



## Ohio's First Cooperative Weed Management Area Celebrates First Year

*The Iron Furnace CWMA successes in 2006/2007 include setting their boundaries, hosting a workshop and workdays, forming a kudzu eradication project, and forming 3 committees to achieve their obj.*



Partners from the Iron Furnace CWMA at a quarterly meeting in Jackson, Ohio

The Iron Furnace Cooperative Weed Management (IFCWMA) held its first meeting in September 2006. Founding members, Carrie Yaniko from Lawrence Soil and Water Conservation District, Chris Smith from the Ohio Division of Wildlife and Chad Kirschbaum from Wayne National Forest attended an online workshop hosted by the Midwest Invasive Plant Network on "How to create a cooperative weed management area." This workshop provided a cookbook with step-by-step suggestions on building a CWMA. We have accomplished much over the last year, using the cookbook as our guide.

The IFCWMA currently consists of a partnership between 15 local, state, federal and private organizations that now meet quarterly. During our first meetings we discussed and drew boundaries of our CWMA based on level 5 watersheds.

Another one of our early successes and team efforts was to develop a Statement of Purpose. This document outlines what a CWMA is, where our CWMA is, who is part of it, and what our objectives are. The objectives were identified as:

- o To increase public awareness through education about invasive and non-native plants by hosting weed workshops, field tours, and public meetings; and by providing informational materials on invasive, non-native plants.
- o To seek grants and other funding sources to support the goals of the Iron Furnace CWMA.
- o To provide coordination and leadership for a local volunteer monitoring program to collect information on the locations and spread of invasive, non-native plants and for early detection of new invasive, non-native plant infestations. This information would aid in prioritizing sites for invasive plant control.

- o To develop and implement a strategic plan for the Iron Furnace CWMA which will determine the long-term direction and priorities of the CWMA.

- o To systematically control, over time, invasive, non-native plants in the Iron Furnace CWMA

In March of 2007 the CWMA organized a "Good Plants Gone Bad Workshop." The workshop was co-sponsored by the Ohio Invasive Plant Council and hosted by Ohio University Southern. We held three sessions during the day and had talks on basic invasive species information, local control efforts and how people can get involved to help with the problem. Seventy-five people attended this workshop.

Shortly after the workshop, we realized that we needed to form committees in order to accomplish more of our objectives. This resulted in three committees; steering, implementation and outreach. The steering committee along with the leaders of the implementation and outreach committees meet quarterly to discuss the cooperative agreement and future projects and events. The steering committee also focuses on recruitment of new organizations and leaders into the CWMA. The implementation committee is working on cataloging the invasive species control projects, ranking the invasiveness of species and helping coordinate control efforts for specific species such as the kudzu control project. The outreach committee focuses on education and communication. They are currently working on developing a CWMA brochure that will be distributed locally to inform citizens about our CWMA and invasive species.

In April and May of 2007 the CWMA sponsored two pulling parties at the annual garlic mustard control site on the Wayne National Forest. Over ten volunteers and CWMA partners participated.

One of our most successful and extensive projects so far has been our efforts to eradicate kudzu in the CWMA. The Forest Service, ODNR Division of Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are working to control kudzu. This effort was spurred by the Fish and Wildlife's ability to help private landowners control kudzu on their property. With the help of CWMA members, Kristen Westad of the USFWS has identified 13 patches of kudzu within the CWMA boundary, and is working with 3 of these landowners to eliminate this obnoxious vine. Managers on Wayne National Forest and Crown City Wildlife Management Area have treated patches of kudzu on federal and state lands and are currently monitoring the effectiveness of their treatment.

We hope that this next year will be even more successful than our first year as a CWMA. In 2008, we will continue to work on a formal cooperative agreement, recruit more partners, apply for funding to inventory and control invasive species on state and private lands, develop a website and determine priority invasive species to treat.

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