



Hoosier National Forest Happenings



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Cooperative Weed Management Areas in Southern Indiana

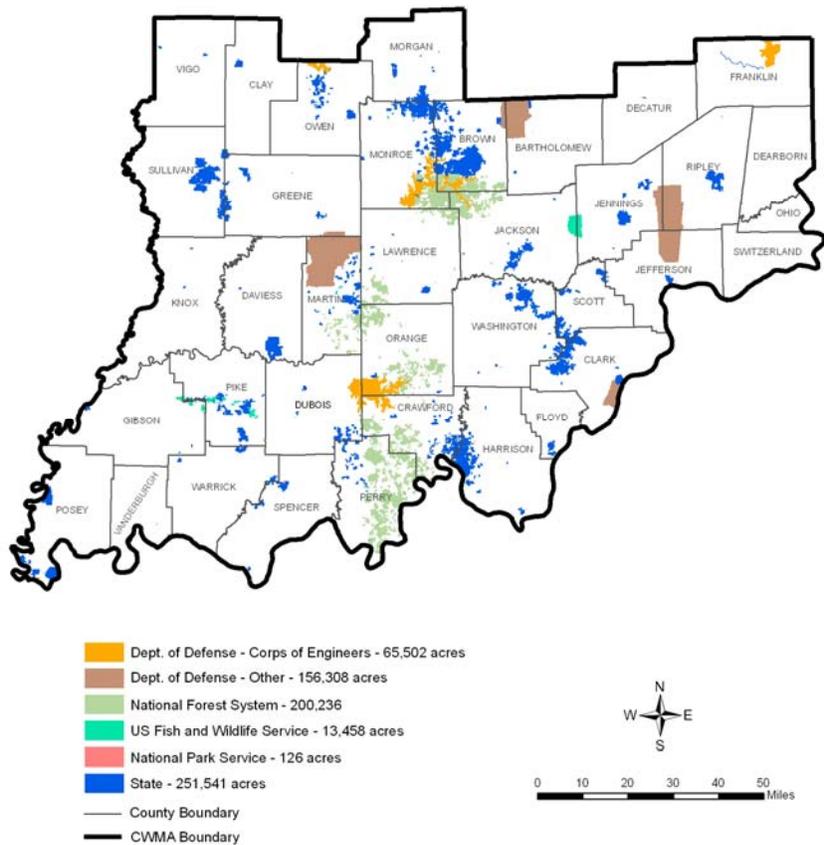
By: Teena Ligman, Public Affairs Specialist, Hoosier National Forest

What is a Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)?

A grassroots organization that helps coordinate efforts by public land management agencies, non-profit organizations and private landowners to address the threat of invasive plants. There are many CWMA's across the United States, most are in western states but many are now forming in the east and Midwest.

Where is the Southern Indiana CWMA?

This CWMA includes the 37 counties in the southern 1/3 of the state. This region includes the Interior Low Plateau Ecoregion and is unique for its karst, extensive forests, hills, rivers and lakes. Southern Indiana's economy relies heavily on forest products, agriculture and natural resource-based tourism and is well known for its natural resources, recreational resources, and beauty. Most of Indiana's public land is in the southern third of the state. Invasive plants are a serious threat to all of these resources.



Why are invasive plants a problem?

An invasive plant is one that is not native to the area, but has been introduced, is starting to spread, and is causing damage to the natural environment. Since these plants are in a new environment, free of natural predators, parasites, or competitors, they often spread quickly. Large invasive populations can out-compete and displace native species, or can reduce wildlife food and habitat. Some species can also disrupt vital ecosystem functions like nutrient cycling or soil decomposition. Other invasive plants cause economic damage to agriculture. They can harm or kill trees and other crops, clog equipment, and contaminate produce. Some invasive plants can even cause direct harm to humans or domestic animals.



Fast Fact – The poison hemlock, a common invasive along our roadsides, can cause blisters if handled without gloves and all parts of the plants are poison to humans and animals. Do not breathe the smoke if it is being burned.

Aren't invasive plants already being managed?

The Hoosier National Forest will treat approximately 750 acres of nonnative invasive plant species on national forest land in 2009.

How CWMA's can help

CWMA's can help coordinate efforts between agencies and help partnering land management agencies be more effective. It creates opportunities for land owners to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of management activities, manage across boundaries, pool available resources, and prioritize issues. Since many invasive populations spread across property lines, if all involved land owners worked together to eliminate the population, each would benefit rather than to continue to battle the plant at their property line.

The CWMA sponsors workshops, and workdays for people to come out and help with a project to see how invasives can be controlled.

The pictures below are from Lower Cascades Park in Bloomington – the same photo point before and after bush honeysuckle was removed by volunteers. Bush Honeysuckle is an invasive shrub which soon takes over a forest understory and crowds out all other plants.



How can individuals or other groups get involved?

Join the CWMA; individuals, agencies or organizations can join as a partner. As a member/partner people can participate in committee work, educational efforts or invasive species mapping and control projects.

It is also important to be more aware and not plant or spread invasive species. Learn to identify the invasive plants in your area. Be sure to clean your shoes, brush off your clothes, and remove any dirt from equipment after being in an area with invasive plants. Start a control program on your land.

Contact Teena Ligman, (812) 276-4757, tligman@fs.fed.us for further information on the Southern Indiana CWMA.

Southern Indiana CWMA Mission: Protect, restore, and enhance southern Indiana's landscapes by coordinating efforts to identify, prevent, and control invasive species.