Cooperative Weed Management Areas: What are they and how can you start one?

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Overview

- What is a Cooperative Weed Management Area?
- Why form a CWMA?
- CWMAs in the West
- The development of CWMAs in the East
- How to organize a CWMA
- Other resources
What is a CWMA?

The term CWMA, or Cooperative Weed Management Area, refers to a local organization that integrates all invasive plant management resources across jurisdictional boundaries in order to benefit entire communities.
What is a CWMA?

• Local weed management organization
• Led by a steering committee
• Formally organized under agreement
• Facilitates cooperation and coordination
• Networks across all jurisdictional boundaries

A CWMA is a formal agreement between parties that can be a long-term strategy for a long-term problem.
There is no one right way....

There is no one right way to form a CWMA and no formal certification of such groups. No matter how a partnership was formed or what it is called, it is considered a CWMA if it has all these elements:

- Local area
- Focused on invasive plant (or invasive species) management
- Led by a steering committee
- Organized under agreement, with a defined plan
- Facilitates cooperation and coordination
- Crosses jurisdictional boundaries
What do CWMAs do?

Education – Awareness

Invasive Plant Facts for Gardeners and Homeowners

What Every Gardener and Homeowner Needs to Know About Invasive Plants

Invasive plants are wreaking havoc in our public parks, nature preserves, and farmland. Gardeners can play a critical role in stopping them by education and awareness.
What do CWMAs do?

Mapping & Monitoring

2004 Map Consolidation Weed Inventory

Legend:
- Land Rivers CWM
- Species:
  - Canada thistle
  - Russian knapweed
  - Scotch Thistle
  - black henbane
  - bull thistle
  - diffuse knapweed
  - field bindweed
  - mouse-tongue
  - leafy spurge
  - musk thistle
  - poison hemlock
  - puncturevine
  - rush sandclove weed
  - spotted knapweed
  - thistles
  - white/thin-martens
- Streams
- Roads
- CWM areas

[Map image]

[Photograph of people in field with a grid]

[Photograph of leafy green plants]
What do CWMAs do?

Prevention

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!
Prevent the transport of nuisance species. Clean all recreational equipment. 
www.ProtectYourWaters.net

Boot Brush Stations
What do CWMAs do?

Early Detection & Rapid Response

**Invasive Plants of the Future**

- Nipping 'Em in the Bud...
- The next wood invasion is Wisconsin.

Early Detection & Rapid Response

**KEEP A LOOKOUT**

*For Now INVASIVE PLANTS in the Midwest!*

To report a sighting, please contact: www.mipn.org/EDRRContacts.html

**WI Invasive Plants Reporting & Prevention**
What do CWMAs do?

Control & Management
Why Form a CWMA?

• They cross boundaries.

• CWMAs allow partners to share and leverage limited resources.

• CWMAs are highly visible.

• They focus attention on the problem of invasive species.

• They provide an early detection and rapid response network.

• CWMAs help secure funding for invasive plant projects.
Cooperative Weed Management Areas in the West

Coverage by CWMAs and/or county weed districts in the West, 2005

Note: Estimates provided by state weed coordinators
Highlights of Accomplishments for California Weed Management Areas, 2001-2004

- The eradication of 2,015 populations of high priority weed infestations;
- The treatment of more than 128,421 acres of high priority weed infestations;
- The receipt of $7,025,187 in matching funds from outside grant funding and the contribution of in-kind donations and services by WMAs valuing $9,109,946;
- The distribution of $5.6 million to 45 WMAs covering 57 counties;
- The development of new local partnerships between public agencies, private landowners, agriculturalists and conservationists, with outreach programs reaching 88,803 people; and
- Attendance by 6,781 people at regular weed management meetings throughout the state.

(from report on California’s Noxious Weed Management Area Support Program, California Dept. of Food and Agriculture, July 2006)
Our goal is to increase coverage by CWMAs in the East.
The CWMA Approach

Long Island Invasive Species MA

- Formed in 2001

- Along with Adirondack Park Invasive Plant Program, has served as a model for the development of 6 additional Partnerships for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISMs) in New York
Long Island Invasive Species MA

Accomplishments

Year 1:

• Strategic plan written
• List of invasive plant species prepared and categorized
• Weed Watchers started
Long Island Invasive Species MA

Accomplishments

Year 2:

• Assisted in drafting legislation for Invasive Species Task Force for NY
• Mapped weeds in 800-acre Pine Barrens Core Preserve
• NYS Landscape and Nursery Association adopted Codes of Conduct (for more information, see www.centerforplantconservation.org/invasives/codesN.html)
• Wipe out Weeds poster contest in elementary schools
• Early Detection/Rapid Response carried out on sites of giant hogweed, black swallow-wort, mile-a-minute vine, and others
• Researched herbicides for use against black swallow-wort
Long Island Invasive Species MA Partners

- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Brookhaven National Laboratory
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- NY State Department of Transportation
- NY Department of Environmental Conservation
- NY Office of Parks, Recreation, & Historic Preservation
- City of New York Parks & Recreation
- Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County
- Suffolk County Dept. of Parks, Recreation, and Conservation
- Nassau County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Museums
- Suffolk County Community College
- Theodore Roosevelt Sanctuary and Audubon Center
- Long Island Nursery and Landscape Association
- Long Island Central Pine Barrens Commission
- Open Space Preservation Trust
- Brooklyn Botanic Garden
- The Nature Conservancy
Organizing a CWMA

1. Choose an initial leader or champion
   • Find someone who is excited about cooperative weed management to lead the group as it forms

2. Establish geographic boundaries
Iron Furnace CWMA

- Southern Ohio: Lawrence county and parts of Scioto, Jackson and Gallia counties

- Includes:
  - Wayne National Forest, Ironton District
  - Dean State Forest
  - Cooper Hollow Wildlife Management Area
  - Crown City Wildlife Management Area
  - Lake Katherine State Nature Preserve
  - Private land
Southern Indiana CWMA
Organizing a CWMA

3. Identify potential partners and begin building support
   - Participation from each major land management entity within the boundaries of the CWMA is critical
   - Convey the importance to potential partners of using cooperative efforts to address shared problems

4. Determine common goals
   A CWMA may form around the common desire to:
   - control a specific species or group of species.
   - address a common concern, such as early detection of new invaders.
Organizing a CWMA

5. Choose a CWMA fiscal manager

• Need to establish fiscal capabilities to receive grants
• Need a federal tax ID number
• Possibly enlist a county or a Resource Conservation and Development Council (RC&D) as the fiscal manager
Organizing a CWMA

6. Hold a public meeting

- Invite all partners
- Invite all major landowners and stakeholders within your established boundaries
- Increase participation and support for your CWMA

A successful CWMA includes many agencies and individuals all working towards a common goal.
Organizing a CWMA

7. Establish a steering committee
   • Sets priorities and provides direction
   • Establishes operating procedures

8. Select a chairperson and a vice-chairperson
   • Delegate responsibility for project accountability
   • Should be in position for a minimum of two years

Aquatic Weed Identification Training Workshop, LIISMA, July 2003.
Photo courtesy of Marilyn Jordan, Long Island Invasive Species Management Area.
Organizing a CWMA

9. Develop an agreement (MOU or MOA)
   - Identify the partners and their responsibilities
   - Establish the legal authorities under which the agreement is made
   - Define the purpose
   - Describe land area covered under the agreement
Organizing a CWMA

10. Develop a strategic management plan

Clearly defines CWMA objectives and priorities for the long-term

11. Develop an annual operating plan

Identifies the goals or projects from the strategic plan to be accomplished this year

Identifies the people and resources needed to accomplish those projects
Organizing a CWMA

12. Establish and utilize committees

- Increases participation by partners and citizens that are not on the steering committee
- Broadens the base of ownership inside the community
- Perform tasks that will give more time for the steering committee to devote toward coordination and administrative duties.
Organizing a CWMA

13. Implement plans
Organizing a CWMA

14. Celebrate success and get media attention

• Utilize media and newsletters to broadcast accomplishments

• Hold an annual meeting of partners, participants, volunteers, and interested members of the public

• Prepare and distribute an annual report

• Give awards to key partners, volunteers, and elected officials
The purpose of a CWMA is to make the whole more than the sum of its parts.

By cooperating and collaborating we can improve our collective ability to prevent and control invasive plants across the landscape.

A CWMA can benefit any community – it heightens awareness, increases knowledge, and strengthens relationships.
Where to find more information

• Midwest Invasive Plant Network
  www.mipn.org, CWMA Resources
  – CWMA Cookbook: A Step-by-Step Guide on How to Develop a CWMA in the Eastern U.S.
  – Sample MOUs, strategic plans, & annual operating plans

• Center for Invasive Plant Management
  www.weedcenter.org, CWMAs