Work with partners to prioritize important target audiences for outreach and engagement.
  - Conduct outreach and education to youth with awareness messaging at tabling events, promoting the use of mobile apps and recruitment to volunteer/intern programs.
- Work with partners to coordinate strategies for reaching new audiences and volunteers with tailored messaging (e.g., nursery, transportation, utility and public works sectors).
- Incorporate diversity, equity and inclusion aspects into PRISM messaging and materials when appropriate.
- Plan, prepare for, and participate in NY's Invasive Species Awareness Week and other regular invasive species conferences (e.g., annual Cornell in-service).
- Deliver invasive species awareness talks and trainings in ways that balance reach with resource efficiency.

**Objective 5.3:** Facilitate participation in community-based invasive species work.

*Priority 2025 Actions*

- Create empowering/inspiring messaging that provides clear steps to support actions in local communities.
  - Promote [action steps/resources webpage](#) on newly designed website.
- Increase local participation and engage new audiences in invasive species management work (e.g., highway departments, landowners, public works).
  - Highlight subcontract/funding opportunities available for these special interest groups.
- Promote volunteer workday opportunities through relevant communication channels including newly designed [webpage on volunteer opportunities](#).
- Increase outreach and volunteer recruitment in counties with lower invasive species reporting rates to enhance early detection and reporting for Tier 2 and statewide priority species.

***Goal 6- Collaborate: Facilitate the Lower Hudson PRISM and its vibrant network of partners, participants, and volunteers to grow regional capacity to address invasive species.***

Effective information exchange between partners, state agencies, and other stakeholders on best management practices, challenges and successes is critical to collective progress in invasive species work. We use email lists to share time-sensitive information and hold more partner meetings because we find they effectively engage the PRISM network. Sharing information, whether in person or digitally, allows Lower Hudson PRISM partners and other professionals to integrate information relevant to their work and share their success stories and lessons learned with others.

**Objective 6.1:** Expand the reach and impact of the PRISM by strategically growing PRISM membership and increasing partner engagement.

*Priority Actions*

- Continue to build relationships and understand the capacity needs of current and potential PRISM members.
  - Continue to engage in partner site visits to learn about partner management project successes and challenges and demonstrate commitment to valued partnerships.
- Create outreach templates for partner recruitment that describe the benefits of PRISM partnership for different people and organizations; encourage [website visitation to the partner benefits webpage and partner application resources](#).
- Strategically recruit new partners to reach new audiences and locations in the PRISM region (e.g., underrepresented communities, municipalities, and businesses).
  - Goal is to recruit at least three new partners in 2025.
- Distribute revised new partner welcome packet to all new partners.
  - Packet will include updated partnership agreement, updated partner contact list, new logo and finalized strategic plan.

**Objective 6.2:** Facilitate the sharing of information, resources, and expertise within the PRISM network to build network capacity to address invasive species.

*Priority Actions*

- Enhance information sharing within the PRISM network by maintaining a variety of existing communication channels to cater to diverse preferences and needs (e.g., email lists, partner meetings, partner meeting minutes, newsletters, etc.)
- Use the diverse communication channels and newly redesigned website to share strategic alerts, funding opportunities, best practices, success stories, and lessons learned.
- Offer opportunities for partners to host meetings and demonstrations with access to treatment and restoration areas to share experiences and knowledge with the partnership.
- Convene ad-hoc working groups to address emerging issues and facilitate partner engagement and collaboration
  - Education & Outreach, Native Species Protection, Priority Conservation Area/ISPZ, PRISM Meeting Planning, Species Categorization, Trailhead, Forest Pest & Pathogen Working Groups are all planned for 2025.



**Objective 6.3:** Coordinate projects and share information with other PRISMs, statewide agencies and organizations, as well as regional partners.

*Priority Actions*

- Continue to participate in regional and statewide initiatives and working groups with other PRISMs, the New York Natural Heritage Program, the New York Invasive Species Research Institute, New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, and New York's Invasive Species Advisory Council.
- Participate in regional or statewide invasive species conferences through planning, presentations, contributed posters or workshops, as appropriate (e.g., Cornell in-service).
- Provide PRISM updates during monthly NYS invasive species and PRISM Coordinator calls.

**Objective 6.4:** Manage the PRISM and complete contract deliverables.

*Priority Actions*

- Work closely with NYSDEC Invasive Species Coordination Section to fulfill LH PRISM contract requirements.
- Review and update LH PRISM bylaws, governance policies, and partner agreement by June 2025.
- Complete and distribute annual report to celebrate successes and lessons learned by December 31, 2025.
- Coordinate and administer LH PRISM subcontract projects in the region.
  - Subcontract application materials distributed by late January 2025 with decisions sent to ISCS for approval by end of February 2025.
- Hold 4 LH PRISM partner meetings (Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall meeting).
  - Plan seasonal meetings with PRISM Meeting Planning Working Group in February 2025.
- Hold Steering Committee elections at January 30, 2025 partner meeting.
  - Review and update LH PRISM Governance Policies and Bylaws with new 2025 Steering Committee.
- Submit quarterly payments requests and progress reports to the Invasive Species Coordination Section.