

## **Iron Furnace Cooperative Weed Management Area 2008-2009 Bi-annual report**

The Iron Furnace Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) was formed in 2006 in Lawrence, Jackson, Scioto and Gallia counties in Ohio as an informal working group that includes 15 local, state, federal and private organizations. The group meets quarterly at the Jackson Public Library in Jackson, Ohio. The objectives of the Iron Furnace CWMA include increasing public awareness, obtaining funding to implement programs, and providing coordination and leadership for invasive species control.

Most of the accomplishments for 2008-2009 (August 2008-August 2009) were funded by a \$30,000 grant from the U.S. Forest Service State & Private Forestry organization, which was administered by the Ohio Invasive Plant Council. Matching contributions were provided through in-kind service provided by the following partners: Ohio University, Buckeye Rural Electric, Lawrence Soil and Water District, Miami University, Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife, ODNR Division of Forestry, and ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. The purposes of the grant were to: 1) map the locations and extent of invasive plants in the project area as a first step toward prioritization and coordination of treatments and 2) provide outreach and awareness to a variety of audiences in the project area including private landowners, land management practitioners, and school groups.

The mapping component of the grant was led by Ohio University. More than 750 acres of invasive species were mapped on selected tracts of private, state and public lands in the project area located around Dean State Forest, Lake Katharine State Nature Preserve and Crown City Wildlife Area. The five most abundant species mapped were Japanese honeysuckle, multiflora rose, Asiatic stilt grass, tree-of-heaven and Chinese privet. The results of this effort were presented at the Midwest Invasive Plant Network Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana and at the Association of Southeastern Biologists in Birmingham, Alabama. Each private landowner and public land manager was also provided a report of the area mapped on their property.

The outreach component of the grant was lead by the Lawrence Soil and Water Conservation District. A website was developed in partnership with Miami University. The site went live in December of 2008. The URL for the website is <http://www.ironfurnacecwma.org>. A brochure was also developed under the grant in partnership with Ohio State University Extension. It is entitled "What are Invasive Species and why should you care?" and is an informational brochure designed for use at field days and workshops.

The grant also provided support for several outreach efforts in 2009. In February, a workshop was held for land managers to help them make informed decisions on how to treat invasive species on the lands they manage. Fifty-five people attended including managers from the Division of Wildlife, Division of Forestry, U.S. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil and Water Conservation Districts and consulting foresters. In June, the Lawrence Soil and Water Conservation District and Lawrence County Farm Bureau hosted a workshop for landowners about invasive species. There were 32 participants at the event. Two workshops for teachers were also held. One workshop was held in April at the Area 5 Envirothon at Highbanks Metro Park, with 15 teachers in attendance. A second teacher's workshop was held in

conjunction with the ODNR Division of Forestry at Tar Hollow State Forest in June. There were 33 participants at this event. Several non-native invasive species activity kits were purchased for use in school classrooms within the project area and are available by contacting the Lawrence Soil and Water Conservation District. Invasive species presentations and outreach were provided by different committee members at a number of venues including the 2008 Natural Areas Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, the Ironton Lion's Club, Jackson and Scioto Soil and Water Conservation District Annual Meetings, Lawrence County Farm Bureau Annual Banquet, and the Ironton Rotary Club.



Land Managers workshop at Oak Hill Public Library on February 25, 2009

In addition to activities supported by the grant, in May of 2008, a field day was conducted for land managers and decision-makers from the 15 partnership organizations of the Iron Furnace Cooperative Weed Management Area to share information about the project, to increase understanding of what Cooperative Weed Management Areas are and to build support for the initiative. The field day included visits to Kline Brothers Farm, Lake Vesuvius Recreation Area and Crown City Wildlife Area. During both 2008 and 2009 through various partners, the Iron Furnace Cooperative Weed Management Area has provided assistance to landowners on identification of species and treatment options. A list of contacts for this type of service is available on the website at <http://www.ironfurnacecwma.org> or by calling any of the committee members.



Treatment being applied to kudzu

In 2007, the Southeast Ohio Kudzu Initiative, led by Kristin Westad with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Private Lands Office, began working with members of the CWMA to help identify locations of kudzu in the CWMA project area. The overall goal of the initiative is to eliminate kudzu in Ohio. To date 44 patches have been identified, with 11 of those patches located within the boundary of the Iron Furnace CWMA. In 2008-2009, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service treated five patches of kudzu within the Iron Furnace CWMA boundary.

Another on-going cooperative effort between the Wayne National Forest and the Collins family is focused on controlling invasive plant species on a public-private rare plant site for the federally threatened plant, running buffalo clover. In 2008 the partners treated 44 acres, and in 2009, 70 acres were treated. Species treated include multiflora rose, Japanese honeysuckle, garlic mustard, Asiatic stilt grass and tree-of-heaven.

Other treatment efforts are being led through the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentive Program. Four private landowners within the Iron Furnace CWMA boundary currently have invasive species control projects being implemented on their land. The species of focus include tree-of-heaven, multiflora rose and Japanese honeysuckle.

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Plans for the Iron Furnace CWMA in 2010 include:

- Formal Memorandum of Understanding among partner organizations
- Volunteer workdays
- Outreach activities that include workshops, field days, newspaper articles and demonstration projects
- Southeast Ohio Kudzu Initiative
- Central Hardwoods Invasive Plant Network Ohio River project
- Treatments in the project area
- Map of treatments already accomplished