MIPN.org Midwest Invasive Plant Network

MIPN Quarterly Newsletter

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June is Invasive Species Awareness Month

The governors of Wisconsin and Indiana have both declared June as Invasive Species Awareness Month in their states.

Wisconsin is holding its third annual Invasive Species Awareness Month, and is sponsoring a wide range of events, including a field class on woodland invaders, boat washing demonstrations, work parties, and a native plant sale. The Wisconsin Council on Invasive Species also sponsored an invasive species poster contest for grade school kids, receiving over 600 entries. For more information on events in Wisconsin and to read about this year's winners of the Invader Crusader Awards, visit http://invasivespecies.wi.gov/awareness/index.asp.

In Indiana, workdays and public lectures have been scheduled to increase awareness about invasive species in the state. Organizers will be drawing attention to problems created by the emerald ash borer, Japanese stilt grass, and hydrilla, among other species. For more information on Indiana's second annual Invasive Species Awareness Month, see www.nature.org/indiana.

A submission to Wisconsin's invasive species poster contest by Kane Poad.

Nature Conservancy Scientists Help Meijer Shoppers Pick Better Plants This Spring contributed by Chip Sutton, The Nature Conservancy

Meijer and The Nature Conservancy have entered into a new partnership aimed at reducing the sale of invasive plant species in the Midwest.

Meijer will donate $450,000 over the next three years for stewardship work to reduce invasive plants and help save Lake Michigan shoreline, part of the world's largest freshwater dune system. Additionally, Meijer will educate consumers in their Garden Centers next spring in their five-state region (Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky and Ohio) on recommended non-invasive species chosen by Nature Conservancy scientists, and has removed two species known to be invasive from their inventory, Norway maple and Lombardy poplar.

Shoppers will find 16 percent of Meijer's plants, trees and shrubs with a special icon created by a Nature Conservancy volunteer indicating that scientists designated them as "recommended non-invasive" plants. Mei-

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The Nature Conservancy & Meijer, continued

jer will also educate consumers through a variety of educational materials both in and out of stores, such as brochures, website and email information, video, audio and other media. All Meijer Garden Center employees will be trained on the new plant tags and invasive species.

Species that will receive the special icon on plant tags include purple coneflower, big bluestem, white pine, and flowering dogwood, as well as many others. A full list of the recommended non-invasive species is available at http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/michigan/files/meijer_plant_list.pdf.

"People want to help the environment, but don't often know how," said Hank Meijer, grandson of Meijer's founder, Hendrik Meijer. "This will help educate consumers while they're shopping about what plants are best-

Illinois receives $350,000 federal grant for management of coastal habitat along Lake Michigan

Illinois has been awarded a $350,000 National Coastal Wetland Conservation grant to remove invasive plants on 240 acres of permanently protected, high quality natural areas within Adeline Jay Geo-Karis Illinois Beach State Park, an Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) property, and Spring Bluff Nature Preserve, owned by the Lake County Forest Preserve District.

The 3,300-acre Illinois Beach-Spring Bluff complex is the largest protected, undeveloped coastal natural area in the state. The site is home to for four federally threatened and endangered species and has the highest concentration of state threatened and endangered species, rare community types, and coastal wetlands in Illinois. Recovery efforts for rare species are a priority in this coastal area, including the successful reintroduction of the federally threatened Pitcher's Thistle at Illinois Beach State Park and an on-going population study of the state-listed Blanding's Turtle at Spring Bluff.

The coastal grant, in addition to $174,000 in matching funds provided by the Illinois DNR, Lake County Forest Preserve District, and local partners, will provide on-the-ground funding for invasive plant control, restoration efforts, and monitoring of rare plant and animal communities.

Blanding's turtle, a state threatened species in Illinois, will benefit from invasive plant control and restoration efforts along Lake Michigan.

Meet Our Board of Directors

Jan Schultz is currently the Botany and Non-native Invasive Species Program Leader for the Eastern Region of the U.S. Forest Service, which is composed of approximately 20 states and 15 national forests. Jan represents the Eastern Region of the US Forest Service on the Terrestrial Invasive Species Committee (TISC) of the Midwest Natural Resources Group and the Regional Invasive Species Issue Team. Prior to taking her current position, she spent seventeen years on the Hiawatha National Forest in the upper peninsula of Michigan working as Forest Plant Ecologist, NNIS Coordinator, Research Natural Area Coordinator and Plant Program Manager for propagation of native plants in restoration purposes. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology and Master of Science in Ecology.

Jan enjoys hiking, traveling and plant explorations with her patient family and gardening with her healthy and inspiring mom.

Jan Schultz

Jennifer Hillmer

Jennifer Hillmer is a founding director of the Ohio Invasive Plants Council, having worked behind the scenes for several years prior to its incorporation in 2005. She is currently the land steward of 3000 acres of natural area at The Holden Arboretum in Kirtland, Ohio. A former land steward and volunteer coordinator with The Nature Conservancy, Jennifer is particularly active in invasive plant management using volunteers and seasonal employees. Her claims to possess the key to successful invasive plant management are intriguing, if unsubstantiated. This summer, she is helping to organize the 34th annual Natural Areas Association Conference to be held from October 9-12 in Cleveland. Terrific symposia and sessions on invasive species are expected.

Jennifer and her husband, Bradley Stemen, share a love for wooden boats, the Canadian Shield, and their animals. Since they both are naturalists and land managers, their home gardens are thoroughly neglected. Jennifer spends her free time reading widely, playing the cello, and making soap.

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Midwest Invasive Plant Network

We are putting together a great program on invasive plants for the Natural Areas Conference and MIPN Annual Meeting in Cleveland, Oct. 9-13. For more information, see page 5.

Invasive Earthworms Facilitate Plant Invasions

On the second Wednesday of each month, The Stewardship Network hosts a webcast on a topic related to caring for natural lands and waters. May's webcast featured Dr. Cindy Hale, Director of the Boulder Lake Environmental Learning Center in Minnesota, who spoke about invasive earthworms and their impacts on forest plant communities. The following is some of the useful information that Cindy shared.

Earthworms are not native in the glaciated areas of North America, yet 14 species of earthworms are now found in the Western Great Lakes region. Earthworms alter the soil chemistry and texture in northern forests by breaking down the thick litter and duff layers of organic matter overlaying nutrient-poor soils. These habitat alterations make the forest floor uninhabitable for many native plants and animals, causing a loss of diversity in earthworm-invaded forests. Earthworms also eat mycorrhizal fungi, which aid many native plant species in acquiring nutrients and water. Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), a mycorrhizal generalist, and Pennsylvania sedge (*Carex pensylvanicus*), a non-mycorrhizal species, are two native plant species that thrive in earthworm-invaded areas. Most native understory forbs and tree seedlings, however, quickly disappear after earthworm invasion.

Forests altered by earthworms may provide favorable conditions for invasive plants, such as garlic mustard, which are non-mycorrhizal and have co-evolved with European earthworms. Invasions may be further aided by white-tailed deer, which overgraze native plants already stressed by earthworm-caused habitat alterations, creating more openings for invasive plants.

In non-glaciated areas of the Midwest where native earthworms exist, it is not yet clear what effect exotic earthworms are having on native plant communities or native earthworms. Research on earthworm distribution, impacts on native ecosystems, and interactions with invasive plants is on-going. You can join the research effort by collecting data in your area and submitting it to Great Lakes Worm Watch. For more information on joining the research team, identifying earthworms, or earthworm impacts, visit http://www.nrri.umn.edu/worms/default.htm.

Funding Secured for River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area contributed by Marion Bunch

Shawnee Resource Conservation and Development Area, Inc. received two grants to fund the River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area (RTR-CWMA). An Illinois DNR grant for $65,390 was received on May 1, 2007. The DNR grant will be used to match a second grant for $65,390 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's Pulling Together Initiative. These grants will provide funds to pay the salary of the RTR-CWMA's new Coordinator, as well as paying for contractual removal of invasive species. Chris Evans has been hired as the River to River CWMA coordinator. He has a Bachelor's Degree in Wildlife Biology from Murray State University and a Master's Degree in Forest Biology from Iowa State University. Chris' experience includes serving as The Bugwood Network's Invasive Species and Natural Resource Specialist at the University of Georgia, where his duties included developing natural resource-related educational materials, working with landowners and managers to develop man-

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River to River CWMA (continued)

taining a location and treatment database. Previously, Chris worked as the coordinator for the woodland invasive species survey of Iowa, which emphasized training private landowners to identify and report woodland invasive plants.

Multiple agencies and organizations collaborated to begin the River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area partnership and subsequently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in 2006. The RTR-CWMA covers the eleven southernmost counties in Illinois that encompass the entire Shawnee National Forest. The RTR-CMWA partners will be identifying other interested stake holders to participate in this collaborative effort during the next few months.

The term Cooperative Weed Management Area, or CWMA, refers to a partnership that integrates all noxious weed management resources across jurisdictional boundaries in order to benefit entire communities. State and county weed experts have helped private landowners for years; however, land ownership boundaries confined the areas that could be treated. The funding from these grants will ease the way for the agencies and organizations forming the RTR-CMWA to work together in an integrated and cooperative effort that will significantly increase the effectiveness of non-native invasive species weed removal projects.

For more information about CWMAs, visit MIPN's CWMA resource page at http://www.mipn.org/cwma.html.

Get Ready for the MIPN Annual Meeting!

MIPN will hold our annual meeting at the Natural Areas Conference in Cleveland this year. We are putting together a great program of invasive plant talks, posters, and workshops as well, so mark your calendar for October 9-13. Invited talks will cover a variety of topics including early detection, Cooperative Weed Management Areas, evaluation of cultivars for invasiveness, the effects of invasive plants on native pollinators, and the development of biocontrol agents for garlic mustard. There will also be a half-day symposium on invasive pests, pathogens, and plants of forests. Details on the program will be published in our next newsletter and posted on our website as soon as the schedule is confirmed.

The theme for this year's Natural Areas Conference is *Some Assembly Required: Preserving Nature in a Fragmented Landscape*. Highlights of the meeting will include full day field trips to natural areas in northern Ohio and a banquet at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

For general program information or to register for the conference, visit www.naturalarea.org/07conference. We look forward to seeing you in Cleveland!

News From Around the Region

Indiana:
Landowners, public land managers, and others have formed the Brown County Native Woodlands Project to combat invasive plants county-wide. They identified four species that are not yet abundant in the county—Japanese knotweed, tree of heaven, Asian bush honeysuckle, and autumn olive—and are using volunteers to map each infestation. Once the mapping is completed, they'll begin working to eradicate these species from the county.

Illinois:
The Lake and McHenry County CWMA just completed a community-wide mailing to make horse people, farmers, libraries, and private residences within 500 feet of known leafy spurge populations more aware of the plant, its early detection status in Lake and McHenry Counties, and resources and assistance available through the CWMA and the New Invaders Watch Program. The mailing and printing was completed through small contributions from each partner. They have also completed the signing of their MOU.

Michigan:
Michigan State University Extension is holding an Ecological Restoration Field Day near Liberty, MI on June 15. More information is available at www.stewardshipnetwork.org under "Events".

Ohio:
The Ohio Invasive Plants Council is sponsoring a workshop called "Good Plants Gone Bad" for master gardeners and the general public on June 23. For more information or to register, visit www.oipc.info.

Wisconsin:
The Upper Chippewa Invasive Species Cooperative has just been awarded a Pulling Together Grant for $7820 for cooperative weed management.

The Travel Green Wisconsin Program awarded Apostle Islands Realty in Bayfield, WI in partnership with the Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area a grant for community education and active control of Japanese Knotweed along the City's Brownstone Trail. Businesses can earn credits towards Travel Green Certification though community outreach and sustainable practices such as native plantings and invasive species control. For more information contact Carmen Chapin 715-682-0631.

Have You Heard About Leafy Spurge?

Leafy Spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) is a serious pest in the grasslands of the Great Plains and is a threat to the upper Midwest, including Illinois. In Montana, the Dakotas and Wyoming alone, leafy spurge costs tax payers more than $144 million a year in production losses, control expenses and other impacts. ***Leafy spurge, a long-lived perennial plant, produces a milky sap that is poisonous to horses and livestock, causing blistering and sores in the mouth and throat when consumed. The sap can also irritate human skin.*** Leafy spurge grows in open, sunny places, tolerating damp to dry soils. It spreads in pastures, turf grass, prairies, savannas, and along roadsides. Although relatively uncommon in Lake and McHenry Counties, ***leafy spurge is beginning to spread this area.*** It reproduces by seeds and roots (including root fragments) and seed lingering in the soil can germinate for several years. Leafy spurge is easily spread by people through contaminated hay or feed, mowing (when seed is present or roots are fragmented), and in soils, gravel or other material excavated from areas where leafy spurge grows. Early detection of small populations will reduce the spread of leafy spurge in our area – and the need for costly control measures in the future.
Identification: Leafy spurge grows from April to October. Flowering from early May to late June, the flat-topped cluster of yellowish-green flowers is easily identified. Seed begins to develop in early July. Leafy spurge has numerous narrow, smooth leaves along the stem, and grows up to 24 inches. Plants turn orange in October before winter die-back. Generally, there are several non-flowering plants scattered around patches of flowering leafy spurge. Control is possible, but requires several years of mowing, herbiciding, and or grazing. Your local Cooperative Weed Management Area can help you develop an effective control plan.

Leafy spurge flower head

Flower with seed capsule

Milky sap (D. Eagan, Univ. WI-Madison)

Fall color

If you find Leafy spurge in your area, please let us know!
In McHenry County, IL call 815-675-2386 x 321
In Lake County, IL Call 847-968-3285

Thank You for helping prevent the spread of Leafy spurge!

Prepared by the Lake and McHenry County Cooperative Weed Management Area
For more information on Leafy spurge, visit: http://www.team.ars.usda.gov/ or http://www.mda.state.mn.us/weedcontrol/leafyspurge.html

This fact sheet was printed with eco-friendly vegetable based ink on 100% post-consumer recycled paper. Printed April 2007

Lake & McHenry County CWMA fact sheet on leafy spurge