

Ben Anderson, Chair of MCISWG, **Dave Spaude** Jackson Co Forestry; **Kevin Luepke**, Biologist, Natural Resources Branch (NRB), Fort McCoy; **Jessup Weichelt**, Threatened and Endangered Species Biologist, NRB, Fort McCoy; **Rikki Ratsch**, **Jessica Hinz**, Colorado State University, serving Fort McCoy Wildlife Dept; **Joey Esterline**, Adrian Township and Monroe Co. District 15. Supervisor; **Matt Modjeski** Conservation Warden, Tomah Ranger Station; **Patsy and Norb Brown** Angelo Township; **Chris Hamerla**, Regional Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator with Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development Council; **Tom Torkelson** Monroe County Land and Water Conservationist; **Jeff Polzin**, Friends of Black River; **Dereck Husmoen** NRCS Soil Conservationist Black River Falls; **Chris Schmitz** DNR Forester and Tax Law Section. Clark and Jackson Counties; **Tim Sprain** Landowner Jackson County and WISCOR Lacrosse; **Andy Ellington** Robinson Creek Preservation Society. **Steve Deethardt** City of Tomah; **Kyle Johnson** Diversity Landworks, Houston Co. Mn. **Eric Ressel**, Soil Conservationist, **Mic Armstrong** Soil Conservation Technician and MCISWG Scribe, Natural Resource Conservation Service

Ben Anderson got the Annual Meeting going.

New Faces: **Dave Spaude** Jackson Co Forestry.

Andy Ellington “This group is great. I have been able to attend the Fort McCoy annual event numerous times.”

Chris Schmitz DNR Forester and Tax Law Section. Clark and Jackson Counties

Tim Sprain Landowner, Robinson Creek and WISCORPS (La Crosse)

Dereck Husmoen NRCS Soil Conservationist Jackson County

Kyle Johnson Diversity Landworks, Houston Co. Mn

There were a few other new faces who did not introduce themselves in this section of a fast moving agenda.

Outreach media: **Weedman** nothing to report

No agenda additions

Minutes of last Meeting **Anderson:** The recap of meeting minutes waived as they were previously sent out via email and are now posted to the website. All said Aye.

Workplan 2023.

Armstrong. Over the years we have had work plans assigning different MCISWG members coordination of projects for example **Bob Micheel** is our Boy scout point of contact (poc). **Joey Esterline** is Farmers market and potentially 4 H poc, if a group shows interest in working with us.


Monroe County Highway Department have mapping all of the county roads for invasive plants contracted, however the mappers weren't able to sit two to a car during COVID and have not been back out. They mapped the Northwest corner of the county about halfway down towards Sparta. Mapping is part of the strategic plan to allow the Highway Department to target weeds such as wild parsnip and poison hemlock with herbicides and/or adjusted mowing schedules.

MCISWG has a brochure that lists our activities. There were other "pet projects" on the 2022 annual meeting list, such as installing PlayCleanGo signs with small boot brushes and wooden benches at access points to public lands.

CISMA **Armstrong** endeavored to explain how Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas had evolved from Weed management areas (noxious weed laws hard to enforce only 4 species anyway and Weed Commissioners are thin on the ground). The NR-40 rule largely superseded the noxious weed list. CISMAS mission is usually more about educating about invasive species of all sorts. **Armstrong** pointed out the wild boar in the room. (The Doghouse has a large stuffed boar in a cage beneath one of the tables). * I won't provide the link but if you google super pigs there are currently articles in the e-newspaper of your choice explaining the invasive boar situation.

CISMAs are often multi county, seek grants and often maintain some staff. Others are simply groups enabled by partners who have an agreed upon Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to meet and run meetings about invasive species management in their area. Usually a county acts as a (fiscal) agent. The Invasive Plants Association of Wisconsin IPAW acts an umbrella to the groups and organizes training events and conferences to facilitate sharing of knowledge and practical advice. There are so far no events planned in 2023. **Armstrong** passed around copies of the MCISWG MOU and the Strategic Management Plan. These documents were written in 2019 The Strategic Plan lays out the goals of MCISWG and includes a lot of background information about Monroe County. The MOU adds further detail and definitions worked out mutually between the partners. There now is a link to these documents on the MCISWG website.

Armstrong noted that he was unable to find information about a meeting between Wisconsin CISMAs which usually occurs in Spring. IPAW's website hasn't been updated for a while and at the time of writing these notes, there are no upcoming events on the Wisconsin First Detector Network. <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/wifdn/>

A phone call with  Jason E. **Granberg**- revealed that there will be a spring CISMA meeting - details will be relayed soon.

Jackson County. Goals:

Husmoen: Cost share opportunities

Spaude: Glossy buckthorn, treatments are usually timed as stands rotated out. Spotted Knapweed present but not impactful to forest. Some Garlic Mustard but not as tenacious on sandy soils. Phragmites

Schmitz Cost share Buckthorn, Autumn Olive management

Ellington business owner, also landowner 3 properties 120 ac in MFL. Member Friends of Black River.

Sprain Entire Robinson Creek is buckthorn choked.

Hamerla, Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development Council some projects operate on a competitive grant. A year ago, the system changed to allocations by county for education purposes. Jackson Co. has \$13,899.00 available. The County would need to say yes as the Fiscal agent. No matching requirement just complete certain deliverables. Could be providing technical assistance to Lake groups e.g. Clean Lakes Clean Waters. Purple Loosestrife program, or Boat landing information (signage) for example. **Hamerla** said Golden Sands had reached out to Jackson County about collaboration but received no reaction to date.

Q. Does it have to through LCD? **Hamerla** to look into. Already working with Hatfield Lake Association (through Clark County)

Anderson Tri creek trials plots: The idea was to compare different rates, as research plots. Possibly with interns: cut stump, basal, spritz application methods. **Armstrong** interjected asking if we knew what spritzing was? Documented in an Oak Savannas webpage you can kill buckthorn using an oil-based mix in summer, spritz just a couple of upper leaves.

<https://oaksavannas.org/invasives.html>

or as **Anderson** and **Armstrong** observed in a trial on buckthorn where the applicator had used a backpack to “spritz” spray the wall of buckthorn along trail edges. Plants up to 8’ or so were dead however any taller ones seem to survive. Questioned as to whether the tips need to receive spray for the technique to work? It certainly seems to be so. The original leaf spritz is described on smaller buckthorn plants and you use a spray bottle on just two upper leaves- probably minimal collateral damage to other plants. The backpack trial we observed could easily result in collateral damage, assuming there are plants other than buckthorn to kill.

Anderson. concluded the proposal for herbicide trials saying costs could also be tracked. It could be great intern or researcher project, adding that Tri creek was open to public.

Weedman Tri creek has controversial logging projects. **Anderson** said she should address concerns to **Bob Micheel** or **Chad Ziegler**

Anderson explained the Monroe County Invasive Species Cost Share Program. Up to \$600.00 is available (at 50% cost share). Landowners can apply by simply writing a letter or email to Land Conservation Director **Bob Micheel**, including a map and brief description of the problem.

<https://www.co.monroe.wi.us/home/showpublisheddocument/24557/637811996536870000>

Armstrong There are 2 successful applicants so far for 2023 funding.

Prairie garden **Esterline** The old prairie garden is no longer managed by Joey, however a new one is starting in between retaining walls of Covered Bridge by the Library orchestrated by the “Farmers Market Bridge Club”.

Armstrong summarized the Amur Maple reduction program in which we attempt to slow the spread of an 80–100-acre patch impacting the Elroy Sparta trail and campground near Sparta. A couple of our volunteers are investigating the possibilities of getting chain saw (and first aid) certification to be more productive on Amur Maple workdays. Email chains with **Chad Ziegler** and **Clint Gilman** on possible locations dates of training etc. are ongoing. Contact **Armstrong** if you would like to be added to the Amur maple volunteer list. Usually we spend a Saturday morning cutting and treating maple along the bike trail and in the campground area- we will probably get out there at least once in March.

Farmers Market **Esterline** explained that MCISWG usually takes over the stage area on opening Saturday of the Sparta Farmers Market. Last year **Chris Hamerla** brought a fantastic display from the Golden Sands Aquatic Invasive Species collection. We plan on repeating the event on May 13th from 9-noon. We are hoping also to display the collection of pressed invasive plants (vouchers) that **Rikki Ratsch** has been working on and answer questions on invasive species. **Chris** said this year **Colton Wolosek** will be presenting for Golden Sands. **Esterline** pointed out that during the season **Armstrong** often comes to the Saturday morning Farmers Markets with the famous ‘Invasive of the Week’ easel display.

Purple Loosestrife **Esterline** has plans to work with a new group helping rear purple loosestrife eating insects with its associated biological control educational program “See Cella Chow”. There is no longer a 4 H coordinator with the Sparta UW Extension office, so the project is on hold until there is a new one. **Hamerla** offered equipment Golden Sands have for the bug rearing, just let him know. There is a coordinator at DNR too and prospective groups need to sign up with **Jeanne Scherer** and complete some paperwork before moving either loosestrife plants or bugs.

Hamerla has been looking into our Phragmites situation. It is a split Prohibited listed NR-40 regulated species so Rapid response \$ should be available, however as no one seemed to have mapped it all **Hamerla** thinks it best to start over and assign **Wolosek** the project from scratch. **Armstrong** said there are maps. He would send them.

Hamerla took the opportunity to briefly explain the NR-40 rule. Invasive species are classified into two categories: "prohibited" and "restricted." With certain exceptions, the transport, possession, transfer and introduction of prohibited species is banned. Control is required. DNR may order or conduct a control effort. Restricted species are already widely established. Possession is allowed except for fish or crayfish. Control is encouraged but not required.

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/invasives/classification.html>

Princess tree. The tree, in La Crosse County, was reported to **Poelma** last year but to date no one has provided a location for him to visit.

Fort McCoy: **Rikki Ratsch**, Garlic Mustard- roadside and other small populations, electing to simply contain the larger populations. Glossy Buckthorn basal treatments has been biggest winter project. One large buckthorn site was shredded for foliar treatment later in year. Cut stump honeysuckle, with Challenge Academy kids doing the cutting went well. **Crews** assist with plant ID and follow up with herbicide treatment after the cadets cut them down and pile them. **Luepke** has been planning some spring prescribed burns including a few sites to manage invasive species.

Email from **Randy Poelma** Env. Sciences Program Manager, Ho-Chunk Nation Division of Env. Health

“We are doing a lot of invasive work but not prioritizing work in Monroe County, below is a summary:

- Foliar and basal follow-up spot treatments on 1,150 acres in Sauk County at the former Badger Ammo Plant. Also, a small 10-acre forestry mowing project on that parcel that was followed up with foliar. We are continuing the foliar and basal work on this acreage in 2023.
 - Target species for this work is primarily Autumn olive, honeysuckles and small amounts of multiflora rose and black locust. Also, some treatment of invasive natives such as box elder, cottonwood and willow.
 - Also looking at biocontrol of spotted knapweed if we are successful in the latest grant application for work on this parcel.
- Foliar and basal parcel “sweeps” of previously treated areas on approximately 500 acres in Jackson Co. This is mostly common buckthorn control, and we will continue sweeps in 2023.
- Foliar and basal parcel treatments on 700 acres in Shawano Co. Also, 30 acres of forestry mowing followed by foliar work. This is almost all common buckthorn work in

areas we have been treating for the last 7 years or so, but we are biting off some new areas they haven't undergone any treatments.

- Inventory, mapping, and prioritization of invasives on the 1,200 acres of Ho-Chunk land in the KVR. We will be initiating treatments in that area starting late winter into spring.
- Continue to apply for grants to support this work as we normally do.
- Couple of small project sites in Richland and Juneau County where we will be doing invasives work as part of restoring the natural community specific to that site.

So, there is a lot of invasive work going on that is a combination of in-house staff and several contractors. I look forward to connecting with the group at a future meeting. Although I am not working in Monroe County at this time, I find a lot of value in meeting and learning from each other. “

Armstrong: Phone conversation with Monroe County Highway Department (MCHD) -**Tyson Langrehr:** Treated Knotweed along County Roads J, M, Z, SS. Also, MCHD will be spraying with the latest recommended (broadleaf) mix that includes a growth regulator along the interstate. If successful (on weeds such as wild parsnip and teasel) they will expand the program to County and Town roads. Mapping at a standstill, **Anne Pearce** moved on. **Dave Ohnstad** is communicating with Mark **Renz** about mapping contract- conversations about how to proceed are ongoing. **Langrehr** will check out new black locust issues by **Cindy Weibel**, on Hwy 71, Cataract.

Armstrong: Phone conversation with **Brad Gilbertson** City Sparta. No progress on invasive shrub treatments in Amundson Park due to manpower restrictions. They did spray the Knotweed sites at Perch Lake dam and the Sparta Library last fall with a good degree of success.

Eric Ressel NRCS Conservation planner. Farm Bill Program EQIP Program can fund Brush Management projects. Asked if people were seeing more burning bush out there, **Armstrong** related the experience finding a patch on a hilltop near Leon last fall. The landowners had thought it was Autumn Olive, which they did have nearby, but these things were over ten feet tall with winged branches you could not wrap your hand around, and under these full-sized *Euonymus alatus* trees there was a carpet of pink leaved groundcover, presumably seedlings of the trees. **Ratsch** said McCoy has had some smaller populations consisting of a couple of shrubs that they treat similarly to other woody invasives such as buckthorn.

Field trip ideas: we have several hosts offering their properties for a tour- usually we do a walkabout on our meeting days. **Norb** and **Pattie Brown** offered their property for a future tour.

Township Field Day ideas. One thing we used to do was meet on the invitation of a township and set up for a whole day (maybe 9-2 pm) and bring in guest speakers to talk about invasive plant ID, mapping perhaps, pesticide and application legal matters, herbicide use, equipment calibration, maybe goats too!

Jackson County landowner **Tim Sprain** suggested we look at the Cranberry Research Center just up the road off County O which runs between Shamrock and Millston as a venue for a field trip/meeting.

Fort McCoy Natural Resource Branch has once again agreed to host a Field Day at the Pine View campground. **Luepke** was checking potential dates but looking like June 15th.

Ben Anderson announced he would be stepping down as chair of MCISWG. At our next meeting we will initiate the process of electing a successor.

Kyle Johnson asked if there was time to talk about invasive species management with goats, Due to **Anderson's** excellent time management of the agenda we still had about 20 minute of meeting time available, we were pleased to talk goats.

The repeated grazing of buckthorn depletes the root system of resources as photosynthesis is taken from them. Goat herders play with timing etc. to get maximum kill of woody invasives. Benefits- no herbicides needed, no chainsaw training (or certification), no prescribed burn planning either. Goats work year-round, can impact lots of acres-Kyle runs 60- 100 at a time. Historically land was kept free of invasive weeds with fire and large animal grazing. Goats can help restore that natural balance; Kyle noted they are trained not to eat natives such as oak

Weedman commented that white tailed deer don't eat invasives, but goats do.

It would be great to have a demo of goats brunching on woody invasives. If our goat contractors do have projects in, or near, Monroe County please loop us in and perhaps we could coordinate a field trip to the site.

Clint Gillman Vice Chair of MCISWG and DNR Forester arrived late due to other obligations, but we were able to have good conversations at the Doghouse about invasive species and other natural resource topics.

We came up with a potential location for our next meeting (in March)- the Sparta School Forest.

