What Can a CWMA do for you?
A Look Back at the First Three Years of the River to River CWMA

Chris Evans
River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area
Case Study – River to River

- CWMA Structure
- Organization
- Projects
- Benefits
Why are CWMAs Important?

Up-to-the-fence problem
Why are CWMAs Important?

Up-to-the-fence problem

Landowner A  Landowner B
Regional Management

- Effective invasive species management should be implemented on the same scale as the infestation

- If invasive species do not recognize boundaries, **but we have to**, they automatically have the upper hand
CWMAs

• Provide a means to communicate and collaborate efforts across agencies and landowners to address invasive species at a more appropriate scale
River to River CWMA
River to River CWMA

- Formally established in 2006
- Coordinator hired in April, 2007
- Address terrestrial and aquatic non-native invasive plants in Southern Illinois
River to River CWMA Goal

“Work cooperatively in inventorying, monitoring, controlling, and preventing the spread of non-native invasive plants across jurisdictional boundaries in the 11 southern counties in Illinois.”

- RTR CWMA Memorandum of Understanding, 2006
Southernmost Counties in Illinois

- Alexander
- Gallatin
- Hardin
- Jackson
- Johnson
- Massac
- Pope
- Pulaski
- Saline
- Williamson
- Union
Need for Cooperation

“There is a bountiful seed source of many of the exotic/invasive species on the lands surrounding the Refuge, thus in order to be effective in our management plans, we must bring together a complex set of interests including private landowner, commercial, and public agencies.”

- Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, page 24
Need for CWMA

“Exotic and invasive plant species pose one of the greatest threats to the maintenance and restoration of the diverse habitats found on the Refuge.”

- Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge Comprehensive Conservation Plan, page 24

“Eradicate, control, and prevent the introduction of invasive exotic species”

- One of six primary challenges set forth at the beginning of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources State Wildlife Action Plan
Need for CWMA

“Non-native invasive species must be controlled or eradicated.”
- Shawnee National Forest, Land and Resource Management Plan

“We control invasive species because they are harming the native plants and animals we care so much about protecting.”
- The Nature Conservancy Global Invasive Species Initiative website: http://tncweeds.ucdavis.edu/
Organization

- Full time coordinator
  - Grant funded
- Steering Committee
  - Representative from each partner
  - Quarterly meetings
- Memorandum of Understanding
- Use Shawnee RC&D as umbrella group to obtain 501C(3) status
- Grant funded and project-based
Project-based approach

Objectives

Awareness
Landowner assistance
Enhance know-how
Research

Projects

GOAL
Project-Based Cooperation

► Complements, not replaces, work done by agency field staff
  ◦ Not looking to increase staff work load
  ◦ Address areas not otherwise being addressed

► Cooperation/participation at the Administration level
Project-Based Cooperation

Control
- DNR
- USFS
- USFWS
- CWMA Project

Prevention
- APHIS
- Dept of Ag
- CWMA Project

Landowner Assistance
- DNR
- NRCS
- Extension
- CWMA Project
Project-Based Cooperation
CWMA Funding Sources

- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
- National Forest Foundation
- Boat U.S. Foundation
- NRCS – Conservation Innovation Grant
- USFS State & Private Forestry
- State Wildlife Preservation Fund Grants
- State Conservation Grants
- Participatory Agreements and Challenge Cost-shares
- State Wildlife Grants
Establishment Phases

1. Education and awareness
2. Organization and capacity building
3. Implementation of coordinated control efforts
Establishment Phases

- Build upon each other
- Lay of foundation for long-term success
  - Fostering participation between CWMA members
  - Engaging other stakeholders
Education and Awareness
Education and Awareness

- Critical first stage
- Success of future stages reliant on effective education and public awareness campaign
- Allows for ‘buy-in’ from public, agency staff, and others
Town-Hall Meetings

- Aimed at engaging other stakeholders
- Dialogue about invasive species
- Input into direction of CWMA
Volunteer Trainings
Agency Trainings
Trainings/workshops

- Over 80 events held
- Over 3,000 attendees
  - Agency staff
  - Volunteers/friends groups
  - Consultants
  - Landowners
  - Students
Publications

Why Should I Care About Invasive Plants?

How Invasive Plants Impact Hunting, Fishing, Boating, Gardening, Hiking, Biking, Horseback Riding, and Other Recreational Activities in the Midwest

MIPN.org
Midwest Invasive Plant Network

Help Protect Southern Illinois' Lakes and Rivers

Stop the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species

Invasive Plants of Southern Illinois

River to River
Cooperative Weed Management Area

by Tiffany Osborne and Brad Steffen
Demonstration Plots

► Educational tool
► Field Tours
► Self-guided

Giant City State Park
Illinois Invasive Species Awareness Month
Other Methods

- Press releases
- Driving tours
- Participation in kids education events
- Booth/displays at fair
Organization and Capacity Building
Organization and Capacity Building

- Increasing technical knowledge base
- Planning and prioritization
- Establishing the CWMA as a source for information and assistance
CWMA Member Interviews

- In depth interview with representative of each CWMA member
  - Expectations
  - Focus
  - Priorities
Research

- Needs identified
- Directed, applied research
- Connect funding sources with interested researchers
Data collection

- Database of invasive species occurrences
  - 12,000 records
- Volunteer-survey program
- Directed survey efforts
Intern Program
Planning

- Determine what is the current status of invasive species management across the region
  - Who is doing what
- Identify gaps in management
- Develop plans that build upon existing work
Species Specific Conferences

August 11-12 – Carbondale, IL

www.rtrcwmaw.org/stiltgrass
Capacity building

- Develop capacity to implement plans
  - Key watersheds/landowners/species
  - Contractors capable of conducting control projects
  - Funding sources
  - Control methods
  - Equipment needs
Control and Management
Landowner assistance

- Working with landowners to control invasive species
  - Kudzu
  - Tree-of-Heaven
  - Bush Honeysuckle
- Provide technical assistance in control and development of management plans
Spread Prevention

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.
Clean all recreational equipment.

www.ProtectYourWaters.net
Early Detection Rapid Response
Management Plan Development
Strike Team

- Modeled after the National Park Service Exotic Plant Management Teams
  - Full-time employees dedicated to exotic control
  - Detailed record keeping
  - Focus on incipient infestations and pathways
Volunteer Workdays
Equipment Bank

- Tools to control invasive species
- GPS/PDAs for survey work
- Available to landowners/agencies/organizations
Coordinated efforts

- CWMA members working across the fence to address invasive species at appropriate scales
- Watershed-level projects
Summary

- Regions can benefit from the CWMA structure
  - Coordinating efforts
  - Fostering cooperation
  - Additional funding
Projects Summary

- Establishing a successful CWMA
  - Increase awareness of invasive species and CWMA
  - Buy-in from landowners and agency staff
  - Choose and implement the right projects
What Can a CWMA Do For You
Benefits - Members

- **Structure for communication**
  - Better technical know-how
  - Broader knowledge of invasive species issues
  - Prioritization of control
  - More informed choices

- **Collaborative projects**
  - Non-profit status
  - Easily share resources
  - Complementary to work already being done
**Benefits - Members**

- Provides vehicle for collaboration that goes beyond individuals
- Additional funding through collaborative projects
- Justification for control projects
- Validity to the problem of invasive species
- Reduction over time in their control costs
  - Reduced spread from adjacent lands
Benefits - Public

- Place to start
- Technical information
- Validity to the problem
- Their work is part of a larger effort
- Projects geared towards landowners
- Volunteers/projects connected easier
Benefits - Region

- Wiser use of limited resources
- Additional funding for invasive species projects
- Enhanced EDRR
- Broader understanding of invasive species’ distributions/impacts
- Dissolving of boundaries
- Reduced cost of invasive species control over time
- Enhanced spread prevention
Overall Benefit

Lessening of the negative impacts of invasive species in both the short and long term