



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

August 31, 2021

OFFICE OF THE
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Chair, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chair, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairs and Ranking Members:

Enclosed please find the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Great Lakes and Lake Champlain Invasive Species Program FY 2021 Implementation Plan. The GLLCISP was established within the EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office as part of the *Vessel Incident Discharge Act* (Public Law 115-282), which was enacted in December of 2018. Congress's explanatory statement accompanying the *Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021*, directed the agency to submit a GLLCISP FY 2021 implementation plan.

This implementation plan details the EPA's efforts to reduce the risk of introduction of invasive species into the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. The plan describes the agency's efforts to continue a joint strategy to emphasize prevention, early detection, and surveillance monitoring within the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain, and waterways and connecting channels just outside of these watersheds. The EPA developed this plan with federal partners, the Great Lakes Program, and the Lake Champlain Program.

If you have further questions or would like to set up a meeting to discuss this implementation plan, please contact Ed Walsh at (202) 564-4594 or walsh.ed@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Amin,
Faisal

Digitally signed
by Amin, Faisal
Date: 2021.08.31
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Faisal Amin
Chief Financial Officer

Enclosure

Great Lakes and Lake Champlain Invasive Species Program (GLLCISP)

FY 2021 Implementation Plan

Prepared by: EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office

Introduction:

The Great Lakes and Lake Champlain Invasive Species Program (GLLCISP) was established within EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office (EPA/GLNPO) as part of the Vessel Incidental Discharge Act or VIDA (P.L. 115-282). While VIDA was enacted in December 2018, Congress's explanatory statement accompanying the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, directed EPA to build on the FY 2020 GLLCISP implementation efforts to reduce the risk of introduction of invasive species into the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. The explanatory statement also directed EPA to submit a GLLCISP FY 2021 implementation plan within 180 days of enactment of the FY 2021 appropriation.

FY 2021 Explanatory Statement

[Great Lakes and Lake Champlain Invasive Species Program] "The Committees look forward to reviewing the plan, directed in Public Law 116-94, on the Agency's expected actions in fiscal year 2020 to implement the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain Invasive Species Program (GLLCISP) as authorized by the Vessel Incident Discharge Act (Public Law 115-282). In fiscal year 2021, the Committees direct the Agency to build on these implementation efforts to reduce the risk of introduction of invasive species into the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. The Agency is directed to include details of this program as part of the Agency's operating plan and to submit a GLLCISP implementation plan for fiscal year 2021 within 180 days of enactment of this Act."

The FY 2021 appropriation included: 1) \$330M to EPA for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and 2) \$15M to EPA for the Lake Champlain Geographic Program. The accompanying House Report 116-448 directed EPA to use funds "from the appropriate Geographic Program" to build on earlier GLLCISP implementation efforts.

FY 2021 GLLCISP Implementation Plan:¹

In FY 2021, EPA will utilize \$51.9M of GLRI funds and \$775,000 of Lake Champlain Geographic Program funds on Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) activities (summarized in Table 1) that specifically address the eight authorized purposes of the GLLCISP and result in substantial benefits to both the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. While the \$775,000 will directly fund ANS prevention and control activities for Lake Champlain, the extensive GLRI-funded efforts, while directly targeting ANS in the Great Lakes, also will provide a

¹ EPA developed this plan with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration; the U.S. Geological Survey; the U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration; the U.S. Coast Guard; and the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

substantial benefit to Lake Champlain by reducing primary source populations of ANS that could potentially move from the Great Lakes to Lake Champlain and bring their attendant negative impacts with them.

By way of example, EPA has partnered with the U.S. Department of Transportation Maritime Administration and other partners to develop a *Great Lakes Ballast Water Research and Development Plan*. Using Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) funds, the primary goal of the plan is to identify approaches, methods, and best available technologies that are effective at reducing the environmental risk associated with ANS that could enter the Great Lakes and also be spread via the discharge of ballast water from vessels operating within the Great Lakes system. Importantly, while reducing the likelihood of ANS entering the Great Lakes via ballast water is of obvious and substantial benefit to the Great Lakes themselves, it also is of substantial benefit to Lake Champlain, because ANS in the Great Lakes can readily spread or be transported to Lake Champlain via a variety of vectors, including, e.g., inadvertent human transport of ANS into Lake Champlain via recreational boats. In FY 2020, \$5M of GLRI funds were directed towards the *Great Lakes Ballast Water Research and Development Plan* and in FY 2021, an additional \$7.5M of GLRI funds will be so directed.

As a second example, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's *Great Lakes Aquatic Nonindigenous Species Information System* (GLANSIS) is a "one-stop shop" for the best available information to limit the introduction, spread, and impact of ANS in the Great Lakes. GLRI funds have and will continue to support this system. Largely because of GLLCISP, GLANSIS now serves as a template for a comprehensive ANS data synthesis and delivery system for Lake Champlain. Using FY 2021 Lake Champlain Geographic Program Funds, the Lake Champlain Basin Program (in collaboration with the Lake Champlain Sea Grant and University of Vermont) will develop a comprehensive tracking system to document current ANS status and distribution. Collaborators from GLANSIS are assisting with the development of this system for Lake Champlain.

EPA also will use funds from the appropriate geographic program to implement targeted activities to prevent and control priority ANS in both the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. In Lake Champlain, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation and partners will continue targeted efforts to remove water chestnut infestations in Lake Champlain and its watershed. Water chestnut infestations, left unchecked, significantly choke waterways reducing native plant species, reducing oxygen levels, and reducing shoreline property values. In the Great Lakes, the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, co-chaired by EPA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will implement key activities identified in the FY 2021 Asian Carp Action Plan. Continued operation of the electric barrier in the Chicago Area Waterway System, contract fishing to reduce populations on the Illinois River, and response actions will continue to prevent bighead, silver, and black carp from entering the Great Lakes and threatening further expansion into Lake Champlain.

The implementation of the activities above, along with others identified below, continues a joint strategy to emphasize prevention, early detection, and surveillance monitoring, as well as control of injurious ANS within the Great Lakes, Lake Champlain, and waterways

and connecting channels just outside of these watersheds. New technology development and sharing of lessons learned through species-specific initiatives is planned to provide additional tools to local managers at the frontlines of ANS efforts in both watersheds. Species-specific and collaborative initiatives² were instrumental to identify the portfolio of activities needed in FY 2021 to maintain and build upon successes in recent years. The ANS activities identified in this strategy are based on successful, systematic approaches implemented by federal, state, tribal, and local partners over the last decade in both the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. The ANS activities also directly support the objectives in the GLRI Action Plan III or the Lake Champlain Opportunities for Action following long-standing planning and budgeting processes among appropriate partners.

² Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, Phragmites Collaborative, Hydrilla Collaborative, Great Lakes and Northeast Aquatic Nuisance Species Regional Panels, and others.

Table 1. Funding levels (\$ thousands), selected species breakouts (*italicized*), and joint benefits of planned Great Lakes and Lake Champlain ANS activities³ in FY 2021.

Aquatic Nuisance Species Activity	GLRI	EPA Lake Champlain Geographic Program	Joint Great Lakes & Lake Champlain Benefits
Early Detection and Surveillance Monitoring <i>Asian Carp</i> <i>Other ANS Species</i>	\$11,900 \$6,800 \$5,100	\$0	Sampling methods and technologies developed, as well as study designs piloted in the Great Lakes, can be efficiently transferred to Lake Champlain. Early detection of ANS in Great Lakes reduces chances of introduction to Lake Champlain.
ANS Tracking and Reporting	\$300	\$60	Great Lakes ANS data tracking and delivery system serves as a template for Lake Champlain.
Maintaining ANS Watch-Lists, Public Outreach, and Other Prevention Activities <i>Asian Carp</i> <i>Other ANS Species</i>	\$4,500 \$1,900 \$2,600	\$400	Mutually beneficial reduction in ANS spread and prevention between watersheds.
ANS Control Activities <i>Asian Carp</i> <i>Sea Lamprey</i> <i>Hydrilla</i> <i>Water Chestnut</i> <i>Other ANS Species</i>	\$17,200 \$6,200 \$2,200 \$1,000 \$7,800	\$90	Control activities within Great Lakes watershed, connecting channels, and waterways reduces source populations of ANS available to potentially invade Lake Champlain through connecting channels and waterways and via human transport.
Technology Development, Testing, and Collaborative ANS Initiatives <i>Asian Carp</i> <i>Ballast Water</i> <i>Sea Lamprey</i> <i>Invasive Crayfish</i> <i>Other ANS Species</i>	\$18,000 \$6,100 \$9,300 \$1,000 \$1,000 \$600	\$225	Species-specific technologies developed for detection and control in Great Lakes have undergone extensive lab and field testing. Key Lake Champlain agencies and entities can now evaluate these technologies for potential expansion into Lake Champlain.
Total	\$51,900.0	\$775.0	

³ Summary includes only planned activities from federal funding appropriated to EPA for the GLRI and for the Lake Champlain Geographic Program.