New Invaders Watch Program

An Early Detection and Rapid Response Network to Limit the Spread of New Exotic Invasive Species In The Chicago Wilderness Region

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Please visit http://ctap.inhs.uiuc.edu/newinvaders/home.aspx to learn more!

New Invaders Watch Program Goals:

> Identify and report populations of 15 exotic invasive plant species and 2 insect species. Target species include those species that are thought to be invasive in other regions and that already exist in small populations in the Chicago region or are not known to be here. Yet, but are likely to thrive in our region.

> Eradicate or contain target species before they spread

> Collect and share location and population information about these potentially invasive exotic species

> Provide resources for monitoring and control of target species

Geographic Range: Chicago Wilderness, including 7 NE Illinois and 3 NW Indiana counties.

Rapid Response Network:

> Composed of 14 (and growing) public and private land agencies and organizations

> Each landowner provides a contact person, the Rapid Responder, who receives alerts (via email) when a new population is found on their property (each Rapid Responder is linked to a unique site name)

> Rapid Responders are responsible for disseminating information about new populations to appropriate staff or volunteers to conduct control work

> The Program provides a limited stock of herbicides that are used by licensed program partners to conduct control on reported, verified target species populations

Early Successes:

> Giant Hogweed reported and chemically treated in Lake County, IL in 2006 (a county record)

> First known population of Silky Bush Clover reported and controlled in an Illinois State Natural Area

> County Divisions of Transportation identified and began control of roadside populations of Leafy spurge

> Japanese Knotweed identified and controlled in 3 Lake Michigan ravines

> Overall increase in public awareness of target species and early detection as a strategy to manage invasive species

Future Goals:

> Include additional exotic invasive species in the program, including aquatic plant species

> Complete the electronic alert notification system for the Rapid Response Network

> Develop an interactive online mapping module

> Develop a system to track control efforts on verified populations, both successful and failed techniques

> Develop an annual newsletter that notifies all partners of new populations reported and verified by the program, highlights volunteers efforts and describes successful and failed control efforts

> Improve communications with program participants and secure funding for a program coordinator and database manager / webmaster

> Engage more transportation agencies, utility companies and private property owners

> Expand the program framework to other regions in Illinois, possibly through the establishment of regional Cooperative Weed Management Areas

Program Contacts:

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Funding Provided By: bp

Partners:

Volunteer Groups (e.g., VSN, Plants of Concern)

Citizen Scientists

NGO’s (Land Conservancies, Land Trusts)

County Agencies (Forest Preserves, Soil and Water Dis.)

Park Districts

State and Federal Agencies

Data Management:

> New Invaders website with online volunteer sign-up

> Online reporting system that includes the capacity to download digital images

> Online database for efficient data management and access

> Electronic verification system; images or vouchers of specimens are examined by herbarium staff, and email confirmation of species identification is sent to collector

Training and Monitoring:

> Required training to sign up as a New Invaders volunteer Data Collector

> Offer Train-the-Trainer sessions

> Laminated species ID card set

> Additional species info. on the website

> Standardized data collection protocol follows NAWMA standards (data collection field form on the web)

> Voucher Collection Instructions (online)

> Program provides a limited number of plant presses, GPS units, and digital cameras to help volunteers collect data

Volunteers!

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