

Eastern Invasives Management Network

Adirondacks, New York

Threat Abatement Priorities

The target area (conservation area) of the Adirondack Park includes the combination of a “Core” area and a “Periphery” area. The “Core” contains most of the land outside of the Champlain, Mohawk, and Lower Hudson River valleys (Periphery) of New York. The “Core” has a skeletal road system, few and widely scattered villages, and is characterized by densely forested non-agricultural lands. The “Periphery” is much more densely populated where agriculture is a large economic component.

Our top four invaders (priorities) include: Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Japanese Knotweed (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), and Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*). These four plants have migrated along the roadways from the “Periphery” area into the “Core” area and have only recently begun to move out of the DOT ROW’s and people’s yards to colonize back-country locations. These species are a priority since they have a proven record of moving into undisturbed back-country locations, hence, their impacts can be so significant either as new colonizers, by extending existing large populations, or by continued dominance of native systems. The Adirondack Invasive Plant program which includes a partnership between the Adirondack Nature Conservancy & Adirondack Land Trust (ANC/ALT), Adirondack Park Agency (APA), New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), Student Conservation Association (SCA), and New York State Department of Transportation (NYSDOT) is working to stop the spread of these four species which are well established in the “Periphery” and are showing signs of establishment in the “Core”.

Examples of how these species are tied to ANC/ALT conservation targets include: Garlic Mustard which is a shade tolerant species moving into forest systems (Northern Apps./Boreal Forest Ecoregion); Common Reed and Purple Loosestrife invading wetland exemplary communities; and Purple Loosestrife and Japanese Knotweed invading river corridors.

We have lowered the priority of some of the areas invasive plant infestations because careful consideration indicated relatively low threats to our conservation targets. We’re now, in particular, looking at the Common Reed sites and determining where we should concentrate our time and energy, and as the Fall approaches will be looking at all of the top four. We will put less focus on, for example, roadside Common Reed sites that pose low threats to conservation targets and more focus on sites that are adjacent to river corridors/ matrix forest areas.

We’ve also been leveraging our conservation action through effective partnerships. Due to our limited budget, staff personal and time we have formed partnerships with many NYSDEC Campground Managers and SCA groups to help us with invasive problems on several of the state campgrounds. We’ve trained both managers and SCA students on identifying and managing invasive plants, in particular, Garlic Mustard, and we’ve helped SCA students develop

educational materials which are available at the campgrounds. By 2004 we predict to provide minimum supervision at the campgrounds.

Threat Abatement Strategies

Our greatest strategy for abating high priority invasive plant species threats is our Early Detection and Monitoring Program. We have a core group of 15 – 20 volunteers who have been helping us with the Invasive Species Program since its conception in 1998. These volunteers are very familiar with identifying invasive species, (both terrestrial and now being trained for aquatics) acting as our eyes throughout the Adirondacks. Whenever a new population of invasive plants are spotted, the volunteer will either call or fill out a postcard to let us know species, size of infestation, type of habitat, date observed and directions to site. ANC/ALT staff will then go to the site, complete a monitoring form, take photos, GPS measurements so the site can be mapped in GIS, and determine what if any action should be taken. The volunteer provides the early detection, and we go out to assess and then determine what our response will be.

Our volunteer partners have been vital to the success of this program and to the health of the Adirondack Park. Whether it be concerned individuals, groups from SCA, interns from New York City, students from surrounding schools and universities, garden club members, other outdoor/environmental organizations, and many others we could not be controlling invasive species in the Adirondacks with the success that we've had. Invasive species is now a large component of our education and outreach program, and throughout the Fall/Winter we will focus on hiring a full-time Invasive Species Coordinator.