

Coordinated Management of Invasive Species on Long Island

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Suggested Action Steps

- 1) Initiate an interagency organizational meeting for 2001 to develop a Weed Management Area (WMA) on Long Island.
 - a) Invite representatives from land management agencies and organizations within the prospective WMA.
 - b) Invite key scientists, weed management specialists, and industry representatives.
 - c) Set the time and place of the meeting to compensate for seasonal work schedules (e.g., prescribed fire windows), special events, and holidays.
- 2) Determine the agenda for the initial WMA organizational meeting(s), such as:
 - a) Review definitions and advantages of cooperating in a WMA.
 - b) Establish WMA boundaries (all of Long Island?).
 - c) If needed, identify preliminary special management zones, such as aquatic areas, threatened or endangered species habitats, or recreational/special use areas. A special management zone is an identified area requiring weed management practices different from the whole of the WMA.
 - d) Review funding and other available resources.
 - i) Discuss available funding and establish accounting guidelines.
 - ii) Determine personnel and time capabilities of individuals and agencies.
 - iii) Develop a plan to obtain additional funding if necessary.
 - e) Obtain appropriate state weed laws and agency weed regulations and policies.
 - f) Select a steering committee to initiate the next stages of organization. Select a leader/chairperson.
 - g) Set target dates for completion of different steps of the planning process.
- 3) The steering committee will meet to complete an initial assessment, including:
 - a) Evaluate the level of weed awareness, the status of weed mapping and inventory, and weed management programs in the WMA.
 - b) Evaluate known weed information and information gaps.
- 4) Hold additional meetings, including public meetings, as needed.
- 5) Write a WMA Plan, including the development of a long-term Management Plan and Annual Operating Plans. Apply the concepts of integrated pest management (IPM) and adaptive management.

Weed Management Areas (WMA)

A WMA is an area of common characteristics and specific boundaries that has been designated a logical area for the management of noxious weeds.

The purpose of creating a WMA is to facilitate cooperation among land managers and owners to manage a common weed problem in a common area. The goal of a WMA is to prevent the reproduction and spread of weeds into and within the WMA. The formation of a WMA replaces jurisdictional boundaries that are barriers to weed management programs in favor of natural or more logical boundaries that facilitate weed management and control. A WMA is an area in which one agency/landowner's weed control success will be largely determined by the cooperative efforts of other agencies or landowners in the area. WMA's have similar characteristics such as geography, weed problems, climate, common interest, or funding support. Boundaries may be a watershed or other geographic feature and eliminate jurisdictional barriers.

The WMA enhances and unites individual ownerships or jurisdictions that form the land unit for mapping, planning, monitoring, and conducting weed programs. Cooperators in a WMA jointly prioritize weed management efforts based on species or geographical area. Cooperators then work together to manage the weeds within the WMA.

Advantages of cooperating in a WMA:

1. It encourages partners to plan through the problem to its successful resolution.
2. The plan results in the greatest good for the entire WMA in the long run.
3. Partners can locally prioritize and give emphasis to species that are a particular threat within individual WMA's.
4. The designation of a WMA by diverse individuals and agencies focuses attention and provides a united effort to state and federal legislators. It also communicates to the general public the seriousness of weeds (and other pests) by increasing their awareness of the weeds and the need to contain or prevent infestations.
5. A WMA pools talents and resources.
6. A WMA provides a channel for communication.
7. Under the WMA plan, a land manager or owner can address the problem of weeds spreading from neighboring land before the damage occurs.
8. WMA's increase the effectiveness of weed management by basing control efforts on biological and geographical factors rather than legal divisions.
9. Designation of a WMA helps secure funding.
10. The creation of different management zones within the WMA fits the most effective and environmentally sound weed management and control practices to each zone.

*--Guidelines for Coordinated Management of Noxious Weeds:
Development of Weed Management Areas*

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Adaptive Management

IPM is a multidisciplinary, ecological approach to managing pests. IPM is a management system that uses the full range of management techniques, including education, prevention, physical or mechanical methods, pesticide control, biological control, and cultural methods, in a compatible manner to reduce pest populations to acceptable economic and ecological levels. It requires managers to understand the biology and ecology of a plant or animal and its environment before developing management strategies. IPM does not exclude pesticides (including herbicides), but attempts to use them as a last line of defense against pests, rather than the first.

IPM is a form of adaptive management. In adaptive management, information about the managed resources is continuously developed and used to make adjustments to management approaches.

Note: I prefer the term “pest” instead of “weed” because “pest” includes plants *and* animals (i.e., pest management areas). However, some agencies may prefer “weed” for legal or regulatory reasons, such as Federal noxious weed laws. Either way, we should manage any and all pests in WMA’s as needed, whether it’s a weed, exotic insect, fungus, feral cat, fox, or some other pest.