



Indiana Invasive Species Council Biennial Report

2022-2023

I. Overview:

The Indiana General Assembly established the Indiana Invasive Species Council within the Purdue University College of Agriculture in 2009 to enhance the ability of state agencies to detect, prevent, monitor and manage new and long established invasive species; work with agencies and partners to effectively and efficiently slow the spread and thwart the impact of invasive species in Indiana; and give citizens and industries a way to voice concerns and opinions about management of invasive species in Indiana. In 2023, the Council was reauthorized until July 1, 2031.

II. Indiana Invasive Species Council Objectives:

As set forth by the Indiana General Assembly in 2009 under [IC 15-16-10](#), the objectives of the Council are to enhance the ability of state agencies to detect, prevent, monitor, and manage new and long-established invasive species. Invasive species are exotic insects, plants, fish, birds, mammals, and other organisms that are a serious threat to Hoosier homes, environment, and the economy. To achieve its objectives, the Council works with responsible state agencies and conservation partners across Indiana.

The Indiana Invasive Species Council:

- Communicates with other states, federal agencies, and state and regional organizations to enhance consistency and effectiveness in preventing the spread of early detection of response to and management of invasive species.
- Coordinates education and outreach activities.
- Assists governmental agencies in reviewing current invasive species policies and procedures, addressing any deficiencies or inconsistencies in such policies and performance measures for accountability concerning the agencies' invasive species actions.
- Receives and manages reports from all governmental agencies that act on the Council's recommendations.
- Can apply for and provide grants for education and management of invasive species.
- Makes recommendations to the Indiana State Legislators relating to invasive species management needs.

The strategic plan is periodically revised and updated by the Council.

III. Message from the Chair:

The need to address both new and existing invasive species in Indiana is GROWING!

As the list of invasive species that threaten the State's economy and key natural resources continues to grow at an alarming rate, it is becoming ever more apparent that a well-funded organization is needed to lead and coordinate a statewide effort for invasive species management and engage Hoosiers to act. Further, agencies with regulatory authority on these issues need to be adequately funded and empowered to collect and enforce data driven regulations as well as execute necessary control programs *without* relying on external granting sources to support their programs.

It is an extremely challenging process to quantitatively aggregate the fiscal impacts that invasive species have on the State of Indiana given the diversity and sheer number of stakeholders, many of which are altogether unaware of these impacts and the costs associated with them. However, fiscal impacts are **estimated to be around 5% GDP for the United States. Assuming each state has equal impacts and using Indiana's GDP, that is an impact of approximately \$17.5 billion-dollar (2022) impact to Indiana, annually!** It is even more difficult to summarize the non-fiscal environmental impacts with >95% of these resources being privately held and managed. Not a day elapses when I do not see these impacts in Indiana.

As we consider the future of Indiana's natural resources, our economy, and our own well-being, action must be taken to mitigate these fiscal and environmental impacts. Rapid detection and early action are essential to reducing the amount of time, energy, and capital required to control, or even slow the spread of, the broad array of invasive species *before they harm our globally important* agricultural lands, forests, grasslands, wetlands, waters, and other natural areas.

A problem here at home and abroad.

- More invasive species threats are being identified every year.
 - The highly destructive spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) has been discovered in more than one location in Indiana. A [study in Pennsylvania](#) suggests that this one insect will result in as much as \$500M annual impact with a loss of 5,000 jobs for the State of Pennsylvania.
 - Our state is on the leading edge of several other devastating invasive insect species.
- The state's presence/absence status of many invasive species and pathogens plays a huge part in our ability to export related goods and commodities. This has the potential for a huge impact on our state's financial well-being.
- Highly invasive plants like Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana*) continue to be offered for sale throughout the state. The propagules of these trees and their cultivars are ravaging natural communities and other historically low input areas such as rights-of-ways.
- There are currently 126 plant species on the Indiana Invasive Species Council invasive species list. The Invasive Plant Advisory Committee assesses species providing a ranking of the potential to be invasive based on current available data.

What is being done?

- An aggressive outreach and treatment effort is being executed by Purdue Extension and the DNR's Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology.
- Under the leadership of the State of Indiana Cooperative Invasives Management (SICIM) organization the Indiana Invasive Initiative (III) is continuing its efforts to develop local **Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) to organize local groups** throughout Indiana.
- The mission of the III is to engage people and its partners in the restoration and protection of Indiana's natural resources by cultivating and coordinating efforts to manage invasive species.

- **Some of the recent SICIM / III accomplishments:**
 - Developed over 41 CISMAs representing 45 counties.
 - Conducted over 460 outreach events reaching over 7,000 people.
 - Written over 1,342 landowner surveys for over 40,529 acres.
 - Conducted over 500 Weed Wrangles® across Indiana in partnership with agencies, professionals, and citizens.
 - Hosted annual conferences reaching over 500 people that focused on the latest research and technology for invasive species management and the use of native plants for landscaping.
 - Partnered with Purdue Extension, Department of Natural Resources, and other organizations such as the Indiana Forestry and Woodland Owners Association and more than 50 other stakeholder groups to provide education and training for citizens and professionals in the natural resource fields.

IV. Indiana Invasive Species Council Accomplishments and Activities During the Reporting Timeframe:

Administrative and Legislative Activities

- The General Assembly reauthorized the Council for the second time since its inception in 2009, extending it through July 1, 2031.
- Two vacancies on the Council were successfully filled, once again resulting in a full Council.
- The COVID 19 epidemic forced many organizations to utilize digital communication platforms to continue to conduct business. The Council drafted and adopted a remote attendance policy to ensure quorum and solidify the concept that both members and the public can attend remotely, thereby increasing attendance and participation at the quarterly meetings.
- Served on SICIM’s legislative working group to support the Indiana Invasives Initiative legislative proposal for sustainable funding.

Education and Outreach

- Formed media/outreach committee to update the IISC website and improve outreach and visibility for the Council with regulatory communities and interested stakeholders.
- Engaged the public through social media channels.
- Sought feedback from industry stakeholders and revised invasive plant species assessments found on the IISC website to enhance clarity for users of these assessments.
- Initiated Invasive Species Awareness weeks with gubernatorial proclamations in April of 2022 and 2023 to coincide with the National Invasive Species Awareness Week.
- Contributed to statewide CISMA initiatives:
 - Conference Social Networking Session held August 2022 with more than 100 participants at the main event and 148 attending regional field sessions.
 - Conference held June 2023. This conference was the highest attended to date with more than 250 individuals present!
- Participated in the 10th Clay Middle School Invasive Species Fair where 6th grade students are tasked with researching an invasive species that exists in Indiana and build a display to present to their classmates and a group of panelists from various invasive species stakeholder groups to provide real-world feedback to their ideas.

V. Emerging Invasive Species in Indiana

- Among the new invasive species found in the state during this reporting period are the:
 - Spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*)
 - Second confirmed population identified in Huntington County

- Asian Longhorned Tick (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*)
 - Asian Longhorned Tick (ALT) was detected in Indiana for the first time in Spring of 2023. A total of thirty ticks have been confirmed as ALT in three Indiana counties: Switzerland, Ohio, and Dubois.
- Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)
 - HPAI was diagnosed in Indiana in February 2022. After 16 additional cases affecting 8 Indiana counties (Allen, Daviess, Dubois, Elkhart, Greene, Johnson, Martin, and Posey), on September 1, 2023, the last infected premises completed the requirements for quarantine release. After this milestone and 577 days since that first diagnosis, Indiana successfully eradicated HPAI and Indiana's 2022-2023 HPAI outbreak was officially closed.
- Spongy moth (*Lymantria dispar*)
 - While not a new species to the state, the first ever recorded observation in Dubois County occurred. This observation leaves Sullivan as the only Indiana county with no observed/detection since the survey began in 1972. Fortunately, this pest has largely been kept at bay with aggressive treatments along the leading edge of sustainable populations, most typically occurring in the northernmost counties of the state.
- Maidengrass/Chinese Silvergrass/et al. (*Miscanthus sinensis*).
 - There are more than 100 cultivars of this exotic grass in the ornamental trade. As a result of the widespread utilization in commercial and residential landscaping, there has been a significant increase in the frequency of detection in natural and low maintenance areas.
- Hardy Fountaingrass (*Cenchrus alopecuroides*)
 - Another exotic perennial grass that is commonly utilized in the ornamental trade. Several agricultural producers have had entire pastures overtaken by this species following unintentional introductions.

VI. Key Needs and Recommendations:

- Develop a strategy that will address the long-term funding needs and support for Indiana Invasives Initiative (III) and the emerging Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) across the state. This support system should be provided with resources through a partnership of Private, State, and Federal stakeholders.
- Add Callery pear (*Pyrus calleryana* Decne.), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides* L.), Chinese Silvergrass (*Miscanthus sinensis*) and Hardy Fountaingrass (*Cenchrus alopecuroides*) to Indiana's Terrestrial Plant Rule (312 IAC 18-3-25). Further, enable a process that allows for subject matter experts to proactively identify, evaluate, and add emerging invasive species threats to this rule.
- Continue to identify and quantify the short- and long-term costs and environmental impacts of the invasive species problem in Indiana.

Respectfully Submitted,

Matt Kraushar

Matt Kraushar, Chairman

Indiana Invasive Species Council Member List:

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