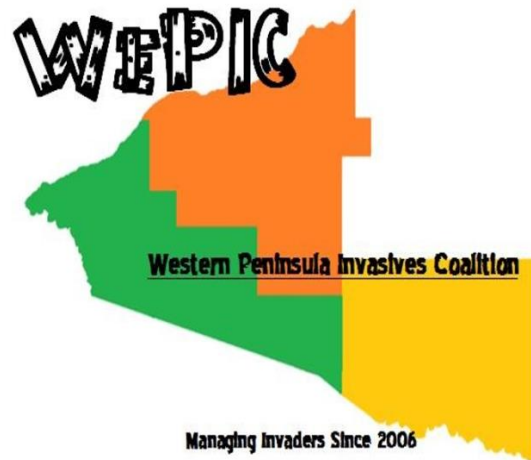


**Western Peninsula
Invasive Species Coalition
Strategic Management Plan
2018-2023**

Approved 5/16/2018



MISSION

WePIC Mission Statement: The Western Peninsula Invasives Coalition’s mission is to facilitate cooperation and education among federal, state, tribal, local groups and landowners in prevention and management of invasive species across land ownership boundaries within Gogebic, Iron, and Ontonagon Counties.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

In September 2006, fourteen organizations interested in controlling the spread of nonnative invasive species came together and created the Western Upper Peninsula Cooperative Weed and Pest Management Area. We covered Gogebic and Iron Counties and the Ottawa National Forest, and signed a five-year participating agreement (06-PA-11090700-024), ending in 2011. Additional members joined during the five years. In 2010, we changed our name to the Western Peninsula Invasives Coalition (WePIC), and added Ontonagon County.

WePIC MANAGEMENT AREA

WePIC’s Management area includes Gogebic, Iron and Ontonagon Counties (Figure 1), totaling 2.3 million acres. WePIC includes 593 named inland lakes, 84 miles of Lake Superior shoreline, three State Parks, one National Forest, and one County Forest.

Several agencies and organizations in the Upper Peninsula actively manage invasive species. Because invasive species freely spread across jurisdictional boundaries, the success of any individual group’s control effort will depend on the cooperation with adjacent landowners. The development of the Western Peninsula Invasives Coalition, hereinafter referred to as WePIC,

helped establish a long-term relationship to deal with the long-term problem of non-native invasive species and created a mechanism for ongoing resource sharing and collaboration for education, prevention, and control. It is to our mutual benefit and interest to work cooperatively to inventory, monitor, reduce, and prevent the spread of invasive species across jurisdictional boundaries within the three counties. This cooperative effort will continue to enhance working relationships between individuals and organizations interested in achieving better results in the fight against invasive species, and maintaining healthy and resilient ecosystems.

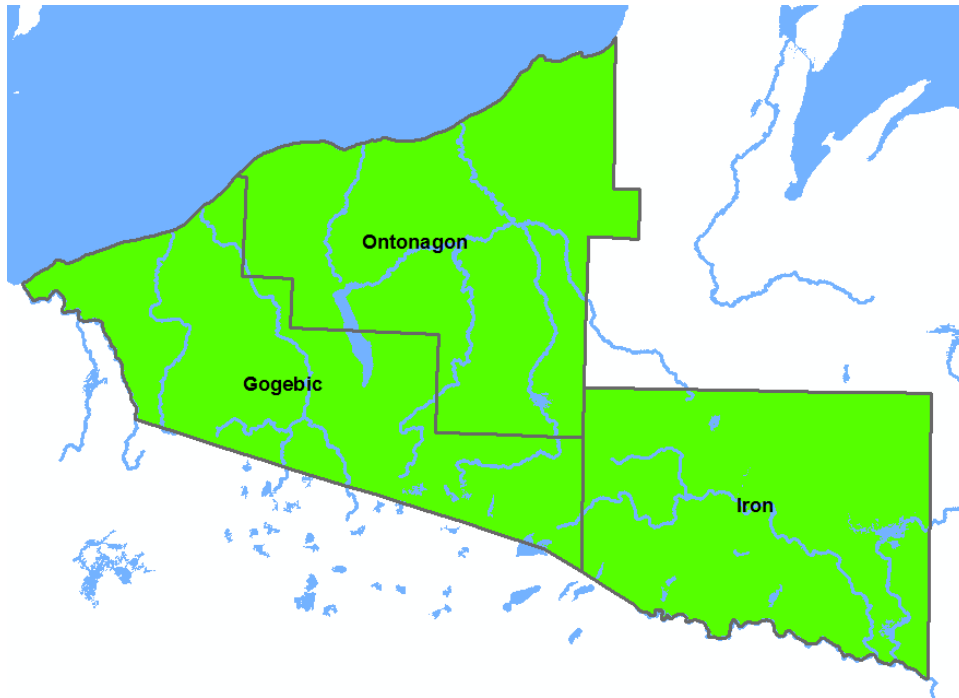


Figure 1. WePIC area.

GOALS and OBJECTIVES

The primary goals of WePIC are to work through our partnership base to:

- Raise public awareness about invasive species in or on Gogebic, Iron, and Ontonagon Counties lands and waters.
- Prevent invasive species spread through early detection and rapid response.
- Address known populations of invasive species utilizing integrated invasive species management methods where appropriate.
- Encourage native species during restoration projects; and
- Continually work to enhance collaboration among all stakeholders involved with WePIC.

Goal 1: Raise public awareness about invasive species in or on Gogebic, Iron, and Ontonagon Counties lands and waters.

Education is essential to meeting the goals of WePIC, as determined by its partners. WePIC's educational outreach is focused on increasing awareness of the problem of invasive species and the role that humans play in spreading invasive plants and animals, and helping people take action in their own communities. Through education, the public can help to reduce the impact of invasive species in the WePIC management area. Community-based prevention measures can dramatically curtail the expansion of established populations.

Objective 1.1: Conduct education and training programs for partners and members of the public to increase awareness of prevention and early detection measures.

Strategic Actions:

1. Conduct invasive species educational presentations across the entire WePIC area.
2. Assess and conduct targeted education and training for WePIC partners.
3. Conduct outreach and targeted training programs for citizen groups: recreationists, clubs/associations, volunteer groups, youth groups, and others.
4. Connect with public officials and industry workers to conduct targeted training, including best management practices, for: road crews, foresters, private loggers, municipal workers, etc.
5. Incorporate the use of regional prevention campaigns/programs into WePIC education and outreach (Clean Boats Clean Waters, Stop Aquatic Hitchhikers, Play Clean Go, etc.).
6. Work with area schools to include invasive species education in the curriculum of elementary and high school students. Guide hands on learning through projects and join in on field trips.
7. Develop cooperative workdays and projects for citizens and Partners across the WePIC area.
8. Provide WePIC representation and invasive species education at area meetings, conferences, and other functions.

Objective 1.2: Provide information via easily accessible means to the public at large.

WePIC will develop and distribute educational information in many forms for the general public and provide specific information to target audiences about the impacts of invasive species and the public's roles and responsibilities.

Strategic Actions

1. Obtain existing educational publications/resources from other agencies and partners (ex. DNR, MIPN, MISIN, USFS and Extension Services) to distribute at public functions (community events, school functions, county fairs, etc.)

2. Maintain a WePIC educational brochure for the public; distribute at public functions and places (community events, local libraries etc.)
3. Develop additional educational materials as able and affordable; distribute at public functions and places. Examples: pens, magnets, posters, signs, buttons, pamphlets, calendars, booklets, placemats, and other printed materials.
4. Provide targeted educational materials for various citizen and professional groups as able and affordable (recreational clubs, gardeners, plant industry workers, landowners, road crews, etc.).
5. Communicate with the audience of WePIC Partners and citizens through the Internet:
 - a. Maintain a WePIC email list and encourage citizens to join at public events. Use email list to inform the public of WePIC events and invasive species news.
 - b. Maintain the WePIC email address (wepiccisma@gmail.com) as a consistent and convenient contact for the public.
 - c. Utilize social media (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) to communicate with WePIC constituents.
6. Utilize “traditional” media to further reach local residents (press releases, newspapers, radio, and television). An annual work plan will specify dates and topics.
7. Increase the use of signage if affordable (billboards, metal signs, temporary signs, etc.) to reach outdoor recreationists and tourists at high traffic areas such as boat landings, trailheads, and along roadways.
8. Maintain a WePIC newsletter and distribute widely in the WePIC area in a timely fashion.

Objective 1.3: Maintain up-to-date information on invasive species threats, management, and research.

Strategic Actions

1. Use a variety of resources (paper/digital publications, webinars, articles, professional contacts, etc.) to keep WePIC staff, Partners, and members of the public knowledgeable and up-to-date.
2. Encourage WePIC staff and Partners to attend local and regional invasive species conferences, conventions, and meetings as able.
3. Promote the sharing of information among Partners, members, natural resources professionals, and other interested parties.

Goal 2: Early Detection and Rapid Response

Once an invasive species is established in a new area, it can spread quickly and overwhelm local resources, making eradication costly, if not impossible. As such, WePIC places a high emphasis on detecting new species and populations of invasives early, and rapidly responding with

control and eradication efforts. These control efforts are the most cost effective and provide a high return on investment.

Objective 2.1: Identify target species for prevention and control. Review priority and watch species lists created by the State of Michigan and WePIC partners. What species will be emphasized will be developed based on area needs by WePIC partners and identified in the annual work plans.

Strategic Actions

1. Review target species annually, or as needed, to reflect the current state of invasive species in the WePIC area as well as new invasives identified by state agencies as early detection threats.
2. Identify locations within the WePIC management area in need of early detection mapping/monitoring. Examples include areas that have never been surveyed and areas deemed “high risk” as likely invasive entry/spread points (parks, roads, etc.).
3. Do an online survey of WePIC members to help identify target species.

Objective 2.2: Develop and enhance the capacity to detect priority invasive species populations.

Strategic Actions

1. Maintain standardized invasive species mapping protocols for use by WePIC staff and volunteers, compatible with the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) requirements.
2. Conduct invasive species survey work by WePIC staff using protocols and targeting areas and species identified in Objective 2.1 as capacity and funding allows. Use results for management planning.
3. Support invasive species surveys and reporting by WePIC cooperators, volunteers, and members of the public. Assist in identification of unknown species and facilitate reporting to MISIN.

Objective 2.3: Respond to newly discovered/localized invasive species throughout the WePIC management area in a timely manner as capacity and funding allows.

Strategic Actions

1. Maintain and develop cooperative relationships with regional natural resource managers and landowners; these relationships will help facilitate a quick response to reports of early detection species/populations.
2. Develop a formal process to make decisions on what species will be a priority for early detection and rapid response activities.
3. As funding and capacity allow, utilize WePIC partners to visit sites of new discovered/localized invasive species. Record location, habitat, abundance, photographs, and landowner information. If feasible, and with landowner

permission, take measures to control the infestation. Conduct appropriate follow-up activities.

Goal 3: Control and Management

WePIC recognizes the negative ecological and economic impacts caused by invasive species. As such, we support the control and management of invasives, even those for which eradication may not be possible. WePIC will support and encourage control/management of invasive species, participating directly as capacity and funding allows. The following objectives will allow management to be addressed strategically using information, prioritization, and integrated techniques, resulting in more effective and efficient results.

Objective 3.1: Collect, manage, and share invasive species location data to make informed control and management decisions.

Strategic Actions

1. Maintain an internal database on invasive locations and work records within the WePIC area.
2. Regularly update records with WePIC survey results. Record details for each report or site visit, including observer, date, species, population size, population density, control history, and landowner contact information.
3. Report location data annually, or as needed, to the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network.
4. Maintain WePIC owned tools and supplies for use by partners and volunteers to control invasive species populations throughout the WePIC area.

Objective 3.2: Use an integrated approach to manage current invasive species populations.

Strategic Actions

1. Advocate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) practices, utilizing a combination of control techniques to effectively manage invasive populations on a case-by-case basis while limiting the economic and environmental impacts of treatment.
2. When conducting control work with staff and volunteers, WePIC will adhere to all legal requirements regarding property ownership, herbicide application and equipment use. Workers will follow all equipment and herbicide label instructions, and document landowner permission, required certifications, records of control activities, and abide by policies of the employer of record.
3. Provide landowners and land managers information on control and management options available for their own invasive species management projects.
4. Monitor and document results of control work and conduct follow-up treatments as needed and able.

Goal 4: Restoration

Objective 4.1: Include native species considerations in guidance for restoration and rehabilitation projects.

Strategic Actions

1. Advise land management agencies, townships, highway departments, landowners, and other interested parties on best management practices and appropriate restoration methods using native species.
2. Include restoration as a component in WePIC control efforts when and where appropriate.

Goal 5: Organizational Collaboration

Recognizing that the success of WePIC is directly proportional to the combined collaboration and diversification of its Partners and their many members; WePIC acknowledges that its future is dependent on the structure and strength of the Partnership. As such, one of WePIC's primary goals will be to maintain and strengthen this collaboration of Partners thereby expanding the combined capacity to accomplish our stated goals.

Objective 5.1: Maintain and strengthen WePIC organizational structure and Partner base.

Strategic Actions

1. Establish a new Steering Committee made up of an odd number of members, targeting 9 to 15 members.
2. Develop Managing Rules and Guidelines to govern the actions of the Steering Committee.
3. Revise the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) as needed.
4. Actively recruit new Partner groups to join WePIC.
5. Seek out and recruit informal members/cooperators for inclusion in WePIC activities.

Objective 5.2: Strengthen cooperation and coordinate activities between and among current and potential Partners.

Strategic Actions

1. Establish and staff a Partner Coordinator/Project Manager, reporting to the Steering Committee.
2. Develop and maintain a Resources Assistance Directory (RAD) for partners in critical growth areas such as long & short term strategic planning, grant research and writing, membership recruitment, general fundraising, messaging and organizational development.
3. Prepare and maintain the WePIC approved annual work plan.
4. Encourage formation of WePIC Volunteer Action Team committees.

5. Establish and maintain communications channels and events among partners.
6. Produce timely newsletter to inform Partners and public about WePIC accomplishments, events, and opportunities.
7. Continually work to strengthen existing partnerships.

Objective 5.3: Assist in funding opportunities to support Partner and WePIC activities.

Strategic Actions

1. All partners are encouraged to continue to seek funding for invasive species work through competitive grants and gifts and may seek funding independently and/or form collaborations as desired. Partners may request assistance from WePIC's Partner Coordinator/Project Manager to explore funding opportunities.
2. WePIC will review invasive species management funding opportunities on a regular basis and will communicate opportunities to interested/eligible Partners. Upon request, WePIC may provide Partners assistance in drafting and reviewing funding requests.
3. An agreement shall be drafted for any WePIC Partner who wishes to utilize the Iron Baraga Conservation District as a financial partner or fiscal agent/administrator for their grant. The agreement shall include a commitment by the WePIC Partner to complete the work of the grant and shall include a penalty clause identifying potential penalties to the WePIC Partner if the grant is not completed by the WePIC Partner and the Iron Baraga Conservation District, or its agents, has to complete the grant on the WePIC Partner's behalf to avoid damage to WePIC's or Iron Baraga Conservation District's reputation and financial standing. For each grant WePIC is awarded, a copy of the approved grant application along with other necessary documentation will be sent to:

Iron Baraga Conservation District
2 South 6th Street, Suite 15
Crystal Falls, Michigan 49920

Appendix A: WePIC Partners (from the 2014 MOU)

Bass Lake Association
Beatons Lake Riparian Association
Bergland Township
Bewabic State Park
Chicagon Lake Association
Cisco Chain Riparian Owners Association
Duck Lake Nuisance Aquatics Fund
Fortune Lake landowners
Friends of Ice Lake (FOIL)
Friends of Sylvania
Gogebic Conservation District
Gogebic County Forestry and Parks Commission
Golden Lake Association
Hagerman Lake Property Owners Association
Invasive Species Control Coalition of Watersmeet (ISCCW)
Iron County Conservation District
Iron County Watershed Coalition
Iron Lake Property Owners Assn
Lac Vieux Desert Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
Lac Vieux Desert Lake Association
Lake Gogebic Improvement Association
Lake Gogebic State Park
Lake Mary Association
Langford Lake Riparian Owners Association
Long Lake Property Owners Association
Many Waters LLC
Maplewood Timberlands Assn.
Michigan DNRE
Michigan Trails and Recreation Alliance of Land and the Environment (Mi-TRALE)
Upper Peninsula Resource Conservation & Development Council (UPRC&D)
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
USDA Forest Service, Ottawa National Forest
Perch Lake Owners Association
Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park
Runkle Lake Association
Sunset Lake Property Owners Association
Swan Lake Association
White Water Associates, Inc.
Wintergreen Farm