



Indiana Invasives Initiative

2018 Annual Report

Johnson County Weed Wrangle.



Purple wintercreeper overtakes trees.



Working on a landowner survey.



Indiana Invasive Initiative Vision:

Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasive Management (SICIM) and its partners work with landowners and citizens to increase awareness of invasive species and act to reduce and prevent their spread across all landscapes to protect Indiana's lands and waters.

From Dawn Slack,
Project Coordinator



It started with an agreement between Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasive Management (SICIM) and the USDA NRCS. Both entities knew that something had to be done, something at a state-wide level, something that involved citizens.

They agreed SICIM would take on the project and at the end of 5 years, have 60 counties represented by a Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA). Seems like a doable project, right? You bet! In fact, its imperative we do.

Well, let me emphasize that this “project” is no small undertaking. Producing a state-wide sustainable CISMA-creating machine to incubate and start 60 CISMAs takes just about every ounce of energy a team has. It takes dedication and tenacity to get out and find and convince partners to start a CISMA. It takes gusto and perseverance for those who step up to the plate to be part of a CISMA. It’s all worth it, just ask our CISMAs.

We have worked hard and more than anything empowered citizens! Please read the following pages; we have news to share.

Why is this volunteer board, their employees and so many in this state so passionate about invasives species? Let me clarify, their passion is not about invasive species, but about our native species, our lands and waters. They are passionate about you and me and this planet.

Successful conservation requires landscape scale action at a particular place with real people. We realize that large-scale conservation is the way forward, and in order to be successful we must engage citizens. People are eager to save what is familiar. It is therefore, imperative that we familiarize ourselves with nature.

Improved management of public lands only goes so far.

Why? Because imperiled species and special habitats occur on private lands too. Hence, we need to work together.

The biological discovery of this planet began long ago and continues! Scientists believe there are more than 14 million species on this planet! About 1/8 have been identified.

The devastation created by just a small handful of invasives species is clear. We understand the power of us; citizens, landowners, gardeners, foresters, managers, family, friends, teachers, farmers, historians, metal fabricators, truck drivers, shoppers, etc. to make a difference. We know that if you understand the implications, you will likely choose to help curtail more catastrophes from invasives.

So here we are, at the end of our first year. We have much to do and share with our friends and neighbors. Together, let’s celebrate our natural diversity and address “the elephant in the room”, invasive species.

Please allow me to share amazing facts about the United States – its impressive. Of 14 major biome types world-wide, the US contains 12. Twelve! Wow!

In 1989, Bailey identified 21 of the 28 globally defined ecoregions in the US and our state natural heritage ecologists have identified more than 4,500 distinct vegetation communities in the US (1994. Bailey. Ecoregions of the United States, rev. ed. Washington: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service). As you can see, we have many reasons to protect our lands and waters.

Please join us! It’s a journey worth taking!

Dawn Slack

Dawn Slack (shown above),
Indiana Invasive Initiative Project Coordinator

Faces of Indiana Invasive Initiative



Emily Finch*
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* No longer with SICIM.



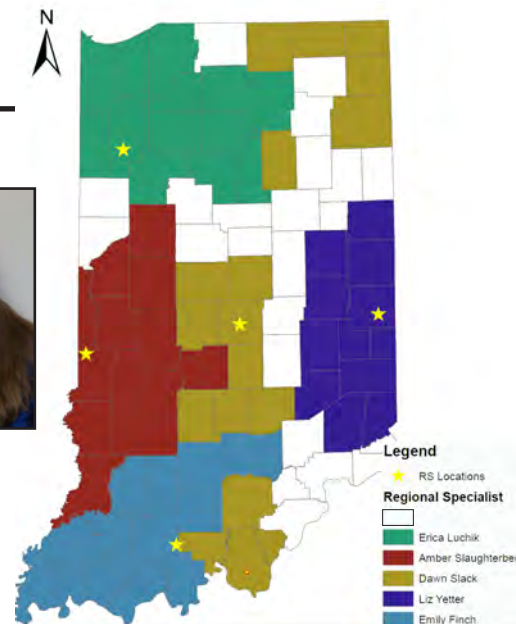
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White counties are unassigned.

Indiana Invasive Initiative (III) Accomplishments



Regional Specialists (2 hired in 11/2018, began work 1/2019)	4
Indiana Conservation Partner Training Events	6
Landowner Visits/Assessments	75+
Outreach Events	135+
Strategic Plan Created 2019-2023	1
CISMAs in Development	31

Expanding Our Reach

In Southwestern Indiana...

SICIM helped two different CISMAs hire personnel last year by providing a financial match to their Clean Water Indiana (CWI) grants. The financial match likely raised their application's scores and resulted in their success.

One of the grants paid to hire an Invasive Species Technician located at Vanderburgh County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD). This position provides assistance and support to CISMA development in Vanderburgh, Warrick, Gibson, Pike and Posey Counties.

The second position funded through a CWI grant was an Invasive Species Specialist at Dubois SWCD, who is working with developing CISMAs in Dubois, Daviess and Martin counties.

Both positions are still funded and we look forward to hearing more from them in 2019.

In Northwestern Indiana...

Another exciting venture was the agreement between SICIM and the ten SWCDs of the Arrowhead Country RC&D (Resource Conservation and Development - regional organizations established to work with NRCS). Each of those ten SWCDs is contributing funding that together with RC&D funding, and SICIM funds from the III, financed an additional SICIM Regional Specialist position.

This specialist will work with these 10 counties to develop local CISMAs. The hiring process began in 2018, and Erica Luchik officially started in January 2019.

SICIM continues to look for grant opportunities and partnerships that will expand the III's ability to provide technical assistance to CISMAs throughout Indiana. If you have an idea on grant opportunities, or potential financial partnerships, be sure to contact our SICIM Financial Committee Chair, Troy Hinkle (troy.hinkle@in.nacdnet.net) to discuss.



Dubois County invasive volunteers shown above and a native plant guide they developed (right).



Many of the new CISMAs come up with names and logos to market their groups.



Get Involved - We need your help!

SICIM began in 2008. Like many groups formed across the U.S. - landowners, private groups and government agencies look for more effective ways to limit the growing economic and environmental damage caused by Invasive Species.

In recent years, SICIM's goal has been to support the formation of local CISMAs within our 35 county region. Starting in 2018, with the Indiana Invasives Initiative, we are working with USDA-NRCS to create CISMAs across all of Indiana. If you want to be involved, we can use more help.

Contact one of the people below to get involved:

- SICIM/III Board (Steering Committee) - Ray Chattin (chattin2265@gmail.com)
- Organization Development – Chery Coon (ccoona@fs.fed.us)
- Finance – Troy Hinkle (troy.hinkle@in.nacdnet.net)
- Communication – Steve Cotter (cotters@bloomington.in.gov)
- Legislative - Mike Warner (mwarner@arborterra.com)

Preventing Invasives

TERRESTRIAL INVASIVE PLANT RULE

On Tuesday January 15th, the Indiana Natural Resource Commission voted to follow the recommendation of the Public Hearing Officer to ratify the proposed rule to ban 44 species. Over 500 responses with overwhelming support of the rule were received during the public comment period. A huge thank you to those who commented, we could not have done this without you. If things go well, an effective rule should be in place by the end of April, 2019.



Wintercreeper (*Euonymus fortunei*) covers the ground and climbs the trees with burning bush (*Euonymus alatus*) in the shrub layer of this Knox County woodlot. Both of these species will be prohibited from sale in Knox County under the new ordinance.

Knox County Addresses Invasive Plants

In August, Knox County was the first county in Indiana to pass a terrestrial invasive plant regulation. This ordinance prevents the sale, trade, or import of 64 different invasive plant species in Knox County. The list includes the 44 species included in new terrestrial plant rule. Passing the ordinance is a win for anyone who cares about natural resources in Knox County.

The ordinance will take effect on January 1, 2020. Plants that have already been planted are not affected by the ordinance. The Natural Resource Specialist or a person designated by the county commissioner will enforce the ordinance.

Congratulations to Knox County for setting the bar for other counties to pass similar ordinances.

Thanks to the Indiana Invasive Plant Advisory Committee (IPAC) and the Indiana Invasive Species Council (IISC) who are responsible for the official Indiana invasive plant list which did the background work for this rule. IPAC is currently reassessing all plants on the official state list that are not ranked highly invasive.



The new rule bans *Phragmites* (above) and *Oriental bitter-sweet* (below).

Plant species assessed as highly invasive would likely be proposed as future amendments to be added to this rule.

For more information on IPAC and the IISC, and to view the Indiana invasive plant list, go to www.indianainvasivespecies.org.



Early Detection Rapid Response

When prevention doesn't work, the sooner we can find an invasive infestation and rapidly remove it, the better. In 2018 there were three instances where early detection helped control an invasive plant population.



Black swallow-wort (shown in photo at left), native to the Mediterranean region, was found in 8 counties in Indiana in 2018. When the Allen County Park Department found the plant invading

their park, they asked for help controlling it and SICIM helped fund the group's effort.

In Monroe County mile-a-minute vine (shown here in center photo) was found on private prop-

erty and eradicated. The patch will need to be watched for a while to make sure it doesn't come back.

In northern Indiana a patch of yellow iris, reported on EDDMaps was removed thanks to the



Indiana Coastal CWMA. Yellow iris can quickly spread throughout a wetland.



EDDMaps is an important tool for tracking invasives as they move into an area and allows us to quickly take action and control them while the populations are small. Help us by reporting invasives on EDDMaps!

www.eddmaps.org

Creating Connections



Indiana Invasive Initiative is a partnership, more than just individuals, but groups working together and collaborating to take conservation to the next level. Our intent is that this level be effective, successful and sustainable. Project Coordinator Dawn Slack points to all the partners involved and says “to me, that inspires people. They are part of a collaborative effort, a really big effort; one that is sweeping across Indiana and across the nation.”

A shared goal of SICIM and the III is to raise public awareness and engagement of invasive species. We have learned that while presentations on invasive species identification and negative impacts are a good start, nothing is better than getting community members out in the field and having a hands-on experience.



One of the greatest impacts our Regional Specialists and partners had in 2018 was one-on-one landowner surveys. Specialists walk the landowner’s property and point out invasives to

them. This inspires confidence in identification and helps them begin a plan on how to manage invasives on their property. In 2018 alone, over 75 land-owner surveys were completed!!

Bringing together community members to work together to manage invasives is another effective way to raise awareness, develop partnerships and create community pride.

In 2018, SICIM decided to become a partner of the National Weed Wrangle®. An initial implementation of this program at eight different sites in collaboration with CISMAs was a great success. Our plan is to continue and grow this program throughout Indiana in 2019 to unite communities to protect the public natural areas they treasure.

Be thinking of a project you would like to have as an official Weed Wrangle®, and talk with your local Regional Specialist on how to coordinate and register your event for 2019.



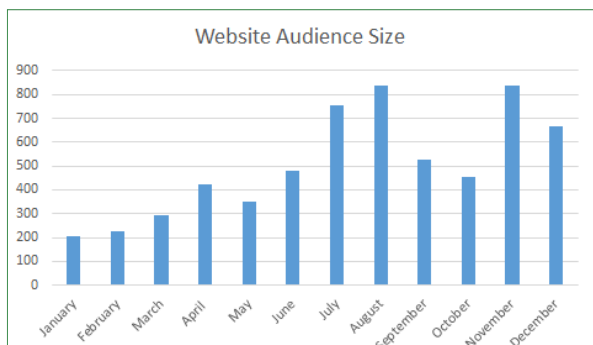
A Weed Wrangle® to pull garlic mustard was hosted at Pioneer Mothers Memorial Forest by the Orange County CISMA.



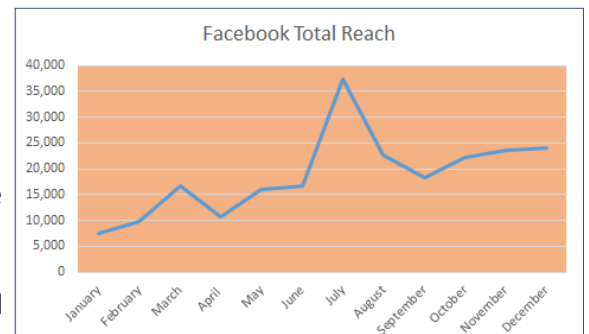
Reaching Out To Tell Our Story

We know people get their information in a variety of ways, so we try to provide that information however you might look for it. Our website, sicim.info provides resources, links and a calendar of activities. We are constantly adding to the site but if you notice things you’d like to see, let us know. Visits to our website vary by season, but a total of 6,153 visits were made to our website in 2018.

Two YouTube videos were produced in 2018 on stilt-grass and Chinese yam. More videos are coming soon.



Facebook has become even more popular in 2018, with a total of 225,892 people viewing at least one of our Facebook posts.



The most viewed information for both sites were posts on the Indiana Terrestrial Plant Rule. But other posts on invasives such as mimosa, Japanese barberry, and European buckthorn also received several thousand views. We appreciate the interest people have in learning more about invasives and hope you continue to want to learn more.

SICIM started an Instagram site at the end of 2018, so watch for more on that in 2019.

We also received donations through these on-line platforms which allow us to continue our work. Thank you.

Building Local CISMAs

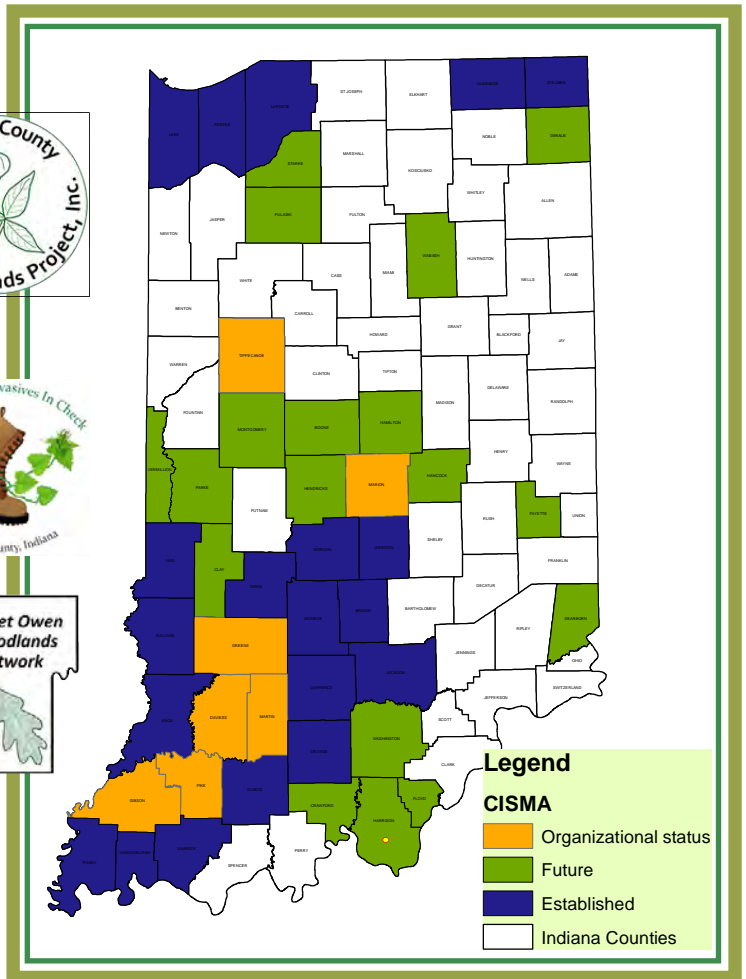
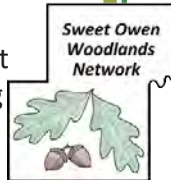
Across the state small groups of people are meeting together to plan how to work together. The mission is simple, reflecting the Indiana Invasive Initiative mission: “Developing local capacity by collaborating statewide to protect the health and diversity of our lands and waters by managing invasive species.”

To ensure there is local capacity to manage invasives locally, SICIM wants every county in Indiana to be served by a sustainable Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) by 2025. With the help of leaders across the state we set a goal of establishing at least 12 new CISMAs/year until we reach our goal. We are well on our way to meeting that goal.

The process can be initiated in different ways but generally with a call-out meeting to those interested in a partnership. These meetings usually forge new friendships and bonds as like-minded people discuss their shared concerns about the impacts of invasive species

As the map shows, several new CISMAs are in different stages of organization, others are just starting to meet and get their footing. Yet some CISMAs have a solid vision, a regular group of partners and members, and logos. They are making things happen and protecting the health and diversity of native plants and animals in their county. We hope the interest in getting involved will catch on in the remaining counties in the upcoming years.

Across CISMAs we’ve also done surveys of landowners, officials, professionals, and just interested individuals to learn what their level of knowledge is on invasives. We also ask if they currently manage invasives or what they perceive to be the biggest concerns and



activities they would like us to pursue.

If there isn't a CISMA in your county, and you're interested in helping us develop one, contact us on how you could start laying the groundwork to get one started in your backyard!



Group of volunteers control invasives with the Knox County CISMA.



MC IRIS volunteers help on a workday.



Fifth graders from Parkview School help control invasives along a trail for the KIC CISMA.



2018 SICIM ANNUAL MEETING

Partners Come Together to Recognize and Celebrate Accomplishments

On June 21st 2018, SICIM held its 11th annual Partners Meeting at the Community Center in Paoli. The meeting unveiled the new faces of the Indiana Invasives Initiative and provided updates on SICIM and the III's accomplishments. It also recognized outstanding partners and volunteers of 2018, and had multiple speakers talk about informative and inspirational work occurring in the Midwest.

Our two guest speakers were Dr. Theresa Culley, University of Cincinnati, and Chris Evans, University of Illinois Extension. Dr. Culley spoke about her ongoing research on callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*) cultivar hybridization and seed dispersal patterns by birds.

Dr. Culley's second topic was the Terrestrial Plant Rule of Ohio that came about through a partnership between the Ohio Invasive Plant Council and Ohio Nursery and Landscape Association. Collaboratively putting plant species through a rigorous scientific assessment, the partners were able to agree on which species were most invasive and should be removed from sale, this included callery pear.



Chris Evans (shown above) spoke about his experience starting as the executive director of the River to River Cooperative Weed Management Area in southern Illinois, and how he took the message of invasive species state-wide.

Additional speakers included: Dawn Slack, with an update on III accomplishments; Dan Shaver, The Nature Conservancy, spoke about their unique partnership with the Maumee Boy Scout Camp to eradicate autumn olive; and the 2017 SICIM update was given by Steve Cotter.

Several awards were presented:

- Outgoing SICIM Board member, David Savage, was recognized for his service and contributions.
- The Partner of the Year award went to NRCS for their collaboration with SICIM to help fund the III.

The plaque was accepted by Brian Kruse, NRCS Forester.

- Volunteer of the Year award recognized Steve Cotter, outgoing SICIM President, for two years of leadership during the III development.
- The President's Award went to Troy Hinkle for his work with the NRCS Agreement.

Lunch was catered by the Lost River Market, and between registration and donations, the Annual Meeting not only paid for itself, but raised additional funds for SICIM and the III. Thank you to all that came and enjoyed the day with us, please join us in 2019 for our next Annual Meeting!



Brian Kruse accepts the Partner of the Year Award for NRCS from SICIM Chair Steve Cotter. Steve Cotter then received the Volunteer of the Year Award from SICIM's Will Drews.

Indiana Invasive Initiative Logo Contest

The Indiana Invasives Initiative (III) logo contest in 2018 was won by Todd Axsom with Sage Graphic, LLC from Solsberry, IN.

SICIM's Chair Ray Chattin applauded Axsom's logo saying, "This logo is the perfect brand to help us market our mission." Axsom's logo was one of 36 entries. The board agreed the entries exhibited some incredible talent. Axsom won \$500 for his design.

The board liked the versatility of his design including that it could be used as a full logo, words only, or as an icon; in black and white or in color. "It was a logo that had a lot of flexibility and really captured the spirit of what we wanted. We couldn't be more pleased," said Chattin.



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Ray Chattin

Vice Chair
Will Drews

Treasurer
Allison Shoaf

Secretary
Teena Ligman

Members
Cheryl Coon
Janet Eger
Troy Hinkle
Abby Irwin
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Mike Warner

SICIM Staff

Project Coordinator
Dawn Slack
Regional Specialists
Emily Finch
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Erica Luchik
Liz Yetter

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The USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service and SICIM Sign 5-Year Agreement to Work Together

"I believe this agreement is a blessing for everyone concerned, and the biggest winners are the people of Indiana and our natural resources," says Ray Chattin, Chair of the Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasive Management (SICIM) group.

As the problem with invasive plants has risen globally, both the NRCS and SICIM realized combining forces to stem the rise of these threats in Indiana would be beneficial. Invasives costs to our economy and environment continue to rise.

SICIM and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) entered into a contribution agreement. The agreement is to develop local grass-root organizations called Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) across Indiana.

Both SICIM and NRCS realized that to make headway, the invasive problem needed to be addressed at the local level by local people using local resources. SICIM was one of four CISMAs in Indiana at that time. All were operated strictly with volunteers.

SICIM as the oldest and largest of the

existing CISMAs, will take the lead state-wide. Chattin explained, "Under the five-year contribution agreement, NRCS provides partial funding to hire the staff who work with conservation organizations to develop CISMAs."

Under the agreement SICIM staff and volunteers are also to provide free technical assistance to landowners to control invasive plants.

Jane Hardisty, who was the NRCS State Conservationist at the time the agreement was signed, was confident that this agreement would bring a needed emphasis to the fight against invasive plants in Indiana.

NRCS put \$917,400 into the 5-year agreement. The SICIM group has agreed to raise an equal amount through grants, donations, and contributions from other conservation organizations.

Together the \$1,834,800 in funds, and the volunteers brought together to work on the invasive problem are a formidable force which are already making a difference to bring back natives and restore natural habitat in Indiana.

Thank you to our Partners and Contributors in 2018

- Arrowhead Country RC&D
- Al Baker
- Benjamin Bemis
- Judi Brown
- Laurie Ann Bruner
- Marilee Mundy Burnside
- Johnny Butler
- Ray Chattin
- Lance Dye
- EcoLogic
- Four Rivers Forestry Committee
- John Gensheimer
- German American Bank
- GramWood Inc
- Abby Irwin
- Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Indiana State Soil Conservation Board
- Michael Owens
- Evie Phelps
- Pike County Farm Bureau
- Sam Shine
- Katie Simmons
- Stambaugh Forestry
- Helen Steussy
- Linda Sutterer
- The Nature Conservancy
- USDA - Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Mark Yost

Plus, Many of you donated during the Annual Meeting or Anonymously.

Thank You!!

Since much of our funding comes from Federal funds this

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