Goal: In light of the co-option of invasive species messaging by various political campaigns and the ongoing conflation of invasive species work and xenophobia, modify our invasive species messaging to disentangle our message from anti-immigration messaging, clarify our focus on protection of existing species and ecosystem services, and the local impacts of invasive species rather than their origin.

Suggestions:

* Use the phrase “invasive species” instead of “invasives”
* Consider shifting to the phrase “community science” instead of “citizen science”: do we only want citizens?
* Emphasize the impacts of invasive species rather than their country of origin
  + If country of origin is included on fact sheets, etc., list it below information about impacts
  + If unsure of the origin of a species, explain that many of our invasive species come from Eurasia (rather than “Asia”) because we share a similar climate
  + When introducing the topic, mention that 99% of introduced plants are not considered invasive- it is about impact, not origin
  + Explain insect-plant/ ecosystem significance of native vs. introduced species as part of the explanation of prioritizing native species.
    - E.g., monarch caterpillars evolved with milkweed and are able to digest and utilize the toxins produced by milkweed, but cannot properly digest the toxins found in non-native swallowwort, which causes caterpillar mortality
* Point out that many of our native species are invasive in other countries.
  + Goldenrod is invasive in Europe and Asia
  + Ragweed is invasive in Europe and Asia and is a health problem
  + Poison ivy is invasive in Europe
* Use analogies that are unlikely to distance anyone in the audience
  + Zombies!
  + Medical- invasive species are a disease and we want to protect the body/ ecosystem
  + Consider whether analogies and slogans could be misconstrued out of context
    - “#stoptheinvasion is now primarily used as an anti-immigration message
    - Always provide context!
  + Emphasize protection of species/ ecosystems rather than killing of invasive species
  + Focus on specific, action-oriented directives
    - Clean, Drain, Dry
    - Play, Clean, Go
* Whenever possible, check in with people who may feel marginalized by our work/ rhetoric and get their feedback so that we can improve the clarity of our messaging.
  + This is the most important and hardest component on this list! There has been little of this, that we know of, so far, and it is a crucial piece.
* Remember- *intention is irrelevant*. If we are making others feel unsafe and unwanted in our outreach, it does not matter that our intentions were good.