
Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative

Charter

Approved by Advisory Committee members September 2016

The purpose of this charter is to define the mission and vision for the Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative (GLPC), define member roles, and outline procedures.

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1. Issue Statement

Non-native *Phragmites* infestations negatively affect wetland resources both along Great Lakes shorelines and in inland wetlands and shorelines. This issue crosses local, state, provincial, federal, and tribal jurisdictions across two countries. Existing guidelines and priorities have been employed within particular regions or organizations to address this issue.

2. Purpose of the Great Lakes Phragmites Collaborative (GLPC)

The purpose of the GLPC is to harness the capacities, expertise, and abilities of all partners in support of common conservation outcomes for wetland ecosystems in the Great Lakes basin that are invaded by or threatened by the invasion of non-native *Phragmites*. It also serves as a strategic forum for collaboration, coordination, and integration. Currently, there are many groups and individuals focused on the *Phragmites* issue, and connections will be made between the GLPC and these groups where

overlapping interests or project work may be anticipated or planned. The GLPC will serve the region by developing shared goals and an agenda to reach those goals, as well as a shared measurement system with which to measure progress toward those goals.

3. Vision and Mission

These statements were approved by the GLPC Advisory Committee in 2015.

Vision: Great Lakes wetland ecosystems and their services are not degraded by non-native *Phragmites*.

Mission: Facilitate communication and collaboration that leads to research and effective management of non-native *Phragmites* within the Great Lakes region.

4. Relationship to other Groups

The GLPC is a non-regulatory and voluntary collaborative comprised of agencies and organizations that work on wetland and invasive-species issues. The GLPC supports and does not abrogate or diminish the authorities and responsibilities of partners or member agencies. It is anticipated that members and partners will engage in those targets, goals, and objectives that are important to them and that align with their respective missions and resources.

5. Backbone and Core Team

The Backbone serves as the coordinating entity that supports the collaborative through logistical support, coordination, and direct activities (resource development). Staff at the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) will serve as the backbone, until they are not able to perform this role or transfer their duties to another entity. Staff will be maintained at the GLC as funded by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative grant to USGS. Funding will be pursued to maintain the GLPC as needed. Direct supervision will be provided by the GLC. Backbone staff will coordinate with U.S. Geological Survey – Great Lakes Science Center staff or contractors (maintained at and direct supervision provided by USGS) at monthly meetings and via email to maintain programming momentum. Together, backbone and USGS staff form the Core Team.

Backbone staff will:

- a) Provide logistical support for meetings, calls, and communications for GLPC committees
- b) Maintain the GLPC website, listserv, social media, and other communication outlets for partners and stakeholders
- c) Develop products and perform outreach on behalf of the GLPC

Core Team staff will:

- a) Meet monthly to collaborate, discuss GLPC progress, and maintain the momentum of the collaborative
- b) Work on individual tasks as needed, to support the functioning of the GLPC

6. Advisory Committee (AC)

The AC serves an important role in providing recommendations and advice to the GLPC. Members are selected to represent their stakeholder group and geographic region, to provide expert advice on collaborative direction and resource development, and to serve as communicators to share GLPC

information and resources to their stakeholders. There is no limit to the number of AC members, but the group will be maintained at approximately 30 people. Participation on the AC is by invitation only (as invited by the Core Team), but anyone can nominate themselves or others to be considered.

Consistent participation is expected of AC members. Members will:

- a) Provide input on tools, resources, and programs as requested, representing the interests of their organization or stakeholders
- b) Serve as a conduit for information from the GLPC to their colleagues and stakeholders (forward information as appropriate, ensure they are kept informed, etc.)
- c) Serve as a conduit for information to the GLPC (represent the challenges, needs, and successes of their organization and stakeholders)
- d) Commit to the following:
 - i. 2-hour web meetings, twice each year, to network with other AC members, share relevant updates and information, and provide input on items presented by the Core Team or Steering Committee. *If unable to attend, advance notice should be provided and/or a designee sent to represent the member*
 - ii. 1 hour/month stakeholder communication

There are no term limits, but participation in the group will be evaluated annually in December. Membership is at will, based on the continued interest of the member and the Core Team, in collaboration with the Steering Committee. If it is determined that a member is unable to participate at a sufficient level, the Core Team will request that they recommend a replacement.

Expert Observers

- a) A small number of Expert Observers may be maintained by the Core Team
- b) These members will be invited to all AC meetings and included on AC communications, but have no obligation to participate, and do not count in quorums or votes
- c) Their participation will primarily be associated with specific requests requiring their expertise

7. Steering Committee (SC)

The SC serves a more involved role than the AC, spearheading new initiatives, and developing ideas for improving the performance of the GLPC. Members are selected based on their expertise and willingness to take on additional responsibilities. SC initiatives and decisions will not be made unilaterally, but will be shared with the AC for additional input and approval. The SC will consist of 3-6 members. Participation on the SC is by invitation only (as invited by the Core Team), but anyone can nominate themselves or others to be considered.

Steering Committee Members will:

- a) Maintain membership on the AC (above)
- b) Refine the initial vision and mission statements based on GLPC participant feedback if necessary

- c) Establish mutually agreed upon goals and associated objectives for the GLPC
- d) Play an active role in developing a path (actions) for the GLPC to reach its goals and objectives
- e) Pursue mutually agreed upon measurements for assessing progress toward goals and objectives
- f) Continue to refine priorities and targets as needed
- g) Commit to the following:
 - i. 2-hour webinars, twice each year (AC – see details above)
 - ii. 2-hour webinars, 3 times each year (SC), to discuss specific GLPC initiatives and ideas for improving the GLPC. *If unable to attend, advance notice should be provided and/or a designee sent to represent the member.*
 - iii. 1 hour/month stakeholder communication

There are no term limits, but participation in the group will be evaluated annually in December. Membership is at will, based on the continued interest of the member and the Core Team. If it is determined that a member is unable to participate at a sufficient level, the Core Team will request that they recommend a replacement.

8. Ad-Hoc Subcommittees and Task-Teams

Ad-hoc subcommittees and task-teams may be formed to address particular issues. Core Team staff will provide support services. Objectives, membership, and member responsibilities will be determined by the subcommittee or task-team. Subcommittees focus on a particular subject area that can be maintained over a longer time (i.e. research), while task-teams focus on a particular project with a defined end goal (i.e. case studies). There is no limit to the number of subcommittees or task-teams. They can be initiated by any member of the AC or Core Team, and will dissolve themselves if no longer needed.

9. Operating Principles

- a) Convening Meetings
 - i. The Core Team will convene meetings via conference call and in-person as needed, and will serve as chair unless an alternative chair has been selected by the Advisory Committee. Meetings may take the form of work groups, task forces, focus groups, willing collaborators, and similar.
 - ii. A call for meeting topics and agenda items from members will occur at least three weeks before any meeting date. Meeting topics and an agenda will be established and sent out at least one week prior to meetings.
- b) Communication
 - i. The Core Team will distribute draft meeting notes to all meeting participants within one week following the meeting.
 - ii. Comments and corrections on draft notes are to be provided by meeting participants to the Core Team at least one week before the next meeting.

- iii. The Core Team will facilitate the review of previous meeting notes at the beginning of each meeting. Notes will be available upon request.
- iv. Members are expected to participate as representatives of their organizations and geographies, voicing the opinions of and representing the interests of their stakeholders to the best of their abilities.

c) Meeting Actions

- i. After all meeting agenda items have been addressed, time will be provided for all in attendance to provide additional content or considerations
- ii. Meetings will end with a clear understanding of expectations and assignments for next steps, including individuals responsible and due dates
- iii. The Core Team will keep a permanent record of meeting attendees, key issues raised, and actions required

d) Decision Making

- i. A quorum of >50% of group (advisory, steering, ad-hoc, etc) members must participate to make decisions. Decisions can be made in person, via phone/webinar, or via email/web-survey.
- ii. Each agency represented is given one vote on the AC and on the SC.
- iii. The Core Team will assist the GLPC committees in generating mutually agreed upon recommendations, decisions, and actions.
- iv. The GLPC will strive to make decisions by consensus and clearly state and document individual member's concerns in cases where a "live-with" consensus level was reached, at minimum.
- v. If, after due diligence, consensus cannot be reached, decisions can be made by a simple majority, with all dissenting opinions clearly documented.

10. Participants

As the structure of the GLPC evolves, participation is also expected to evolve. The GLPC will strive toward broad representation, including a diversity of geographies within the Great Lakes Basin, all levels of government (US, and Canadian), NGO's, and others. Current participants can be found on the GLPC website. The composition of the committees will be evaluated annually in December, and invitations will be made to individuals or organizations to help eliminate gaps in representation. Anyone is able to suggest organizations or entities that should be represented.