



Our Partners

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) – Bureau of State Parks, Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), Pennsylvania Sea Grant, Tom Ridge Environmental Center (TREC), Cleveland Museum of Natural History (CMNH), Lake Erie Region Conservancy (LERC), Ducks Unlimited (DU), Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), Pennsylvania Lake Erie Watershed Association (PLEWA), Mercyhurst College, Erie County Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Erie County Department of Planning, the Pennsylvania State University (PSU), Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (Penn-DOT)

*Lake Erie Watershed
Cooperative Weed Management Area*

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Private Landowners Guide



Lake Erie Watershed

Cooperative Weed Management Area

Invasive Plants

Non-native invasive plants are changing the places we love. These species arrive accidentally or intentionally from locations around the globe, and often behave quite differently away from their native habitats. They can grow rapidly and form dense thickets that dominate habitats and harm the natural resources we depend on both ecologically and economically. Invasive plants can negatively impact farmland, working forests, and recreational land and reduce the aesthetic value of naturally diverse landscapes. They displace native plants that wildlife and fish depend on for food and put rare plants and animals at further risk. Once invasive plants become established they can be difficult to remove. Identifying invasive plants and understanding the potential damage they can cause is essential to stopping their spread and protecting native vegetation.

Many invasive plants grow in the Lake Erie Watershed and they all impact native plants and plant communities.



When the rare West Virginia white butterfly lays its eggs on the invasive garlic mustard pictured above, instead of on native toothworts, the caterpillars do not survive.



On Presque Isle the invasive common reed has impacted the breeding sites of the endangered piping plover which need open, gravel or cobble beaches for nesting sites.

Lake Erie Watershed

Cooperative Weed Management Area

The over 320,000 acre Lake Erie watershed located within the northwestern corner of Pennsylvania, supports some of the most biologically diverse habitats in the state from the immediate Lake Erie shoreline to the glacial wetlands further south within tributary wetlands. These unique, native ecosystems are under an increasing threat from invasive species.

What is a CWMA?

Cooperative Weed Management Areas or CWMA's are local organizations that bring together landowners and land managers to coordinate action and share expertise and resources to manage common invasive species.



LEW-CWMA

Within the northwestern corner of Pennsylvania, the Lake Erie Watershed Cooperative Weed Management Area or LEW-CWMA is working to reduce the negative effects of invasive species by coordinating control and education efforts, leveraging funding, and increasing the capacity of individuals, agencies, and organizations. The LEW-CWMA provides an opportunity to cooperatively and strategically control invasive species within the watershed, and represents an important milestone in regional invasive species control.



How Landowners Can Help

Invasive species know no boundaries! Since species can spread beyond fence lines, a combined effort by both private landowners and public land managers is needed to control invasive vegetation. With only about 4% of land in the Lake Erie watershed publicly owned, private landowners remain the largest stakeholders. However, all stakeholders, both public and private, can benefit from collaborative efforts to reduce the impacts and threats posed by invasive plants.

When we are able to exercise control efforts across property boundaries and manage invasive species populations more broadly, the benefits are greater and more long lasting.

Enroll Your Property

Have your property considered for a LEW-CWMA project. The CWMA can provide services and funding to help you with your invasive species management needs.

- ⇒ Provide an inventory for invasive species on your property.
- ⇒ Identify the areas where invasive species control would have the maximum benefit to the native plant communities on your property.
- ⇒ Offer recommendations for control and management strategies.
- ⇒ Provide funding to carry out control and monitoring efforts on your property.

Take Action On Your Own

Minimize landscape disturbance

Invasive plants thrive on bare soil and disturbed ground where the native plant community has been displaced.

Scout your property annually for invasives

The best way to control invasives is to prevent their initial establishment.

Remove invasives immediately

Effective scouting or monitoring means that problems are found while they are still small and easy to control. Early detection and rapid response is a key element of successful property management. Rapid response methods may include manual removal by digging or cutting or spot herbicide applications.

Have a plan for maintenance over time

Property owners conduct vegetative management on their properties often by moving lawns or removing weeds within garden areas. Meadow, wetland, and woodland areas require a low degree of maintenance but are often overlooked when considering priorities for vegetative management. Long term property management plans provide the information and identify the resources necessary to successfully reduce damages caused by invasive plant species.

