

Great Lakes Early Detection and Monitoring Program – Data Sharing Protocols

The Great Lakes Early Detection and Monitoring (GL EDM) Program combines traditional fish sampling gears with genetic metabarcoding to detect aquatic invasive species before they become established, providing an early-warning system. Because the Great Lakes basin spans multiple state jurisdictions, tribal treaty-protected waters, and international boundaries, effective surveillance depends on close coordination between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and its state, tribal, and NGO partners. Data sharing protocols are essential to this collaborative model by clarifying data ownership and access rights, ensuring the timely communication of critical data to partners, and establishing requirements for making data publicly available.

Creating

A data sharing protocol should be created for each jurisdiction in which the USFWS collects samples and with each entity that collects samples for the GL EDM program. Data sharing protocols will be developed before any samples or data are collected. A new data sharing agreement can be created by any programmatic staff but is typically generated by the appropriate FWCO.

Steps for developing a data sharing agreement:

1. Open the provided [template](#). Save as “Year_GLEDMDDataSharingProtocol_Jurisdiction/Entity_v#” in the Metabarcoding Team folder: Documents/General/Data Sharing/Developing. Version # is specific to year.
2. Fill in the needed information.
3. When the draft is complete, alert the GL EDM coordinator that a draft is ready for review.
4. The GL EDM coordinator will review the draft and work with the appropriate FWCO on edits.
5. The draft needs to be reviewed with the jurisdiction/entity either in a virtual meeting or in person. This review can be conducted by either the GL EDM Coordinator or the creators of the protocol. Date of review should be notated in Appendix A.
6. The jurisdiction/entity will have two weeks (or longer if agreed upon) to provide comments, concerns, or additional information. These are to be sent to the GL EDM Coordinator or designee of the GL EDM Coordinator.
7. The GL EDM Coordinator or designee will address comments and concerns and incorporate additional information. When completed, the date will be notated behind the version in Appendix B.
8. The finalized document will be saved as a PDF and sent to people listed in Table 1 of the document.
9. The finalized version of the word document and PDF will be moved to the appropriate year folder in Metabarcoding Team/Documents/General/Data Sharing

Already Created

Created data sharing protocols are updated and reviewed annually until they are officially terminated. The GL EDM coordinator will make sure all protocols are either updated or terminated.

Steps for continuing a data sharing agreement:

1. The appropriate FWCO should be the first to review the agreement. Open the most recent data sharing protocol. Save as “*Year_GLEDMDDataSharingProtocol_Jurisdiction/Entity_v#*” in the Metabarcoding Team folder: Documents/General/Data Sharing/Developing. Version # is specific to year.
2. Verify and update the information.
3. When the update is complete, alert the GL EDM Coordinator that it is ready for review.
4. The GL EDM coordinator will review the draft and work with the appropriate FWCO on edits.
5. The draft needs to be reviewed with the jurisdiction/entity either in a virtual meeting or in person. This review can be conducted by either the GL EDM Coordinator or the creators of the protocol. Date of review should be notated in Appendix A.
6. The jurisdiction/entity will have two weeks (or longer if agreed upon) to provide comments, concerns, or additional information. These are to be sent to the GL EDM Coordinator or designee of the GL EDM Coordinator.
7. The GL EDM Coordinator or designee will address comments and concerns and incorporate additional information. When completed, the date will be notated behind the version in Appendix B.
8. The finalized document will be saved as a PDF and sent to people listed in Table 1 of the document.
9. The finalized version of the word document and PDF will be moved to the appropriate year folder in Metabarcoding Team/Documents/General/Data Sharing

Amending

Data sharing protocols can be amended any time during the year. Reasons for amending a data sharing protocol may include: new personnel have been added to the project, project objectives have changed, additional water bodies were added, additional data types will now be collected, or some of the data which was previously identified to be collected and shared will no longer be collected.

Steps for amending a data sharing agreement:

1. Open the most recent data sharing protocol. Save as “*Year_GLEDMDDataSharingProtocol_Jurisdiction/Entity_v#*” in the Metabarcoding Team folder: Documents/General/Data Sharing/Developing. Version # is specific to year.
2. Amend the document using track changes mode.
3. When the amendment is complete, alert the GL EDM Coordinator.
4. Partner communication should occur for most changes. Changes that do not need further communication prior to finalizing the amendment include alterations to points of contact, grammatical changes, or partner-initiated modifications.
5. The finalized document will be saved as a PDF and sent to people listed in Table 1 of the document.

6. The finalized version of the word document and PDF will be moved to the appropriate year folder in Metabarcoding Team/Documents/General/Data Sharing

Terminating

Data sharing protocols can be terminated at any time by either the USFWS or partner. While terminations do not require a justification by either party, it is strongly recommended to provide a reason such as sampling will no longer occur in a jurisdiction or the scope of work has changed significantly.

For USFWS, the GL EDM Coordinator will send the partner an email stating that the USFWS is terminating the data sharing protocol. Upon confirmation of receiving the email, the GL EDM Coordinator will update Appendix C, save a copy of the termination email, and save a copy of the confirmation. These three documents will be saved in the appropriate year folder in Metabarcoding Team/Documents/General/Data Sharing.

Partners can terminate the protocol in writing with the GL EDM Coordinator. The GL EDM Coordinator will confirm receipt of termination request with the partner, update Appendix C, save a copy of the termination email, and save a copy of the confirmation. These three documents will be saved in the appropriate year folder in Metabarcoding Team/Documents/General/Data Sharing.