

Coordination

Goal C: Coordinate invasive weeds and agricultural pest management strategies statewide & locally

Weeds and agricultural pests do not respect property and land management boundaries making coordination between managers of adjacent lands essential to effective management. In Alaska, several semiformal statewide and local organizations exist around the state to coordinate invasive species prevention, education, and management issues. The Alaska Pest Risk Assessment Committee (AKPRAC), Alaska Committee for Noxious and Invasive Plant Management (CNIPM, www.CNIPM.org), and the Alaska Invasive Species Working Group (AISWG, www.alaskainvasives.org) have a statewide focus. Local groups include Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA) which are formed or forming in several different areas of the state (Figure 5). As invasive species management moves forward it is imperative that coordination is strengthened within and amongst these statewide and local organizations.

The accomplishments of the invasive species management bodies, both local and statewide, exemplify the cooperative spirit of invasive species managers in Alaska. The Alaska Pest Risk Assessment Committee (AKPRAC) has established communication about pest interceptions between the CBP and the other committee members. CNIPM and AISWG hold monthly teleconferences, host a joint annual meeting that draws between 100 and 200 participants, and features speakers from around the United States and neighboring Canadian provinces. CNIPM helped coordinate creation of an online data submission system for recording invasive plant locations in Alaska (AKEPIC akweeds.uaa.alaska.edu/), a citizen Early Detection and Rapid Response educational pamphlet and reporting system (www.eddmaps.org/alaska/report/),

an invasive plant identification field guide (AKEPIC 2005), and development of a weed free forage certification program. CNIPM participants continue to expand existing efforts, while initiating projects including weed free gravel certification, coordinating research, control work, and other activities.

The main weakness of CNIPM and AISWG lays in the voluntary cooperation component which results in irregular participation of some key agencies, and underrepresentation of certain stakeholder groups. Formation of an invasive weeds or invasive species board or council is one way to accomplish broader more official coordination. Boards and councils ensure that all affected agencies and stakeholders are brought to the decision making table. They are better able to communicate across political and agency divisions to solve problems while remaining sensitive to the missions and goals of all stakeholders. States that have boards or councils that address invasive weeds or agricultural pests are often viewed as examples of excellent programs that are highly effective at coordinating and producing results on the ground.

CWMAs from around the state work on local eradication and control work projects, and provide outreach to key audiences at local events. The work of CWMAs is presently completed by the Soil and Water Conservation Districts, nonprofits and their partners. While their efforts have been exemplary in addressing priorities, the funding for these groups is nearly entirely grant oriented making sustainability of their coordinated efforts an ongoing challenge.

Public Identified Priorities

Scoping participants viewed local and statewide coordination efforts consistently as a high value. Participants overwhelmingly identified establishment of an invasive weeds and agricultural pest management board as highly important to management of invasive weeds and agricultural pests. Respondents were divided with regards to separating an invasive weed board from a board or council that addressed all invasive species. Further comments provided indicated that weed management was a large enough issue to require a board all its own, and requires different disciplinary backgrounds. Others felt separation was not necessary because a weed board could be a part of the invasive species council or board.

Figure 4. Cooperative weed management area locations in Alaska

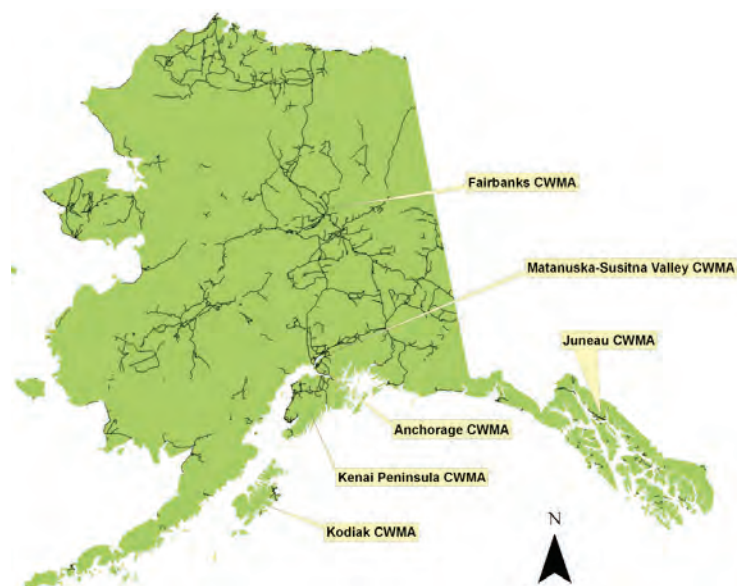


Figure 4 shows the location of six, Alaska Cooperative Weed Management Areas (CWMA) in existence at the time this strategic plan was developed.

Objective 1:

Formalize coordination efforts amongst land managers and interest groups associated with invasive weeds and agricultural pest management.

Action Strategies

1. Encourage development and formalization of CWMAs around the state, resulting in establishment of five new CWMAs.
Suggested participants: SWCD, DOA, DOT, Native Corporations and Associations, and other land managers
Timeline: June 2016
2. Further formalize statewide interagency/stakeholder coordination groups by revisiting, and updating MOUs for the established groups.
Suggested participants: State and Federal agencies and other participating groups
Timeline: June 2016
3. Formalize interagency coordination through development of an invasive weed board and/or invasive species council.
Suggested participants: legislature, commissioners or their designees of state agencies, federal agencies, representatives of stakeholder groups.
Timeline: June 2012
4. Develop formal partnerships between invasive weed and agricultural pest managers in Alaska and the neighboring Canadian Provinces resulting in sharing information about location and management of invasive species.
Suggested participants: State and Federal Agencies, Canadian Agencies, Invasive Plant Council of British Columbia, representatives of stakeholder groups
Timeline: June 2013
5. Increase quality of information shared by CBP with AKPRAC members for pest interceptions.
Suggested participants: CBP, DOA, DOF, DOI, USDA
Timeline: June 2012

Photo: John H. Ghent, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org



Asian Gypsy Moth, *Lymantria dispar*



Canada thistle infestation in a commercial blue spruce planting

Objective 2:

Facilitate invasive weeds and agricultural pest managers in contacting appropriate land managers and permitting groups when implementing projects.

Action Strategies

1. Develop interagency contact list organized by region.
Suggested participants: All state, federal and local government agencies
Timeline: June 2011, update annually