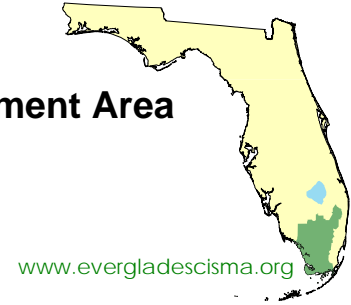


Everglades Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area 2008 Annual Plan



Introduction

This one-year plan is intended to serve as the blueprint for cooperative efforts within the Everglades Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) during fiscal year 2008. The elements of the plan were developed during the 2007 Everglades Invasive Species Summit, held at Florida International University between 25-27 July 2007. In a collaborative spirit, invasive species managers and researchers from governmental agencies, tribal groups, and other entities shared knowledge and progress in invasive species control efforts and worked to identify potential cooperative activities that could further region-wide goals of invasive species management efforts.

This is the first annual plan for the newly-formed Everglades CISMA, but many of the proposed activities arise from on-going collaborations and well-established control programs. The plan is not intended to supersede, nor should it contradict, individual invasive species control programs. Rather, the plan should compliment efforts of participating groups by improving communication, increasing knowledge and technology transfer, and pooling talent and resources to combat invasive species in a regional context.

Elements of the annual plan are arranged into five broad categories: 1) coordination & integration, 2) detection, 3) collaboration & reporting, 4) research, 5) education & training. Given that the Everglades CISMA is still organizing and formalizing agreements, many of the 2008 plan elements are focused on developing partnerships and cooperative programs. It is envisioned that the Everglades Invasive Species Summit will serve as a forum to report on the progress of CISMA activities proposed in this plan, as well as individual invasive species programs. Further, it is hoped that Summit participants will help to develop the next year's cooperative plan.

A. Coordination and Integration

1. Information Management

1. Develop agreement among CISMA members to enter project information into the ECOSTEMS project tracking database on an annual basis. This item is included in the current draft of the CISMA MOU, which is under review by potential signatories. Once approved, project managers will be asked to input invasive exotic plant project information, including task descriptions, project dates, funding, agency affiliation for each task

Taskers: All MOU signatories (Due Oct 15)

2. Pursue WEEDDAR as a common plant treatment database. The SFWMD is now in its second year implementing the WEEDDAR (Weed Data And Reporting) database program. The oracle-based application is designed to manage and analyze invasive plant control data for SFWMD staff and contractors. USACE, USNPS, USFWS, and FDEP staff are coordinating with SFWMD staff to determine the feasibility of adopting WEEDDAR as a standard data management application. Standardization of data management will greatly increase the efficiency of information transfer and improve program interoperability. This item is included in the current draft of the CISMA MOU.

Taskers: Francois LaRoche, Jon Lane (Due Aug 1)

2. Biological Control

1. Prioritize locations for biological control agent releases. Land managers within the CISMA who are engaged in various control activities and monitoring efforts will coordinate with USDA-ARS and UF-IFAS researchers to identify optimal release locations for biological control agents. Prior to November 2007, CISMA land managers should provide maps of planned treatment areas and prescribed burn units to biological control researchers. This information will help locate optimal areas for agent releases. In future years, it is hoped that this coordination can be completed during the Summit operations workshop.

Taskers: Jim Burch, Hillary Cooley, Alyssa Jacobs, Francois LaRoche, Misti Little, Jim Cuda, Bill Overholt, Paul Pratt (Due Jan 30)

3. Contractor Standardization

1. Pursue using SFWMD Contractors' Standard Operating Procedures. SFWMD is finalizing a SOP document for invasive plant control contractors. To increase consistency between agencies, the CISMA will explore utilizing the SFWMD SOP as a standard for all CISMA entities. Francois LaRoche will coordinate with other agencies to develop a standard SOP, which can then be amended by each CISMA member to meet individual needs.

Tasker: Francois LaRoche (Due May 1)

4. Engineering Prevention

1. Initiate dialogue with agencies and their representatives to pursue project element designs that minimize new introductions. CISMA members involved in CERP-related construction projects will make contact with project planners and designers to discuss potential engineering solutions to invasive species prevention. Candidate Everglades restoration projects for consideration include: the Tamiami Trail improvements under DECOMP and the Eastern Everglades Retention Areas.

Taskers: Jon Lane, Jeff Kline (Due Mar 1)

5. Inter-agency Synchronization

1. Work with DOT and FP&L to identify cooperative projects. Steering committee members will meet to discuss FY08 projects that are near property boundaries in order to identify coordination opportunities that will enhance individual efforts. For example, linear projects (e.g., roadways) could synchronize their treatment activities with adjacent land owners in order to reduce offsite propagule pressures.

Taskers: All Steering Committee Members (Due Jan 30)

B. Detection

1. Regional Assessments

1. Complete CISMA-wide aerial sketch map and analysis of invasive plant distributions in 2008. Digital aerial sketch mapping consists of "on-the-fly" mapping of invasive plant locations from low-flying aircraft using an integrated system of tablet PCs or laptops, specialized

mapping software, and GPS technology. The SFWMD is mandated under the Everglades Forever Act (EFA) to monitor invasive plant distributions within the Everglades Protection Area. Through collaborations with NPS staff, the SFWMD plans to utilize this technology to meet the monitoring requirements under the EFA on a biennial basis.

Taskers: Dan Clark, Tony Pernas, LeRoy Rodgers, Jonathan Taylor (Due Jun 1)

2. Early Detection

1. Develop web-based invasive species reporting system. A web-based reporting system for non-native species observations in the Everglades Cisma and surrounding areas will be developed through partnerships between the National Park Service, the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, and the University of Georgia (Bugwood Network)

Taskers: Chuck Barger, Tony Pernas (Due Oct. 1)

2. Develop email distribution list for the early detection reporting system. An email list of interested parties will be established for the evergladescisma.org website. This should include specialists with FFWCC, members of the Aquatic Nuisance Species Task Force, and members of the Wildlife Society.

Taskers: LeRoy Rodgers (Due Oct. 1)

3. Identify existing sources of early detection information. Identify key groups and websites that report sightings, ranges, populations, infestations, etc. (e.g. Pest Alert, bird watching groups, herpetological societies, HABITATTITUDE, Protect Your Waters, NAS Alert System). Information sources will be periodically monitored for new observations of potential threats.

Taskers: LeRoy Rodgers (Due Aug 31)

4. Develop reporting specifications for website. Website developers will determine information needed to best collect and report information on unknown species. For example, the Bugwood Network has developed a protocol for photographing subjects.

Taskers: Chuck Barger, Tony Pernas (Due Aug 31)

5. Develop web crawler for early detection information. An automated script will be developed to survey identified websites for update information on species observations in South Florida. For example, the crawler will monitor web boards for amateur naturalists to identify new entries for non-indigenous species.

Taskers: Chuck Barger, Rapid Identification and Assessment Team (Due Oct. 31)

C. Collaboration & Reporting

1. Annual Report

1. Complete annual report for the Everglades Cisma. Steering committee representatives will prepare an annual report outlining accomplishments specific to cooperative efforts of the Cisma. The report will be posted on the Cisma website and submitted to the South Florida Environmental Report for inclusion in the Everglades Module section of the invasive species chapter.

Taskers: Tony Pernas, LeRoy Rodgers (Due Jul 1)

2. Establish a standardized template for end-of-year reporting. To facilitate more efficient tabulation of annual Cisma accomplishments, reporting guidelines will be established and made into a standardized template for each individual Cisma entity to complete. The information can then be compiled for annual reporting by report editors.

Taskers: Jon Lane, Jonathan Taylor (Due Jan 31)

3. Include regulation and enforcement entities in the Everglades Invasive Species Summit. CISMA members will develop a law enforcement/regulatory session for the 2008 Summit and invite participation from “badges” and “guns” of state, federal, and tribal entities.

Taskers: Bill Thomas, Misty Little, Alyssa Jacobs, and Jenny Ketterlin (Due Jan 31)

2. Collaboration

1. Identify funding opportunities. A list of potential funding opportunities for CISMA-like entities will be submitted to the steering committee. Funding for future collaborative projects could then be sought for the CISMA.

Taskers: Chuck Bargerion, Janet Clark (Due Oct 31)

2. Create list of funding available from CISMA-like organizations.

Taskers: Chuck Bargerion and Janet Clark (Oct 31)

D. Research

1. Coordination

1. Generate a list of scientists currently engaged in research within the CISMA. The Research Sub-Committee will create and maintain a list of researchers that study invasive species within or have applicability to the CISMA. The research Sub-Committee will strive to improve communication between land managers and scientists by employing tools (i.e. Ecostems, CISMA website) to distribute research information to CISMA members and other interested parties. The Sub-Committee will also facilitate posting the locations of research sites for improved communication between agencies.

Tasks: Research Sub-Committee members (Due Dec 31)

2. Inform and coordinate other research-promoting entities of the Sub Committee's activities. The Research Sub-Committee will identify various groups that promote or support research in Florida. The committee will establish contact and regularly update the various groups concerning the CISMA research efforts and seek collaborative opportunities.

Tasks: Paul Pratt, Dan Clark (Due Mar 1)

3. Identify research expertise and funding opportunities in support of the research gaps (see Research Workshop 1-8). (see Research Workshop 1-8). The Research Sub-Committee will develop and maintain a list of funding opportunities. The committee will use the lists research gaps, scientists and funding to promote additional invasive species research that is directly beneficial to the CISMA. The committee will request CISMA endorsement or support for select research proposals.

Tasks: Research Sub-Committee Members (Due Mar 1)

2. Needs and Gaps

1. Identify critical knowledge gaps. The Research Sub-Committee will develop a priority list of all taxa based on knowledge gaps and not on control needs. This will help researchers direct their efforts towards critical information needed to understand invasive species in Florida.

Taskers: Paul Pratt, LeRoy Rodgers, Steve Friedman, Ken Langeland (Due Dec 1)

2. Develop list of priority animals for SFWMD tree island surveys. A request for a list of priority invasive animals within the CISMA was made by Steve Friedman, SFWMD. The committee accepted the assignment and Dr. Doren volunteered to generate the list with assistance from other experts.

Tasker: Bob Doren (Due Aug.31)

E. Outreach

1. Training

1. Conduct FDOT training for invasive species identification and reporting protocols. Recognizing the early detection benefits that field staff can provide, the CISMA proposes to conduct training seminars for FDOT employees that are frequently in the field. The training objectives will include plant and animal identification, distribution of educational materials, and explaining voluntary reporting mechanisms such as the web-based reporting system.

Taskers: Tony Pernas, LeRoy Rodgers (Due Jan 30)

2. Education and Awareness

1. Form ad hoc educational committee to develop educational materials or activities for distribution.

Tasker: Ken Langeland (Due Mar 1)

2. Participate in the review and updating of the 2008 Pet Amnesty Day supplement. CISMA members will assist FFWCC and USNPS staff in revising the newspaper supplement for the 2008 South Florida Pet

Amnesty Day. Assistance will be coordinated through Skip Snow and distributed to members as needed and according to area of expertise.

Tasker: Skip Snow (Due Feb 15)

3. Develop CISMA display for outreach events. A CISMA information display will be created for use in various outreach and professional events. For FY08, this will include the South Florida Pet Amnesty Day and the annual Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council symposium.

Taskers: Dan Clark, Tony Pernas (Due Dec. 1)

4. Develop CISMA artwork. The CISMA will develop a logo, letterhead, and marketing items. The logo graphic will be commissioned through a art competition with students at Florida International University. Logo design specifications for the TAME logo will be used. The CISMA steering committee will select the winning design.

Taskers: Bob Doren, Paul Pratt, Kristina Serbesoff-King (Due Feb 15)