



United States Department of Agriculture



Indiana
Invasives Initiative

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

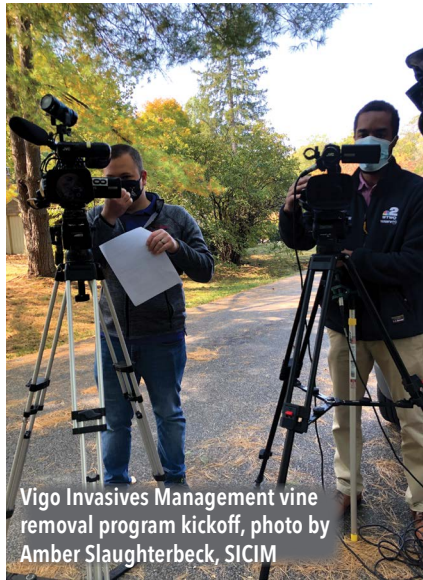


Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management

A LOOK BACK TO FORGE AHEAD

2020 has posed hardships and challenges for us all, and yet so much has been accomplished for invasive species awareness and management in Indiana. This is made possible by the hard work of our Indiana Invasives Initiative (III) team, our local CISMAs, and volunteers, as well as through the support of our conservation partners and contributors.

As of 2018, the III project is the primary focus for SICIM, by way of a partnership with the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service. Through this agreement, SICIM is working to realize the goal of 60 counties in Indiana represented by a Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA). We involve our partners in support of CISMA development and other project deliverables. The III provides free in person landowner technical assistance



Vigo Invasives Management vine removal program kickoff, photo by Amber Slaughterbeck, SICIM

and trainings for our Indiana Conservation Partners and general public. In this third year of the III, our staff has grown to 6 Regional Specialists, which affords us the means to actively work with 70 counties in Indiana.

The year began with a record number of planned events and trainings. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many (but not all) of the in person activities were adapted to take place as virtual opportunities. We provided live and recorded experiences that gave people the

opportunity to volunteer, network, and receive training.

We are grateful to all our members, partners, sponsors, and staff. In thanks, we take this opportunity to share what we have learned, and the goals achieved, despite all obstacles.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR SICIM CHAIR

SICIM's progress over the past year has been dramatic, given the challenges that COVID-19 has presented. Even with having to retool a lot of events and the way our employees work, the Indiana Invasives Initiative (III) continues to move forward and gain momentum.

In 2020, our employees and volunteers found innovative ways to continue to engage with landowners and organizations through social media, emails, calls, virtual meetings to address the threat of invasive species and continue to work on local CISMA development. We were even able to host several outdoor events (mostly Weed Wrangles) in the later part of last year, following county safety protocols.

In addition, we were able to expand our team. We were sad to lose our NW Regional Specialist Erica Luchik as she and her spouse



moved to Montana. However, we took the opportunity to hire 2 new Regional Specialists in her place, Mandi Glanz and Dugan Julian, who will be able to provide more technical assistance to Northern Indiana landowners and professionals.

In this 2020 Annual Report, you will not only see how far SICIM has come but also the exciting new invasive plant related news from partners like the DNR Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology with a recap of their first year of enforcing the Terrestrial Plant Rule. Look out for more great events, programming, and new groups to come along in 2021 as we hopefully head back to normalcy!

Lastly, I would like to thank all of our sponsors (listed on at the end of the report) and partners in 2020. This grassroots initiative would not be possible without your support.

Sincerely,
Will Drews

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PROJECT COORDINATOR

Last year was challenging and yet many never wavered to help us build capacity for conservation across Indiana. We witnessed an increase in participation in trainings, an increase in conversations about invasive species' impacts, an increase in the desire to improve our land management (we have written management plans for over 18,000 acres!), and an increase in on-the-ground work. A hearty thanks to those in this boat for healthy lands and waters.

It will take many partnerships to keep us afloat; working together is the path forward and is the way to success. As we sail into 2021, we want to recognize your efforts, build relationships, share the knowledge and passion of many to inspire us, and ensure you have tools to succeed. We are holding quarterly lunch and learn sessions to cover topics you request, as well as provide time to network. We are again hosting a Weed Wrangle Indiana Contest to encourage and award those who work to partner and hold events that reach new audiences. We are planning at least 8 regional trainings for 2021 and a multi-day Indiana CISMA Conference with the theme "Why Do We Manage Invasive Species?!" We want simply to build upon your efforts, so we effectively create capacity for conservation. We hope that we will partner more, communicate more, and together steer the boat through the challenges that are before us.

As we engage in this grassroots project across the state, we want to acknowledge the tireless, dedicated and collaborative effort for effective land management that is required to restore and maintain a natural landscape, one that supports our native species and is biodiverse, healthy, and economically productive. Hence the Weed Wrangler award. This award is associated with the Indiana Invasives Initiative (III), our grassroots project with a vision to restore and maintain a natural landscape that is defined by healthy diverse and economically productive communities

of native species integrated within a mosaic of other land uses driven by an informed public. We choose awardees based upon their level of effort and ability to collaborate to improve land management within their CISMA. We seek a group or an individual that is:

- 1) actively engaging with their community via boots on-the-ground activities to manage invasive species,
- 2) connecting with partners for long-lasting high-level impacts across the county and,
- 3) thinking creatively to educate, engage and empower our communities to tackle invasive species issues to improve native habitat for healthy lands and waters.

Awardees are chosen annually by the III team members (includes SICIM, Regional Specialists and Project Coordinator) who are in the trenches and working with our citizens and conservation partners across their region. Anyone can nominate a person or group for this achievement through the III team. Although this award is from our small but mighty III grassroots project, it is bestowed by a team that fully understands the dedication and exhausting level of effort necessary for effective conservation to support healthy lands and waters upon which we all depend. We recognized the following Weed Wrangler Award winners in 2020:

Terry Sanders, Marilee Burnside, Upper Wabash Invasives Network (UWIN), Helen Steussy, Judy Brett, Steve Heeger, Daviess-Martin CISMA, Hamilton County Invasives Partnership (HIP) and Bill Zacher. Thank you for your dedication to the mission!

Lastly, thank goes to all of you for your support and hard work. We can't do this without you!

Please continue to spread the word, help us enlist landowner assessments, find, and develop both typical and atypical partnerships, hold Weed Wrangles and remove invasive species.

Respectfully,
Dawn Slack



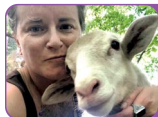


Indiana Invasives Initiative is a collaboration between Southern Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service to manage invasive species and raise public awareness of the devastation they cause.

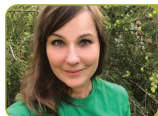
MEET THE INDIANA INVASIVE INITIATIVE TEAM



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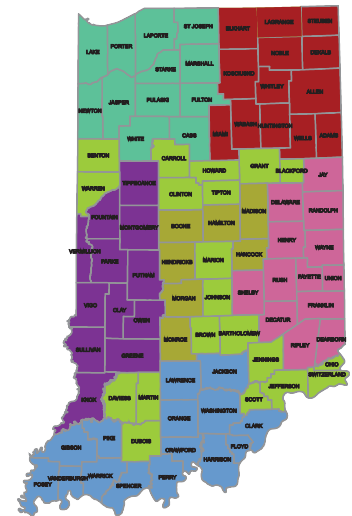
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INDIANA INVASIVES INITIATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

OUR PROGRESS BY THE NUMBERS



629 Outreach Events



359 Property Assessments



123 Technical Assistance Provided



18,206 Acres with Management Plans



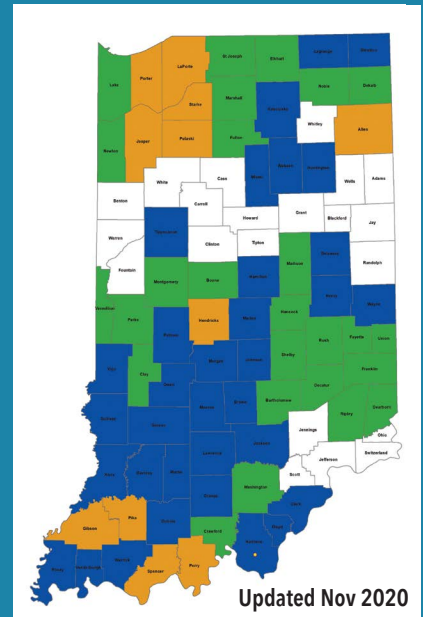
8 Trainings Conducted (in 2020)



31 established CISMAs (in 34 Counties)

Totals reflect progress of Indiana Invasives Initiative since launch in 2018 unless otherwise indicated

INDIANA CISMA MAP



- Established CISMAs
- Working on CISMAs
- Others we are working with to develop CISMAs



West-Central Invasive Plant Training at Shakamak State Park, photo by Amber Slaughterbeck, SICIM

SICIM 2020 ANNUAL MEETING GOES VIRTUAL

Over 75 people attended the virtual annual meeting held on June 25th, 2020, which was the best attendance ever for an annual meeting. Many that joined us were new to SICIM so it gave SICIM Chair Will Drews a chance to bring everyone up to date with our mission and highlight our accomplishments.

The Chair recognized Allison Shoaf with Brown County SWCD, as the SICIM 2019 Volunteer of the Year. Allison has served as SICIM treasurer from the time SICIM was a small organization through 2020, as we grew and added employees. Will noted she handled the job with finesse and skill.

The 2019 Partner of the Year Award was presented to the Arrowhead Country RC&D. The Arrowhead RC&D took the lead in the northwest (NW) region to partner with SICIM and work with their SWCDs to coordinate support and funding for a majority of the NW Regional Specialist position. Their support in NW Indiana is invaluable.

The 2019 President's Award was given to Cheryl Coon, for providing support and help to SICIM in the past year. Cheryl is the Forest Botanist for Hoosier National Forest, USDA Forest Service and the Operations and Development Committee lead for SICIM. Will Drews said she helps keep him and the organization on track. Congratulations to all the award winners!

Project Coordinator Dawn Slack gave an overview of the Terrestrial Plant Rule and explained the new guide. Following that, each Regional Specialist provided a short update on their areas featuring a few exciting or interesting things going on in their areas.



Keynote speaker, John Goss 'Asian Carp Czar'

Keynote speaker John Goss presented on *In Every Crisis There are Opportunities*. John spoke on embracing change. John had served as the 'Asian Carp Czar' under the Obama Administration and recounted the alternatives they had looked at to controlling carp in the Mississippi River. He said ten years ago it seemed hopeless and many thought we were

going to lose the fisheries in our Great Lakes. Yet today they've been kept out of the Great Lakes. He described the partnership of groups who worked together and the bipartisan leadership. He emphasized how important that was to have an alliance that worked together to get a sustainable budget and kept the pressure on.

Goss commented on our Indiana political climate for invasives and told us it was looking good for our cause. He advised that we never underestimate the value of good photos to get results in convincing legislators.

He reminded us of the importance of documenting evidence in each legislative district where invasives are taking over and let them hear from our

landowners. Despite tight Indiana budgets, he emphasized that in the wake of our win with the Terrestrial Plant Rule, it is a good time to keep things moving forward.

John Goss's presentation was inspirational, and many positive responses were received on the 2020 annual meeting. Thanks to all who helped make it possible.



Volunteer of the Year and outgoing SICIM Treasurer, Allison Shoaf, Brown County SWCD



President's Award Recipient Cheryl Coon, USFS Hoosier National Forest

2020 INDIANA CISMA CONFERENCE, INVASIVE SPECIES AND WATERSHEDS

As with many meetings and events in 2020, the proceedings of the Indiana CISMA Conference were creatively transitioned to an online experience. Conference organizers divided the event into two segments to offer both educational and networking opportunities. The first part consisted of a series of prerecorded presentations by conference speakers. The 2nd portion was a live 2-hour virtual meeting held on August 20th. There were a total of 317 registrants.

The sessions in the first segment were made available to attendees two weeks in advance of the live event. Qualifying attendees were able to earn continuing education credits through the Office of the Indiana State Chemist, the Society of American Foresters, and International Society of Arboriculture. The presentations covered a range of topics including: research review of invasive species impacts on forests and watersheds with Stephanie Downs, Ohio Division of Forestry; invasive management techniques with Lenny Farlee, Purdue University, Department of Forestry and Natural Resources; updates on kudzu and spotted lantern fly from Ken Cote & Vince Burkle, IDNR, Division of Entomology and Plant Pathology (DEPP); research on how native plant communities support biodiversity with Deb Marr, Department of Biological Sciences and Director of Sustainability Studies at IU South Bend; and a walk-thru of the new Woody Invasives of the Great Lakes Collaborative online platform with Clair Ryan, Coordinator of the Midwest Invasive



Plant Network.

A total of 187 attendees joined the live session. The meeting began with a welcome from Ken Alexander, Hamilton County Councilman. Megan Abraham, Director of the IDNR, Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology, gave an update on the Indiana Terrestrial Plant Rule. This segued into an introduction to the new Indiana guide to terrestrial invasive plants by Dawn Slack, in her role with the Invasive Plant Advisory Committee. Dawn and the SICIM Regional Specialist team gave a progress update of the Indiana Invasives Initiative project. Participants were able to take part in a live Q&A with the conference speakers before breaking off into small group networking sessions. During the Weed Wrangler Awards, various individuals, partners, and organizations were recognized (more details on Page 3). The conference culminated with a drawing for the winner of the 2020 Weed Wrangle Indiana Contest.



We are grateful for all our sponsors that stuck with us as we figured out the best way to hold this conference in light of the pandemic. We also want to thank each attendee for your interest and engagement. We are in the process of organizing the 2021 CISMA Conference to be held during the first week of August. Mark your calendars and check back soon for more details (www.sicim.info/cismaconference).

2020 INDIANA WEED WRANGLE CONTEST

Many CISMAs hosted Weed Wrangles over the course of the contest. Participants created flyers, posted on social media, sought sponsors, found clever ways to track their progress, and most importantly, restored habitat statewide. Thanks to all Weed Wrangle hosts and attendees. Congratulations to our 2020 Contest winner Morgan County Native & Invasive Plant Partnership (MC-NIPP), who received \$500 to support invasive management in Morgan County, and 4 hours of hands-on assistance from the Regional Specialist for their county. Join us for the 2021 Weed Wrangle contest, for a chance to win (www.sicim.info/weedwrangleincontest).



Old Town Waverly Weed Wrangle with Morgan County Native & Invasive Plant Partnership - photo by Mary Welz, SICIM

Weed Wrangle® Indiana is part of a national movement that highlights the importance of managing invasive species. Each event offers expert-led, hands-on invasive species identification and management. SICIM and the Indiana Invasives Initiative partner on Weed Wrangle events across the state to celebrate and protect our native plant communities.



REGIONAL SPECIALISTS 2020 WEED WRANGLE HIGHLIGHTS

NICKEL PLATE TRAIL WEED WRANGLE - Mandi Glanz , Northwest Indiana

On October 24th, several partners including Friends of the Nickel Plate Trail (NPT), Upper Wabash Invasives Network, Rooted in Forestry, Miami County Highway Department, Miami County Soil & Water Conservation District, and SICIM



Nickel Plate Trail Weed Wrangle, photo by Mandi Glanz, SICIM

worked together for the first Nickel Plate Trail Weed Wrangle. Twenty volunteers gathered along the NPT at the Fulton and Miami County Line. They learned to identify and control invasive species and that ecosystem health will improve with continued invasive management. The volunteers worked hard to treat dense patches of Asian bush honeysuckle, autumn olive, and white mulberry. Multiple truckloads of invasive plants were hauled away. Partners continue to collaborate about invasive management along the NPT. We hope to see you at the next Nickel Plate Trail Weed Wrangle!

FOSTER PARK WEED WRANGLE - Dugan Julian , Northeast Indiana

Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation held its first ever Weed Wrangle event on November 14th. The event started off with a presentation on the impact of invasive species to natural areas as well

as the best ways to identify the target species of the day: Asian Bush Honeysuckle. Chad Shaw, Superintendent of Parks Planning, Landscape, and Horticulture, conducted a safety brief on the use of loppers and hand-saws for the volunteers. Over twenty volunteers and Parks and Recreation staff members cleared honeysuckle along the main looping path at Foster Park. The Fort Wayne Parks and Recreation Department brought out two industrial mulchers and bin



Foster Park Weed Wrangle, photo by Dugan Julian, SICIM

trucks to dispose of the brush as it was removed. The crew removed honeysuckle along more than 500 meters, with total biomass removed and chipped topping 36 cubic feet! There are plans to continue treating honeysuckle along the remainder of

the path in 2021 in the spring (and possibly Fall).

WEST LAFAYETTE WEED WRANGLE - Amber Slaughterbeck, West Central Indiana

The City of West Lafayette hosted its first Weed Wrangle event on December 14th at a well-used trail between Purdue's Football Field and the historic landmark John & Catherine Christian House by Frank Lloyd Wright. Partners from the City of West Lafayette, West Lafayette Parks and Recreation, Wabash River Enhancement



West Lafayette Weed Wrangle, photo by Amber Slaughterbeck, SICIM



Dutro-Ernst Woods DIY Weed Wrangle, photo by Jane Meyer Delaware County Invasive Plant Project



Williams Park Weed Wrangle, photo by Greg Dickenson, Brownsburg Parks & Recreation



Charlestown State Park Weed Wrangle, photo by Kaila Knies, SICIM

Corporation, Tippecanoe Invasive Cooperative Taskforce, Indiana Native Plant Society, RIP Squad, and SICIM all came together to control purple wintercreeper and English ivy along the trail with intentions to return to remove Asian bush honeysuckle in February 2021. Additional plans for this site include planting natives and installing interpretive signage.

DIY WEED WRANGLE WITH RED-TAIL LAND CONSERVANCY & DIPP

- Liz Yetter , East Central Indiana

For the month of May, the Delaware County Invasive Plant Project hosted a week-long self lead Weed Wrangle at two Red Tail Land Conservancy properties, Dutro -Ernest Woods and White River Woods. Barrels were placed at both sites with instructions on how to ID garlic mustard and how to remove it. Over the course of the week over ten 20-gallon bags of garlic mustard were removed between the two sites. Be on the look out for more events in 2021.

CHARLESTOWN SP WEED WRANGLE

- Kaila Knies, Southern Indiana

Charlestown State Park hosted their first Weed Wrangle event on October 10th at the head of the Rose Island trail in partnership with SICIM, the Clark County Harmful Invasives Removal Project, and the Clark County Soil and Water Conservation District. The event kicked off with

an introduction to why it is important to remove invasive plant species and several participants shared their own battles and success stories with invasive plants. Participants of all ages

including a small homeschooling group worked to cut and stump treat invasive bush honeysuckle, Autumn olive, and burning bush. At the end of the event native plant seed packets were given away to all participants. The next Weed Wrangle for Charlestown SP is planned for Saturday March 27, 2021.

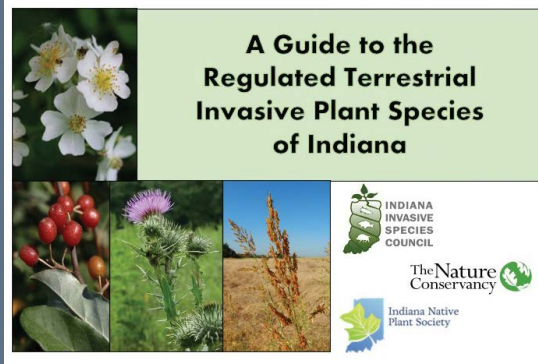
WILLIAMS PARK WEED WRANGLE

- Mary Welz, Central Indiana

Brownsburg Parks & Recreation hosted their first Weed Wrangle event on December 5th at Williams Park in partnership with SICIM and Hendricks County Invasive Management Cooperative. To start off the event, Michael Homoya, retired Indiana DNR State Botanist, and wife Barbara spoke about the importance of removing invasive plants, which displace native plants, eliminate food and cover for wildlife, and threaten our rare plant and animal species. Residents of all ages worked to cut, and stump treat invasive bush honeysuckle and burning bush in a portion of the 47 wooded acres at the 77-acre city park. More Weed Wrangle events are planned for Williams Park in 2021, and this work supports an ongoing commitment to manage invasives at other Brownsburg Parks & Recreation properties.

YEAR ONE OF TERRESTRIAL PLANT RULE & INVASIVE PLANTS GUIDE

The Terrestrial Invasive Plant Rule, which became enforceable on April 18th of last year, is a significant milestone and tool in our toolbox to help foster healthy lands and waters that support insects, birds, other wildlife and of course us. In order to protect and manage our wonderful green spaces (our parks, preserves, forests, etc.) we need to manage invasive terrestrial plants. Part of management is to avoid planting an invasive plant, hence the terrestrial plant rule. In order to manage our public and private lands effectively we need to also be able to identify invasive plants, report them to assess damage and work collaboratively to control them, and use native plants appropriately to help our lands and waters heal.



To enhance efforts to identify invasive plants for mapping and management, the Indiana Invasive Species Council, The Nature Conservancy in Indiana, and the Indiana Native Plant Society have collaborated to create *A Guide to the Regulated Terrestrial Invasive Plants*

Species of Indiana. This field guide covers 49 regulated terrestrial invasive plants in Indiana with pictures and descriptions on how to identify the species, as well as specifics on how to distinguish these invasive species from similar native species. Information on the regulations and how to report violations are also included. The PDF version of the field guide is free to download and a printed edition is available for purchase.

UPDATES TO THE INDIANA OFFICIAL INVASIVE PLANT LIST

In 2020, the Invasive Plant Advisory Committee (IPAC) to the Indiana Invasive Species Council (IISC) released assessments for 20 terrestrial plant species. Several of the species assessed received an updated rank based on new research and data.

Some of these recently reviewed species, such as burning bush, which was previously ranked Medium, were already on the IISC Official Invasive Plant List. However, others are new to the list including mimosa tree, moneywort, beefsteak plant, and Ravenna grass.

Based on new data collected from citizens and professionals, the following species were ranked High: sweet autumn clematis, burning bush, lesser celandine, moneywort, Chinese maiden grass, wild parsnip, spreading hedge parsley, Japanese hedge parsley, and European highbush cranberry.

The IISC adopted the revised lists in December 2019 and these ranking for these 20 species is now included in the Official State List.

The IISC Official Invasive Plant List is not the same as the Terrestrial Plant Rule (TPR). The plants ranked High on the Official State List were used

to develop the list of plants for the TPR.

Species newly ranked as High on the Official State List will be evaluated for inclusion in future amendments to the TPR. At this time, no dates have been set to begin the process of amending the rule. The ongoing ranking updates by the IPAC is an important part of the process for future regulations.



The invasive tree Mimosa (*Albizia julibrissin*) was recently ranked and added to the IISC Official Invasive Plant List. Photo by Mary Welz, SICIM.

ON THE HORIZON

SICIM Annual Partner Meeting: *Working Towards Resiliency in an Uncertain World*

On March 25th, 2021, SICIM will again host our annual meeting as a virtual event. Join us as we explore how the land management activities that we do locally tie into creating a network of resilient lands across Indiana. Our guest speaker will be John Shuey, Director of Science for The Nature Conservancy in Indiana.

Indiana Invasive Species Week

Join us April 18-24, 2021, as we engage audiences during this week to acknowledge the impacts invasive species have on our amazing native plant and wildlife species across the Hoosier state. Stay tuned for more details.

Indiana Cisma Conference

We will meet the first week of August (final dates tbd). This year's theme is "Why Do We Manage Invasive Species?". We plan to offer continuing education credits through recorded sessions, and host a live virtual 2.5-hour event with a keynote speaker. This year the event will include optional field days to teach plant identification, demonstrate management techniques and illustrate why we manage invasive species. You will be able to choose from several locations hosted in across the state.



Landowner survey in Owen County, photo by Amber Slaughterbeck, SICIM

SPREAD THE WORD!



We now offer both short and long sleeve versions of our Indiana Invasives shirt. These shirts are a great way to spread the word about the importance of protecting our Hoosier landscapes from the threat of invasive species. For those that are able, you can make an additional donation to directly support the Indiana Invasives Initiative during checkout (www.sicim.info/donate/#iitshirt).

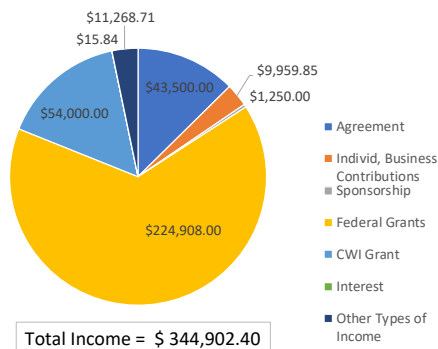
COLLABORATIONS

With the goal of cultivating sustainable support for invasive management, SICIM continues to advocate for state-level invasive species management funding alongside our state and local partners. We offer grant opportunities and partnerships that will expand the capacity of the Indiana Invasives Initiative. For potential collaborations, please reach out to SICIM Vice Chair and Financial Committee Chair, Troy Hinkle (troy.hinkle@in.nacdnet.net).

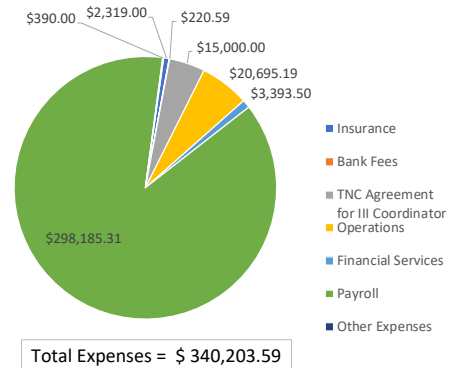
SOUTHERN INDIANA COOPERATIVE INVASIVES MANAGEMENT is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization led by a volunteer board and committee members with the mission to protect, restore, and enhance Southern Indiana's landscapes by coordinating efforts to identify, prevent, and control invasive species.

2020 SICIM FINANCIAL REPORT

FY2020 Income



FY2020 Expenses



This Financial Statement Activity was developed by the SICIM Treasurer, Jason Larson, and is true to the best of his knowledge and belief.

BECOME A SICIM SPONSOR

We are so grateful to our members and sponsors who have made it possible for SICIM to advance invasive species awareness and management across Indiana. Our work must go on and your continued help is so important. To sustain and expand our efforts, please consider SICIM for your charitable support. The money raised goes directly to the Indiana Invasives Initiative. Please contribute today as a Student, Contributor, Patron, Bronze, Silver, or Gold Level Sponsor (www.sicim.info/donate). In thanks for your contribution, SICIM and Ill merchandise will accompany each sponsorship. All supporters will receive the SICIM Annual Report electronically. Our Gold Level sponsors will also receive printed copies of the Annual Report, Business Plan and Contributor Guide. Working together we are building a strong and resilient network of grassroots action to reduce the harm caused by invasive species. **Thank you for your support!**



Yellow passionflower (*Passiflora lutea*) at Buena vista Glade Harrison County after invasive control, photo by Mike Everidge

THANK YOU TO OUR 2020 SPONSORS

GOLD LEVEL

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Indiana Association of SWCDs
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Ray Chattin
State Soil Conservation Board
The Nature Conservancy

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Linda & Larry Sutterer
Tom Tremain

CONTRIBUTORS

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Thanks also to our anonymous sponsors!

ADDITIONAL PHOTO CREDITS: Front cover - Monroe County - Identify and Reduce Invasive Specie; Griffy Creek Weed Wrangle, photo by Ellen Jacquart; Knox County Cisma native plant care workshop, photo by Duane Chattin; Upper Wabash Invasives Network, Nickle Plate Trail Weed Wrangle, photo by Cassandra Kennedy; Vigo Invasives Management vine removal program, photo by Amber Slaughterbeck; Clark County Harmful Invasives Removal Project, Charleston SP Weed Wrangle, photo by Kaila Knies
Back cover - Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge, photo by Dawn Slack



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 Sipes, Phil Woolery

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Project Coordinator - Dawn Slack
 Regional Specialists - Mandi Glanz,
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 Mary Welz, Liz Yetter

SINCE MUCH OF OUR FUNDING COMES FROM FEDERAL SOURCES THIS NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT APPLIES

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