
USING MOCK SCENARIOS TO IMPROVE RAPID RESPONSE IN PENNSYLVANIA

SARA STAHLMAN, EXTENSION LEAD



PENNSYLVANIA AIS RAPID RESPONSE PLAN

Interagency decision support framework designed to aid agencies in conducting a coordinated and structured response to new aquatic invasive species infestations.

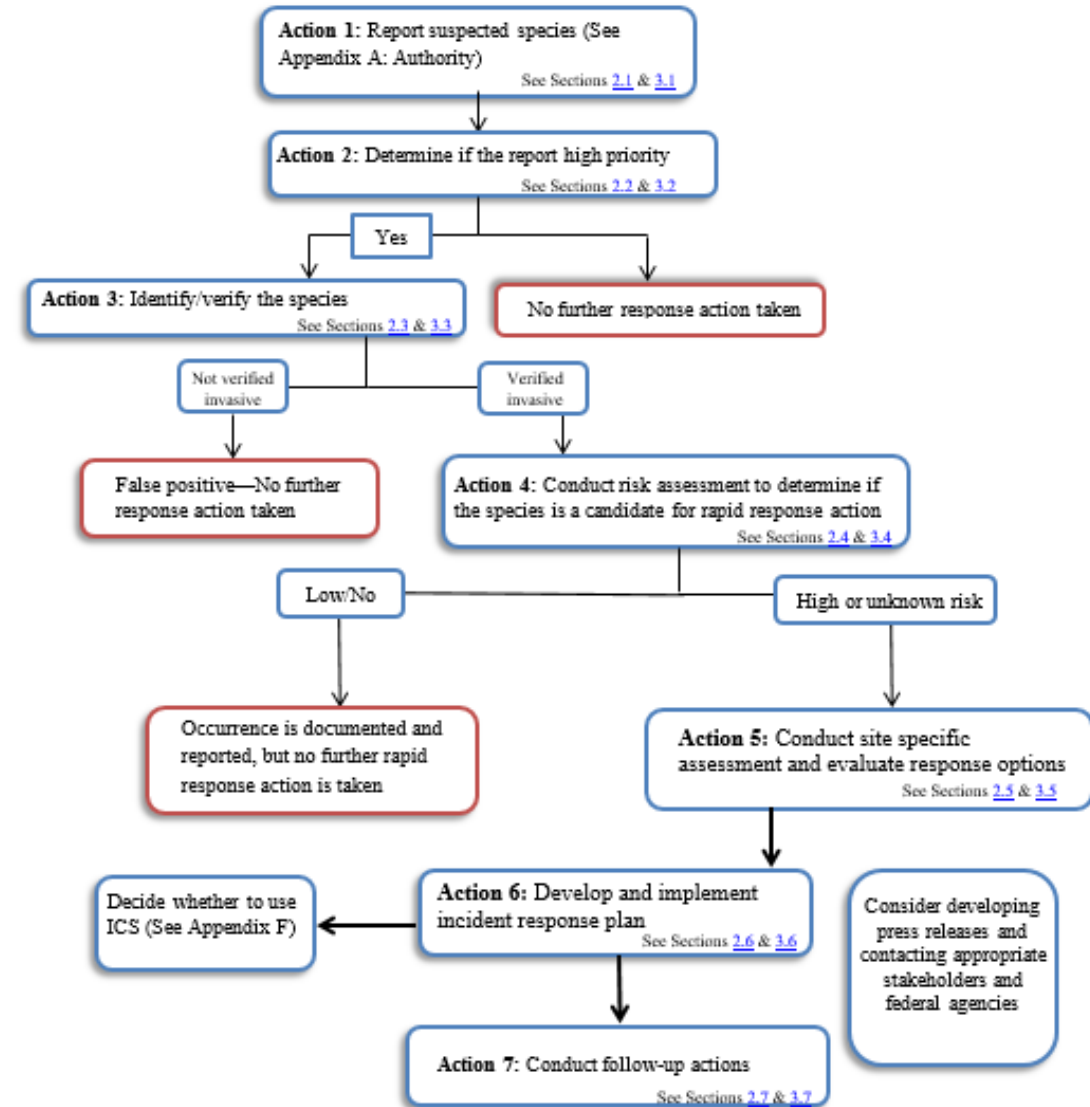
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SECTION I- DECISION TREE

Concise overview of all the action steps that may be needed in the rapid response process.

SECTION 1: Overview of Rapid Response Actions



This decision tree provides a quick reference to the rapid response process and should not be used as a stand-alone document. References provided in the boxes indicate important information that should be referenced during the response process.

SECTION 2 – CHECKLIST OF ACTIONS

Action 1:
Report
suspected AIS to AIS
coordinator

☐

completed

Action 2:
Is the
report
high priority?

☐

completed

Action 3:
Identify/verify the
species

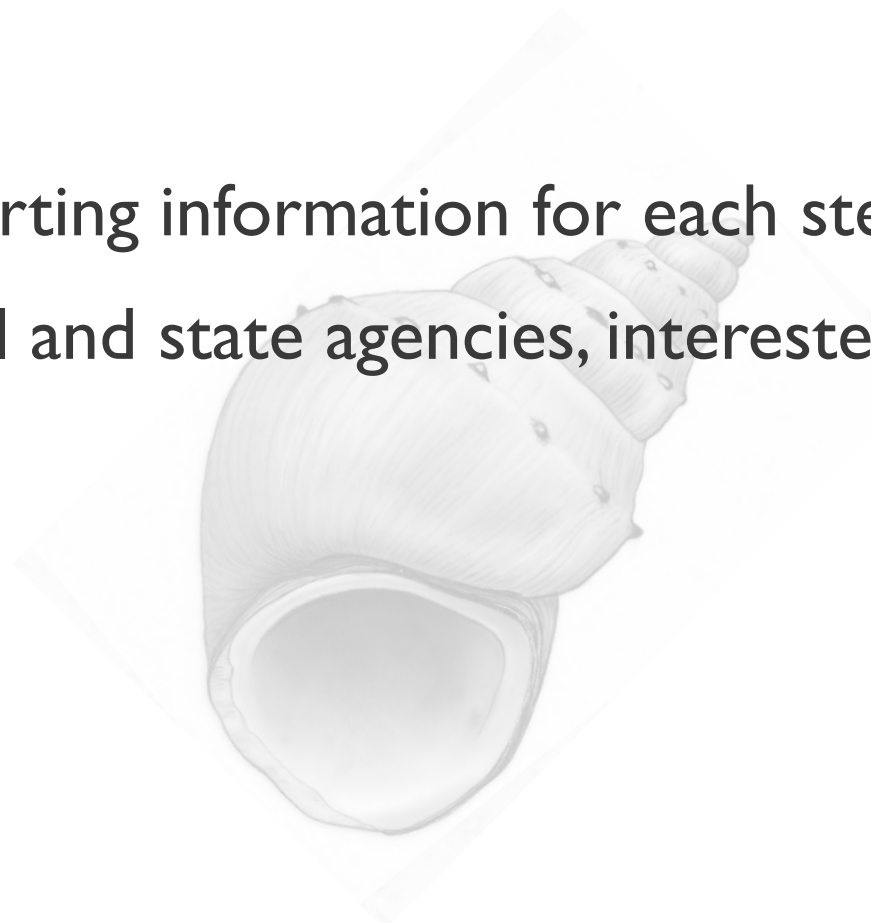
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completed

Checklist of actions that can be used as a stand alone document

SECTION 3- DETAILED ACTION STEPS

- Detailed, comprehensive supporting information for each step
- Contact information for federal and state agencies, interested parties, and others
- Interactive tools:
 - Response Options Template
 - Incident Response Plan



THE CHALLENGE...

- What is it and why should we use it?
 - Provide a structure for communication and decision making
 - Allow for leveraging additional support and capacity for rapid response
- Education and outreach on rapid response

MOCK EXERCISES

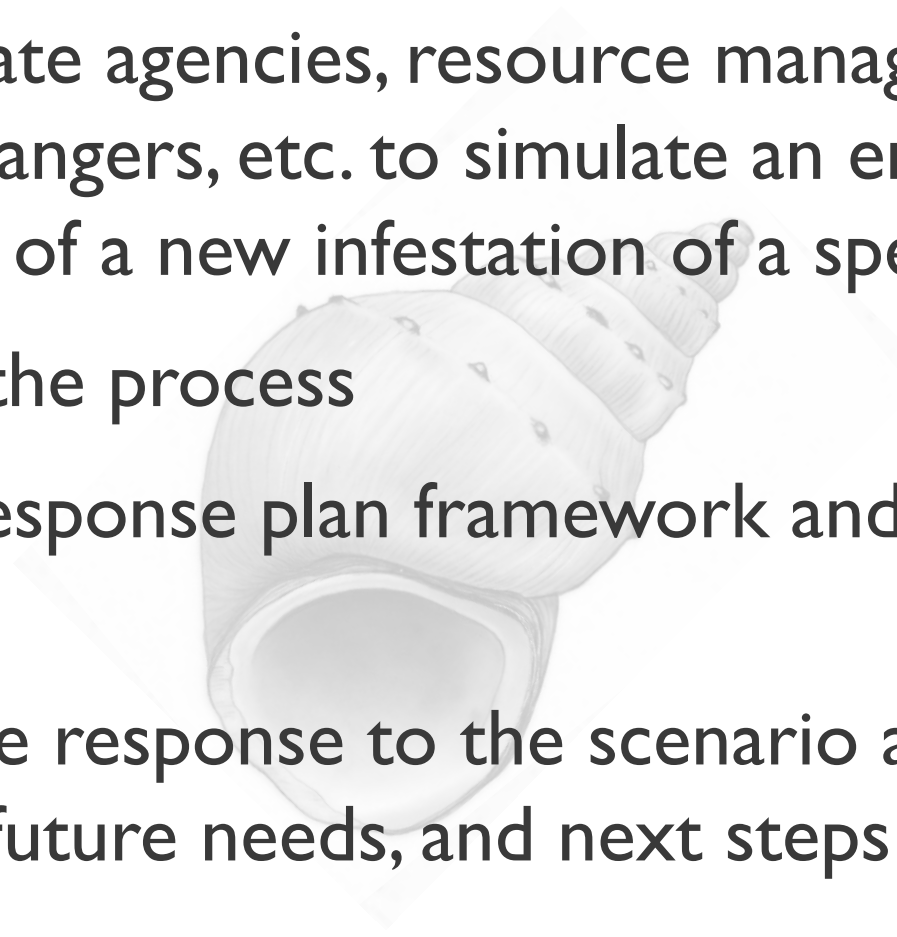


GREAT LAKES RESTORATION INITIATIVE FUNDING

- Hold 1 mock exercise per year
- Hold 4-6 rapid response trainings per year



WHAT IS A MOCK RAPID RESPONSE EXERCISE?

- Bring together federal and state agencies, resource managers, conservation districts, lake managers, etc. to simulate an emergency response to a mock scenario of a new infestation of a species
 - Familiarize participants with the process
 - Test the Pennsylvania rapid response plan framework and identify existing gaps and challenges
 - Produce a report detailing the response to the scenario and have discussions about successes, future needs, and next steps
- 

MOCK EXERCISES CONDUCTED

STARRY STONEWORT – OCTOBER 22, 2015
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

HYDRILLA – NOVEMBER 16, 2017
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA

NEW ZEALAND MUDSNAIL – MARCH 21, 2019
BELLEFONTE, PENNSYLVANIA

WATER CHESTNUT – MAY 29, 2019
MERCER, PENNSYLVANIA



LOCATIONS FOR EXERCISES

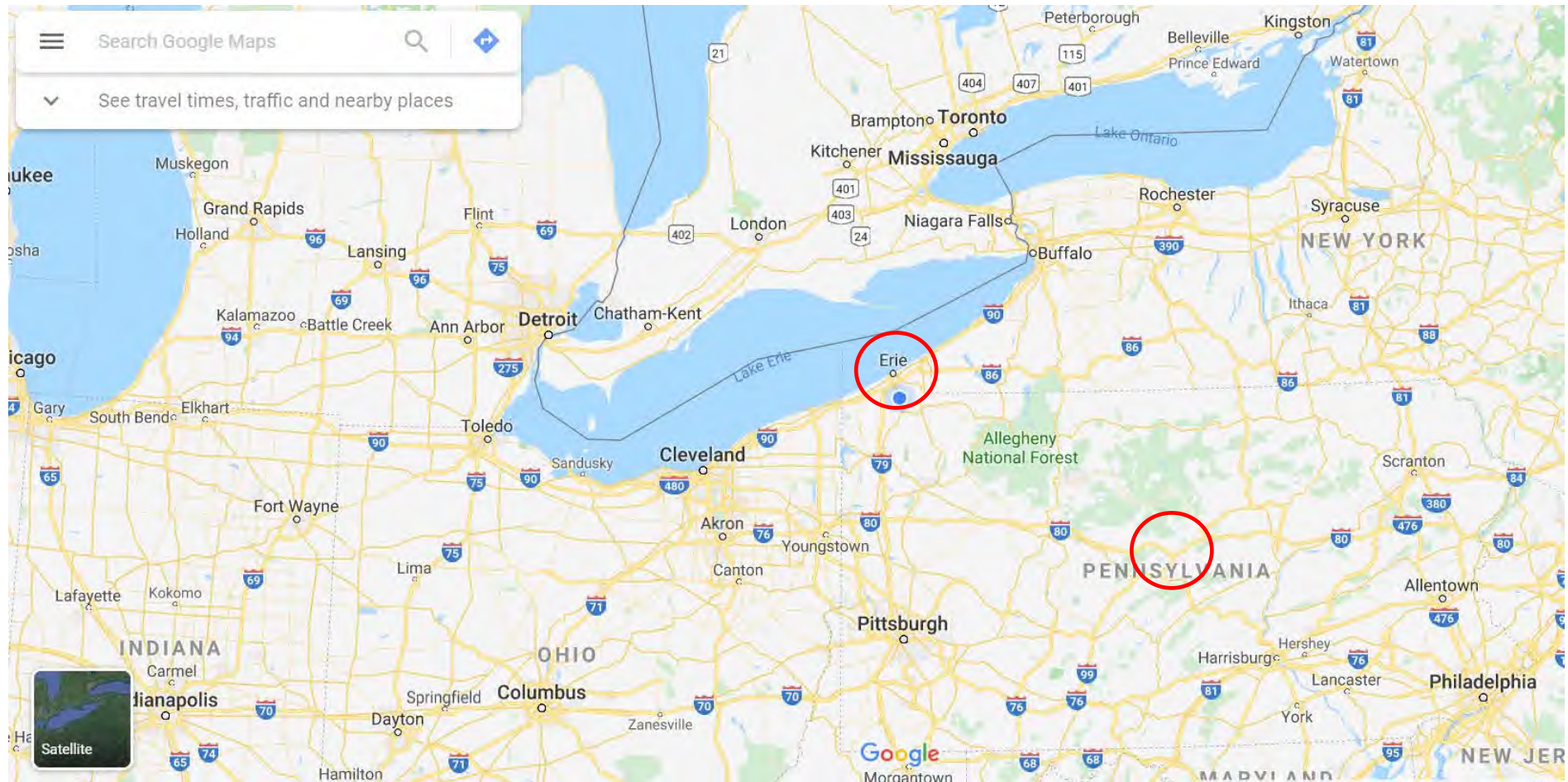


TABLE TOP DISCUSSIONS



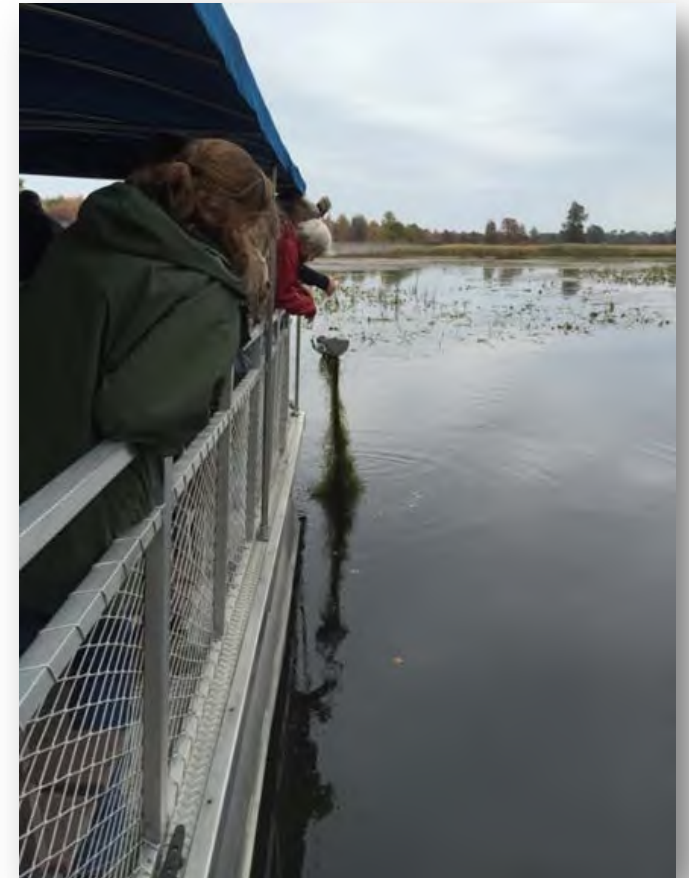
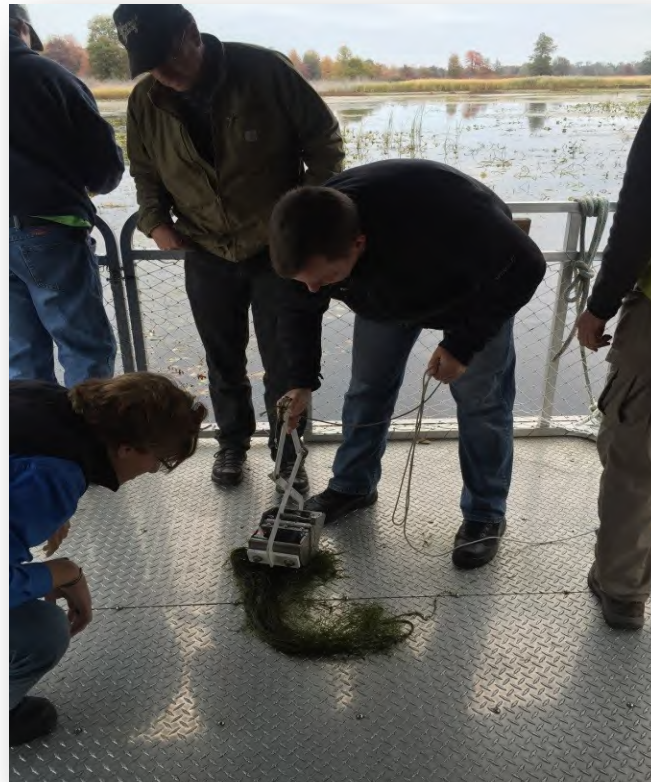
- How to report
- Communication procedures
- Risk assessment
- Collecting information
- Background and biology on species

IDENTIFICATION WORKSHOPS



SITE ASSESSMENTS

- Starry stonewort in the lagoons of Presque Isle State Park
- Site assessment of infestation
- Collected site data and specimen samples



SITE ASSESSMENTS



at the infestation site.	
Vectors of spread	
Continual boat traffic out of marina lake	Would DCNR ever consider closing access to marina lake?
Marina Lake hosts yearly bass tournaments for anglers traveling from all throughout Pennsylvania	
Presque Isle Bay is home to many migratory bird populations	
Presque Isle is a popular tourist destination for water recreational uses	
Potential impacts	
<u>Hydrilla</u> could impede boat traffic, impact native fish and wildlife populations, and impact the local angling economy at Presque Isle State Park	How will <u>Hydrilla</u> compete with existing species such as starry stonewort?
	A Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI) to determine if any rare, threatened, or endangered species are present
Management	
DCNR has jurisdiction over the patches of <u>Hydrilla</u> within marina lake and within 500 feet of the park boundary.	Who has jurisdictional authority for the patch of <u>Hydrilla</u> beyond DCNR's jurisdictional boundary?

BRAINSTORM ALL POSSIBLE RESPONSE OPTIONS

- Consider available resources
- Needed resources
- Pertinent laws and regulations
- Permitting
- Available funding
- Other resources

	Response Option 1	Response Option 2	Response Option 3	Response Option 4
What resources would be needed to implement this control strategy? (if appropriate, insert the quantities of each)	<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment: <input type="checkbox"/> Power Boats <input type="checkbox"/> Kayaks/Canoes <input type="checkbox"/> Nets <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing poles <input type="checkbox"/> Electrofishing gear <input type="checkbox"/> Waders <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticides and applicators <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment: <input type="checkbox"/> Power Boats <input type="checkbox"/> Kayaks/Canoes <input type="checkbox"/> Nets <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing poles <input type="checkbox"/> Electrofishing gear <input type="checkbox"/> Waders <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticides and applicators <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment: <input type="checkbox"/> Power Boats <input type="checkbox"/> Kayaks/Canoes <input type="checkbox"/> Nets <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing poles <input type="checkbox"/> Electrofishing gear <input type="checkbox"/> Waders <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticides and applicators <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> Equipment: <input type="checkbox"/> Power Boats <input type="checkbox"/> Kayaks/Canoes <input type="checkbox"/> Nets <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing poles <input type="checkbox"/> Electrofishing gear <input type="checkbox"/> Waders <input type="checkbox"/> Pesticides and applicators <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
List any other resources that may be needed to address this infestation				
Of the needed resources, which				

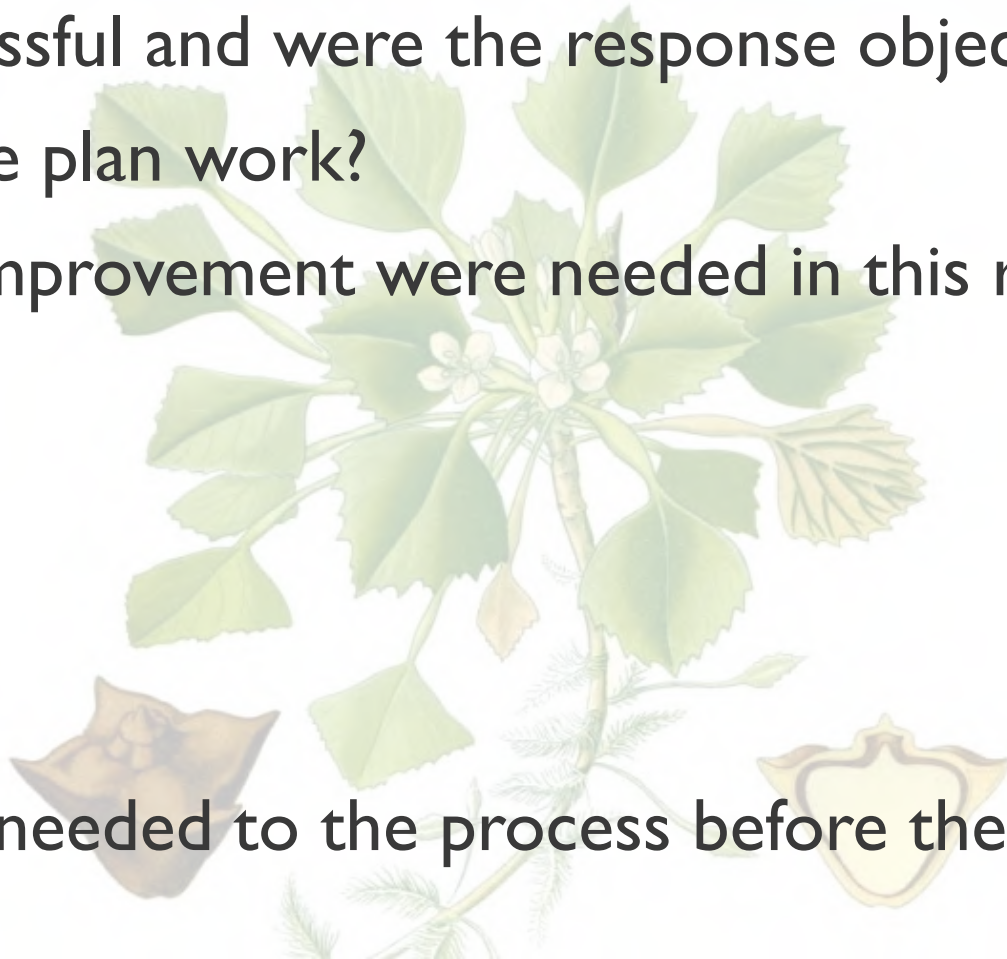
DEVELOP AN ACTION PLAN FOR CHOSEN RESPONSE

- Outlines who will take the lead and how the chosen response method will be implemented
- Ensures all involved entities are working together
- Ensures those who should be at the table, are at the table
- Include all partners (other agencies, organizations, stakeholders, etc.)



POST INCIDENT EVALUATION

- Was the response successful and were the response objectives met?
- Did the mechanics of the plan work?
- What gaps or areas of improvement were needed in this response effort?
 - Sticking points
 - Permits
 - Legislation
 - Funding
- What modifications are needed to the process before the next effort?



KEY OUTCOMES FROM MOCK EXERCISES

- Identified issues with suggestions for improvement and action steps
- Increase knowledge about the plan and how to use it
- “After-Action” reports detailing the process and outlining next steps
- Increased coordination, communication and networking
- “Knowing what role I play”
- Platform for discussion about current rapid response issues and needs

Issue	Suggestions for Improvement
Confusion among state agencies about who is responsible for what in some situations (for example: aquatic plants, private lands,)	Agencies should work together to identify “gray” situations and develop clearly-defined roles and responsibilities
Lack of funding for RR outside of Lake Erie watershed. Lack of “emergency” RR funding across state.	Increase funding for AIS prevention and control, including RR activities.
New agency staff are not fully trained on RR plan.	Implement more regular RR training within agencies and as part of other job training. Increase promotion of the plan to state agencies and organizations.
Lack of a unified reporting process in Pennsylvania	Work within agencies to develop an internal reporting chain for AIS that cannot be interrupted by personnel vacancies.
Lack of dedicated agency and organization staff working on aquatic invasive species issues in Pennsylvania	Seek alignment between agency-specific issues and AIS impacts to help encourage the need for dedicated staffing for invasive species.
In some cases, the actions steps in the plan are not being used by agencies and organizations to address new infestations.	Work with upper level management at state agencies to create buy-in on using the Plan and following its guidelines for rapid response.



THANK YOU!

SARA STAHLMAN

SNG121@PSU.EDU

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