

DRAFT South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force
Next Steps: Early Detection Inventory

TO: South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group
FROM: Invasive Species Advisory Body
RE: Inventory of Current Detection Programs and Tools

Purpose

The Invasive Species Advisory Body (ISAB) requests the Working Group (WG) direct them to bolster detection monitoring and response teams by developing response and removal strategies in the South Florida Ecosystem. The first step is an inventory of existing detection programs and tools.

Background

As part of the duties outlined in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020, an initial list of priority species for prevention and a set of associated recommendations were prepared by the ISAB and accepted by the WG last year. One of the recommendations advised the WG to prepare in advance for species entering the ecosystem by “bolstering detection monitoring and response teams.”

Bolstering Detection Monitoring and Response Teams: Next Steps

In order to address this recommendation, it is important to first understand how and where detection is currently occurring in the South Florida Ecosystem. The proposed inventory of existing detection programs and tools can then be used to identify strengths and opportunities to improve agency response capabilities when a new species or incipient infestation is detected.

Since detection efforts are designed to find incipient infestations, the inventory will also inform and support response for those species listed as priorities for Eradication under Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR). The University of Florida and U.S. Geological Survey is spearheading a scientifically based process to prioritize species that includes impact evaluations for the ecosystem and restoration indicators. The EDRR priority species list is expected later this year.

Summary

As available detection tools and programs are inventoried, and the Eradication priority species list is created through concurrent efforts, collaborating agencies will have a clearer understanding of detection needs and how existing programs can be optimized to meet regional early detection objectives. Both efforts are key to responding to new threats quickly and building a coordinated EDRR strategy for the South Florida Ecosystem. The ISAB is uniquely qualified to begin this inventory process. Therefore, the ISAB is requesting the WG accept their recommended next steps toward bolstering detection monitoring and response teams by developing response and removal strategies in the South Florida Ecosystem.