



What's Working:

Invasive Species Control

July 2016

Running Cooperative Weed Management Areas

2016 Information

- The Kandiyohi Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and the Stearns SWCD started a CWMA back in 2009. The priority of the funding was to promote invasive weed awareness in the community and to prevent invasive weeds from forming a presence in high biodiversity areas. The partners formed a steering committee that operated under a Memorandum of Understanding to draft a strategic Management plan. The plan has goals and objectives, priorities for the CWMA. Education materials were designed and created and distributed to the public, next was newsletters to the targeted areas along with township meetings to encourage participation and radio promotion, the Kandiyohi SWCD also held a Bio Blitz workshop along with the University of Minnesota to identify and show control techniques that are being used for weed management. Base line maps were generated with the targeted weeds on them. Now seven years later Kandiyohi and Stearns SWCD have created their own CWMA areas and expanded the original areas enabling landowners to apply for aid in herbicide purchase and weed treatment implementation. The prevention of new plant invasions and early detection and monitoring of infestations on invasive plants and effective control of established communities through area wide partnerships are key objectives in an overall strategy for invasive plant prevention and control. (Rick Reimer, Kandiyohi SWCD)

2015 Information

- Big Stone SWCD gets the word out to private landowners in two ways 1. Weed of the Week articles in the newspaper with timely and informative articles to educate citizens on up and coming weeds in the county. 2. The intern for the CWMA this past summer worked hard to contact private land owners directly by calling or writing letters to inform them if they had either Queen Anne's lace or Wild Parsnip on their private property (Cara Gregor MDNR, Big Stone/ Traverse CWMA).
- For the past two summers, one intern has been hired to work on mapping, contacting landowners, and treating the infestations. Each year a great amount of work has been done that would not get done otherwise. This is the best spent money of the CWMA. Both summers, we have had energetic and knowledgeable college students work on the project and have great results. Getting a baseline map of weed locations in the county is one of the biggest accomplishments. Before that other agencies have been mapping but there was no consolidation of the information. Now there is. Next summer, the intern will start looking more at Traverse County (Cara Gregor MDNR, Big Stone/ Traverse CWMA).
- A key to successful quick response to early detection of invasive species is communication and respect between the team members. Trust in the correct identification of a plant allows confidence in choosing

and implementing a management plan, minimizing time wasted. And time is money (Jyneen Thatcher, Washington Conservation District, Washington CWMA).

- Free weed tours and hands-on biocontrol experience have worked very well. Ramsey CWMA and MISAC held a well-attended invasive plant tour at AHATS. Becker CWMA and I held a spotted knapweed identification and control workshop. We collected knapweed bioagents at both of these events. These events were informal without registration. People were told when and where to show up for the event. A sign-up sheet was passed around to track attendance and contact participants with follow up information. This format minimizes the time and labor involved with advanced planning such as registration. No cost makes it much easier for people to attend and there is no work involved with processing fees. I think that a number of CWMA's held events during the field season. These events are fun, inexpensive and very effective communication/learning opportunities. Pope CWMA and I have floated the idea of a similar workshop next June for spurge biocontrol. I'm guessing that we would all like to do more of this outreach. I'd say that CWMA outreach is working well (Monika Chandler, Minnesota Department of Agriculture).
- The Wright Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) sent out requests for letters of support prior to applying for the CWMA grant from BWSR to obtain an idea from multiple organizations on the need for noxious and invasive species control. It was from these supporters and the financial commitment of Wright County, matching a BWSR grant of \$15,000 the SWCD was able to start a CWMA for Wright County. Multiple start up meetings were scheduled to inform, educate and finalize an official CWMA for Wright County by developing Annual Plans, Memorandum of Understanding, Hold Harmless Agreements, Cooperative Agreement, Informational Handouts, Strategic Management Plan, and other pertinent information. Steering committee representatives were voted to lead representatives in working cooperatively to educate, detect, inventory, monitor, control, and prevent the spread of noxious/invasive weeds across jurisdictional boundaries within the CWMA (Brian Sanoski, Wright SWCD).
- Effective control efforts were achieved by aligning all townships, county highway and parks department, MN DoT, Minnesota DNR, USFWS, and SWCD. Each party plays an important role in inventory, control and education sharing cooperative efforts to achieve better management of noxious and invasive weeds while improving working relationships between parties and local community. Parties control and inventory their own property and the SWCD is responsible for ensuring private land is being treated or obtaining permission to treat on areas that noxious and invasive species were found to escape passed right-a-ways. Any CWMA member or private landowner treating noxious and invasive species targeted by the CWMA is eligible to receive 100% reimbursement on approved herbicides; provided they submit proof of purchase, time logs and map of area sprayed. At year end all reporting, budgeting, inventory and documentation is completed by the SWCD. This information is displayed on the SWCD website and shared with CWMA members during annual meetings, for consideration in the decision making process of the following seasons annual plan (Brian Sanoski, Wright SWCD).
- We have done no mapping as all work is done on easements and are easy to find/track. The admin is also easily done because all work is done in-house. The hardest things when working with the landowners are meeting the match requirement and convincing them to keep up the suppression efforts after we are done. Some landowners are very enthusiastic and will continue after we have described the reasons and methods of control and others don't seem to mind if the easement is eventually all box elder,

buckthorn,... . We actually had a landowners with a CREP easement that wouldn't let the contractor remove the 30'-40' cottonwood (Eric Gulbransen, Resource Conservationist, Steele SWCD).

- The biggest parts of administering the CWMA program for me are education, cooperation and communication. Education is important for both me and for landowners. Some invasive species are new to me and some are new species. I generally have to educate myself before I can educate the landowner as these new things come up. I take advantage of learning opportunities offered as they come up. I also have a variety of contacts that I call for help. They are from the MDA, TNC, the DNR, and chemical representatives, as well as local professionals. I also like to hear "what is working" from the landowners I work with. Sometimes they try different approaches and they work, or sometimes they don't and we learn from that, also. I communicate information to and from the landowners to other professionals that I am working with. What we all gain from one project is good information to go forward. There are several ways I find people interested in CWMA. The first is someone may call our office or come in with questions. A landowner may be interested in the EQIP program through NRCS and after talking we decide CWMA will work just as well or better for their situation. We write informative articles for the newspaper people call because they are interested. Our office may be working on a larger overall project that involves different agencies or programs. We could offer CWMA as a component of the project if it applies. Lastly, I may have a particular species of interest that I am mapping and I will send letters out to particular landowners in an area of interest (Terri Peters, Wabasha CWMA).
- Direct landowner contact is important to the success of the program. Cost share for treatments doesn't seem to be as important as education and direction. We're lucky to have media support in that the Pope County Tribune will post a 'Weed of the Week' article during the summer months. The articles are well received and generate questions (Luan Johnsrud, Pope CWMA).