

Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition (WRISC)

Strategic Management Plan

2015-2017



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Active Edits – as of August 2nd, 2017

MISSION

THE WILD RIVERS INVASIVE SPECIES COALITION (WRISC) IS A MULTI-PARTNER ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING FIVE COUNTIES IN TWO STATES. WRISC IS DEDICATED TO THE MANAGEMENT OF INVASIVE SPECIES ON OUR LANDS AND WATERS THROUGH COOPERATION, EDUCATION, PREVENTION, AND CONTROL.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

~~In 2009, the~~The Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition (WRISC) was formed ~~in 2009. The WRISC collaboration and to this day~~ operates across a five county area in northeastern Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The group consists of formal Partners and informal members from local/state/federal/~~tribal~~ agencies, businesses, individuals, and civic organizations, all committed to battling invasive species in the region. Formal Partners (Appendix A) express their support of WRISC by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), but participation is strictly voluntary. ~~and Partnership with WRISC is open to all local/state/federal/tribal agencies, businesses, individuals, and civic organizations and~~ WRISC welcomes the participation of informal cooperators as well.

Invasive species are recognized as a widespread and increasing problem with serious economic and ecological impacts on public and private lands and waters, as well as hazards to human health. Cooperation provides mutual benefits in managing invasive species across jurisdictional boundaries and improves working relationships between coalition members and the public.

To combat the threat of invasive species, WRISC outlined several goals in their ~~2011-previous Strategic~~ Management Plans. In the world of invasive management, various policies, priorities, threats, research, and funding are constantly in flux. As such, the best way for WRISC to continue to combat the threat of invasive species is to take a strategic approach to its goals ~~by way of a Strategic Management Plan. As such the WRISC Strategic Management Plan was formed.~~ This Strategic Management Plan is intended to be dynamic and adjusted as needed to address changing needs and priorities. The plan will be reviewed annually, with adjustments made as needed, and formally revised/updated every ~~three-five~~ years.

WRISC MANAGEMENT AREA

The WRISC management area is geographically defined as the lands and waters within the geopolitical boundaries of Florence, Forest, and Marinette counties in Wisconsin, and Dickinson and Menominee counties in Michigan. This area encompasses 5,208 sq. miles and a population

of 105,673 (2010 census). Much of the management area is forested, with a large proportion under public ownership as national, state, or county forests. Various Native Americans also call the WRISC area home, which includes a portion of the ceded territory, and reservations for the Forest County Potawatomi Community, the Sokaogon Chippewa Community, and the Hannahville Indian Community.

LOCATION

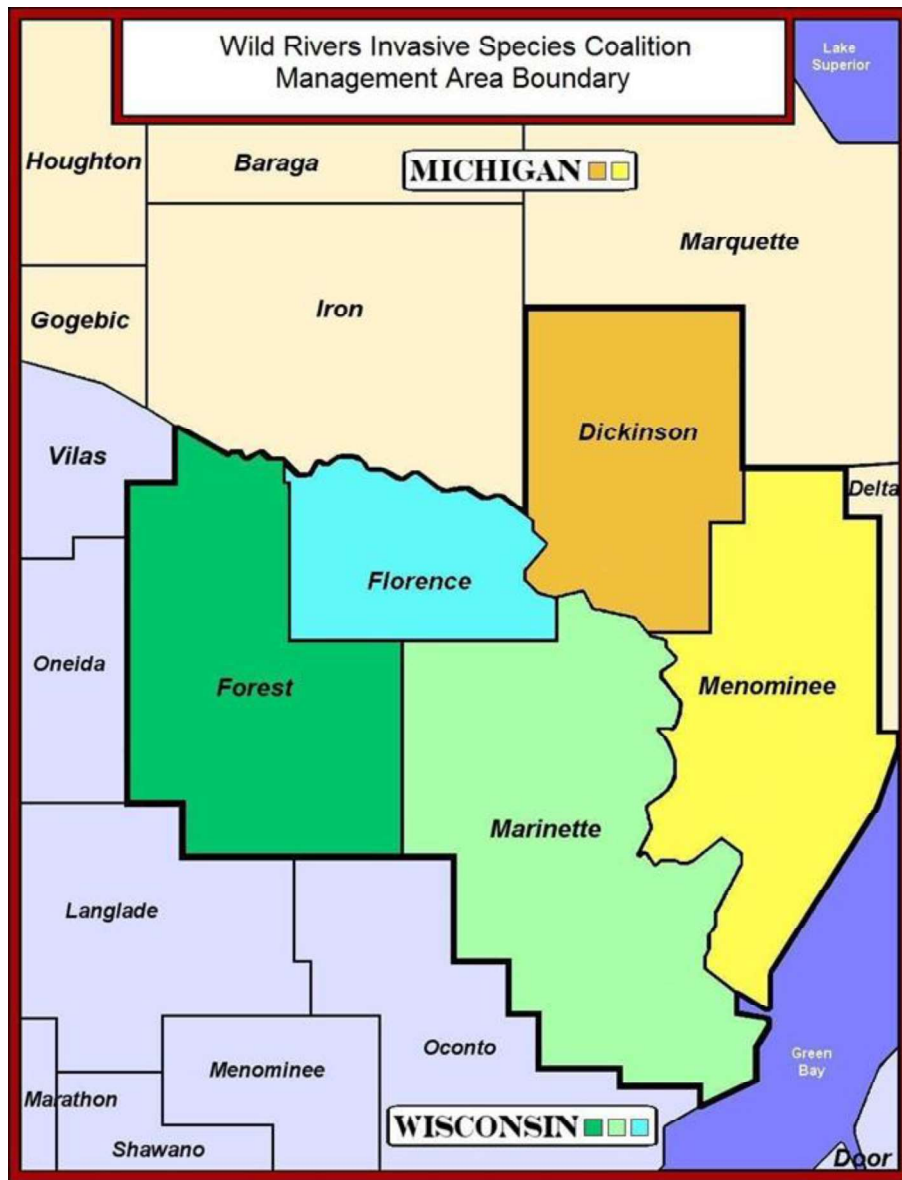


Figure 1. The WRISC Management area.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The primary goals of WRISC are: to raise public awareness about invasive species in ~~Florence, Forest, and Marinette counties in Wisconsin, and Dickinson and Menominee counties in Michigan~~ the WRISC area; prevent their introduction and spread through monitoring, early detection, ~~and~~ rapid response; address known populations of invasive species utilizing Integrated Invasive Species Management methods where appropriate; consider invasive species during restoration projects; and continually work to enhance collaboration among all stakeholders involved with WRISC.

Goal 1: Prevention through education.

Education is essential to meeting the goals of WRISC and its Partners. WRISC's educational outreach is focused on increasing awareness of the problem of invasive species and the role that humans play in spreading invasive plants and animals, and helping people take action in their own communities. Through education, the public can help to reduce the impact of invasive species in the WRISC management area. Community-based prevention measures can dramatically curtail the expansion of established populations.

Objective 1.1: Conduct education and training programs for Partners and members of the public to increase awareness of prevention and early detection measures.

Strategic Actions:

1. Conduct invasive species educational presentations across the ~~entire~~ WRISC area ~~in public meeting areas such as libraries~~.
2. Assess and conduct targeted education and training for WRISC Partners.
3. Conduct outreach and targeted training programs for citizen groups: recreationists, clubs/associations, volunteer groups, youth groups, and others.
4. Connect with public officials and industry workers to conduct targeted training, including best management practices, for: ~~road crews, foresters, private loggers, municipal workers, etc~~ local units of government, municipalities, and businesses.
5. Incorporate the use of regional prevention campaigns/programs into WRISC education and outreach (Clean Boats Clean Waters, Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers, Play Clean Go, etc.).

6. Work with area schools to include invasive species education in the curriculum of elementary and high school students. ~~Guide hands-on~~ Direct project-based learning through ~~projects-workdays~~ and field trips.
7. Develop cooperative workdays and projects for citizens and Partners across the WRISC area.
8. Provide WRISC representation and invasive species education at area meetings, conferences, and other functions.

Objective 1.2: Provide information via easily accessible means to the public at large.

WRISC will develop and distribute educational information in many forms for the general public and provide specific information to target audiences about the impacts of invasive species and the public's roles and responsibilities.

Strategic Actions

1. Obtain existing educational publications/resources from other agencies and Partners (ex. DNR, MIPN, USFS, ~~and~~ Extension Services) to distribute at ~~public functions~~ and events (~~community events, school functions, county fairs, etc.~~)
2. Develop and maintain an updated WRISC educational brochure ~~for the public; distribute at public functions and places (community events, local libraries, the Wild Rivers Natural Resource Center, etc.)~~
3. Develop additional educational materials for distribution and display as able and as funding permits; distribute at public functions and places. Examples: pens, magnets, posters, signs, buttons, pamphlets, calendars, booklets, placemats, and other printed materials. Materials should be targeted for various citizen and professional groups, special interest groups, specific invasive species, activities, or pathways of introduction and spread.
4. ~~Provide targeted educational materials for various citizen and professional groups (recreational clubs, gardeners, plant industry workers, landowners, road crews, etc.)~~
5. ~~Reach a vast audience of WRISC Partners and area citizens through the internet in various ways. ÷~~
- 6.4. ~~Maintain~~ Maintain a WRISC email list and ~~encourage~~ encourage citizens to join ~~at sign ups at public events~~. Use this email list to inform the public of WRISC events and invasive species news. Manage the WRISC email (wildriverscwma@gmail.com) and the WRISC website (www.wrisc.org) to provide accurate, detailed, and updated information to the public and to serve as a point of contact. Utilize social media platforms to promote WRISC's mission, events, and more.
 - a. ~~Provide accurate, detailed, and updated information on the WRISC Facebook page and website (www.wrisc.org).~~
 - b. ~~Maintain the WRISC email address (wildriverscwma@gmail.com) as a consistent and convenient contact for the public.~~
7. ~~Utilize a variety of appropriate "traditional" media to further reach local residents (press releases, newspapers, radio, and television), with particular focus on -~~

- 8.5. ~~increase the~~ increasing the use of signage ~~(billboards, metal signs, temporary signs, etc.)~~ to reach outdoor recreationists and tourists at high traffic areas such as boat landings, trailheads, and along roadways.
- 9.6. Maintain a ~~quarterly~~ WRISC newsletter (produce three per year); distribute online and via the WRSIC email list, make limited paper copies available ~~at public functions and places.~~

Objective 1.3: Maintain and actively seek up-to-date information on invasive species threats, management, and research.

Strategic Actions

1. Use a variety of resources ~~(paper/digital publications, webinars, articles, professional contacts, etc.)~~ to keep WRISC staff, Partners, and members of the public knowledgeable and up-to-date.
2. Encourage WRISC staff ~~and Partners~~ Partners to attend local and regional invasive species conferences, conventions, and meetings as able.
3. Promote the sharing of information among Partners, members, natural resources professionals, and other interested parties.

Goal 2: Early Detection and Rapid Response

Once an invasive species is established in a new area, it can spread quickly and overwhelm local resources, making eradication costly, if not impossible. As such, WRISC places a high emphasis on detecting new species and populations of invasives early, and rapidly responding with control and eradication efforts. These control efforts are the most cost effective and provide a high return on investment.

Objective 2.1: Identify early detection targets.

Strategic Actions

1. Maintain the WRISC Priority Invasive Species (Appendix B) list to categorize species as Early Detection/Rapid Response, Manageable, or Widespread.
2. Update priority list annually, or as needed, to reflect the current state of invasive species in the WRISC area as well as new invasives identified by state agencies as early detection threats.
3. Maintain Early Detection/Rapid Response activities throughout the WRISC area, with particular attention to “high risk” areas such as recreation pathways or areas susceptible to spread/introduction. Identify locations within the WRISC management area in need of early detection mapping/monitoring. Examples include areas that have never been surveyed and areas deemed “high risk” as likely invasive entry/spread points (parks, roads, etc.).