

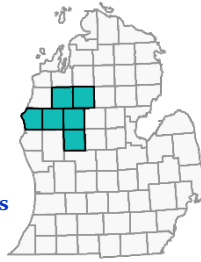


North Country  
Cooperative  
Invasive Species  
Management  
Area

CISMA

Fighting Invasives, Protecting Assets, Restoring Habitats

Serving the counties of Lake, Mason, Mecosta,  
Missaukee, Osceola, and Wexford



# 2020 Annual Report

Despite the myriad of challenges that marked the year 2020, a number of positive developments occurred for NCCISMA. Due to funding and logistical considerations early in the year, the field season was forced to start late. Still, NCCISMA was lucky to have two highly skilled and experienced field staff working from mid-summer through late fall. In 2020, 243 acres of invasive species control was achieved at 148 sites in the region. Another boon for NCCISMA came in mid-September, when we welcomed a new Outreach Coordinator to our ranks. To accommodate this new staff member, Wexford County has generously allowed the expansion of NCCISMA’s office space at the county courthouse to allow our full year-round team to work together from one central location. All of NCCISMA’s previous treatment sites were monitored in 2020, and at five of these sites there was no regrowth, one year after the last treatment. These included four Phragmites treatment locations, one each in Lake, Mason, Missaukee, and Osceola Counties, and one wild parsnip treatment location in Mason County.

2020 Survey, Control, Restoration, & Inquiry Responses						
	Lake	Mason	Mecosta	Missaukee	Osceola	Wexford
Property owner consultations	14	18	17	10	11	20
Mechanical Control (sites/acres)	0	2/2	1/3	0	2/3	2/1
Chemical Control (sites/acres)	8/31	34/52	15/23	11/13	15/51	58/64
Cost-shared treatments	4	23	2	8	4	28
Invasive Species Surveys (acres)	0	521	181	51	0	0
Restoration work (sites/acres)	0	1/5	0	0	1/17	2

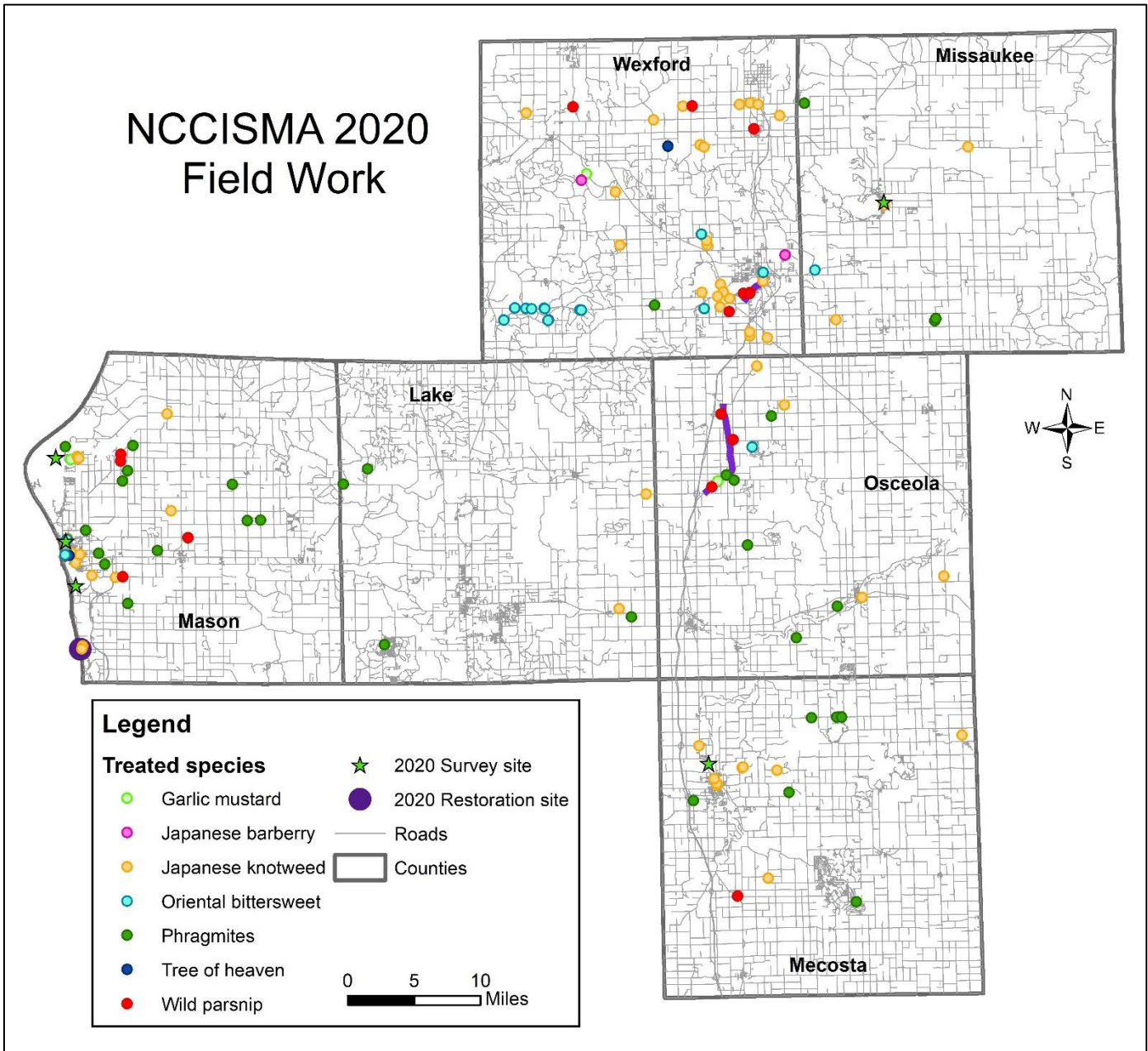
## Cost-share Program

Much of the control work accomplished in 2020 was done as part of our cost-share program. This program provides control at half of cost to landowners/managers. The number of jobs that NCCISMA was hired for more than doubled from 2020 to 2021. Several area county road commissions (CRC) account for the biggest increases in program participation. Both Missaukee and Wexford CRCs hired NCCISMA to treat Japanese knotweed and Phragmites, and Mason CRC paid NCCISMA to treat wild parsnip on their roadsides.

The cost-share program received a boost from other partners in 2020 as well. This was the second year that the Hamlin Lake Preservation Society (HLPS) provided additional cost-share for



their members, covering half of the landowner’s portion of the cost of control. HLPS supplemented cost-share jobs account for six of the 23 cost-share jobs in Mason County. Inspired by this, the Lake County Riverside Property Owners Association (LCRPOA) has decided to offer a similar program for their own members in 2021.



**Parks and Trails Initiatives**

In addition to cost-share jobs in 2020, control and restoration work was done in parks and on trails to maintain progress that was accomplished in previous years. Furthermore, follow-up surveys were performed to verify and update 2018 and 2019 data. Survey data will be used to produce invasive species management plans for parks in Osceola County, and for the cities of Cadillac, Big Rapids, Evart, and Lake City. Other parks/trails work achieved in 2020 includes restoration planting at Summit Township



Park in Mason County, and cover crop seeding along the White Pine Trail in Wexford and Osceola Counties.

Working in these publicly visible areas often presents the opportunity for spontaneous outreach by the field crew. Approximately eight days spent by the field crew working on the White Pine Trail in 2020 provided the opportunity for them to speak about NCCISMA, and the work being done on the trail, to 39 different people.

**Partner Funded Invasive Species Surveys**

In 2020, several new surveys were performed on request of partners that agreed to cover the cost for NCCISMA’s time in performing these surveys. With funding from HLPS, surveys were performed along 88 linear miles of roadsides surrounding Hamlin Lake. These survey results are currently being assessed, and impacted property owners will be notified and provided with best management practices. Additionally, NCCISMA partnered with Mason-Lake Conservation District (MLCD) to survey and produce a natural resource management plan for Pere Marquette Township’s new 300 acre Conservation Park.



**Outreach**

About half of the outreach accomplished in 2020 was performed online as part of partner workshops and webinars. In-person presentations included NCCISMA’s participation in two walking tours. One of these took place at Cartier Park in Ludington with the help of a local environmental group, A Few Friends of the Environment of the World (AFFEW), and a local botany expert, Dave Dister. The other took place at Maple Grove Park in Lake City, and was hosted by the Missaukee Conservation District. The audience for this second walking tour was a group of Lake City seventh grade students.

2020 Outreach		
Description	# Efforts	# Reached
NCCISMA Articles in Print/Electronic Publications	13	43,426
Presentations at Partner Events/Meetings	14	342
Booth at Partner Events	1	74
Interviewed for Radio, Television, Print, or Internet	2	12,400
Facebook Postings	25	1,772
Invasive Species Walking Tours	2	30
Educational YouTube Videos Produced and Posted	1	90
Updates and Unique Visitors to NorthCountryInvasives.org	7	338
Temporary Educational Signs Installed	10	N/A
Spontaneous Outreach in the Field	N/A	39

Two new outreach strategies were started by NCCISMA in 2020. One of these is the production of short educational videos. NCCISMA has set up a YouTube channel to share these videos. The first of these was posted in 2020, and is on Japanese knotweed control. NCCISMA’s YouTube channel can be accessed through the webpage, NorthCountryInvasives.org, or by searching NCCISMA on the YouTube webpage. The second new outreach initiative for 2020 is the installation of temporary educational signage at high traffic public treatment sites. These were placed as listed below.

Locations of Temporary Educational Signage - 2020		
County	Treatment Location	Species Addressed
Lake County	Reed Lake boat launch	Phragmites
Mason County	Summit Township Park	Japanese knotweed
	Pere Marquette State Game Area	Garlic mustard
		Japanese knotweed
Mecosta County	Cartier Park	Japanese knotweed
	Hemlock Park	Japanese knotweed
Oriental bittersweet		
Missaukee County	Osceola Park	Japanese knotweed
		Japanese knotweed
Missaukee County	Maple Grove Disc Golf Course	Japanese knotweed
Osceola County	Riverside Park East	Japanese knotweed

**Muskegon River Watershed Project (MRWP)**

One prime objective for the MRWP is to promote the Exotic Aquatic Plant Watch (EAPW) of Michigan Clean Water Corps’ (MiCorps) Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP). The EAPW empowers lakeshore owners to catch destructive invasive species quickly in their lakes, before the problems they may cause are insurmountable. The goal is to get 50 lakes within NCCISMA and the upper Muskegon River watershed to enroll in this program. An integral partner in the MRWP is the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (MRWA).

One means to encourage participation in the EAPW is by providing free tool kits to program participants. These include all supplies that someone would need to participate; specifically, a secchi disc transparency



testing tool and a plant sampling rake. The tools in these kits were made by students of the Agriscience and Natural Resource program of the Wexford-Missaukee Career Tech Center, and by staff and volunteers from the MRWA and NCCISMA. In 2020, ten lakes in the project area enrolled in the EAPW. Enrollees in the EAPW program in 2021 are encouraged to contact NCCISMA for their free tool kits.

To further promote the EAPW program, MRWA started their Lake Champion e-newsletter, as part of this project, in 2019. An issue was distributed to 250 subscribers in March of 2020.



**Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA)**

Mason-Lake Conservation District (MLCD) has taken the lead in responding to the threat of HWA within NCCISMA. HWA is a forest pest that threatens hemlock trees. Hemlocks serve a variety of ecological benefits in Michigan’s natural environment. In 2020 MLCD staff surveyed over 2,100 acres on 91 different parcels in Mason County, 84% of which were privately owned. Federal and state lands are being surveyed by Michigan



Department of Natural Resources (DNR) staff. Most efforts are focused within 5 miles of Lake Michigan and along river corridors, as HWA is not known to occur further inland. MLCD staff did not themselves find any HWA, but DNR staff discovered it in Summit Township. Treatments of infested trees are undergoing control as part of a multi-county effort being overseen by NCCISMA’s cohort to the south, West Michigan CISMA.

**Funding**

After the early set-back of a freeze in Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program (MISGP) funding, all of NCCISMA’s state funding was restored, and the Huron-Manistee National Forest (HMNF) has since increased NCCISMA funding, including new grants from the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), and a new funding source for NCCISMA called the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA). The GNA funds invasive species control work on HMNF land using timber sale revenue. GNA funded work on U.S. Forest service land in 2020 focused on the removal of Oriental bittersweet along the M55 corridor in Wexford County.

NCCISMA 2020 Funding			
Project	Funding Source	Grant Amount	Completion Date
CISMA Base Funding 2019	MISGP	\$60,000	Completed
Strike Team Formation	MISGP	\$135,000	December 2021
Muskegon River Watershed	MISGP	\$191,900	June 2022
CISMA Base Funding 2020	MISGP	\$75,000	October 2021
Parklands Initiative II	USFS-GLRI	\$40,000	April 2021
Treatment Instruction Videos	USFS-GLRI	\$25,000	April 2022
Public Trails Initiative	USFS-GLRI	\$40,000	April 2022
Stopping Spread from Roads	USFS-GLRI	\$44,000	April 2025
Supplemental Outreach Funding	USFS-GLRI	\$2,798	April 2025
Control on USFS Land	USFS-GNA	\$25,000/year	2020, 2021, 2022

Thank you to all of our dedicated partners, organizations and individuals, that actively work with NCCISMA to stop the spread of invasive species in the region!

**Special thanks go out to the following:**

Wexford County Commissioners for continued donated office space for NCCISMA's three permanent staff at the Wexford County Courthouse

Wexford County Road Commission for safe winter storage of NCCISMA's herbicide inventory at their temperature controlled garage

Mecosta and Mason-Lake Conservation Districts for acting as fiduciaries on NCCISMA grants

Mecosta County Parks for allowing NCCISMA to maintain a shed for storage of supplies and equipment, and also provide a staging place for field staff

Mason-Lake and Wexford Conservation Districts for allowing NCCISMA space in their sheds for storage of supplies and equipment

Wayne Anderson for the purchase of educational brochures on the dangers and identification of wild parsnip

**The members of NCCISMA's ever dedicated Steering Committee:**

Dani McGarry, Mason-Lake Conservation District

Brook Baumann, Mecosta Conservation District

Michelle Hill, Missaukee Conservation District

Mark Sweppenheiser, Osceola-Lake Conservation District

Tiffany Jones, Wexford Conservation District

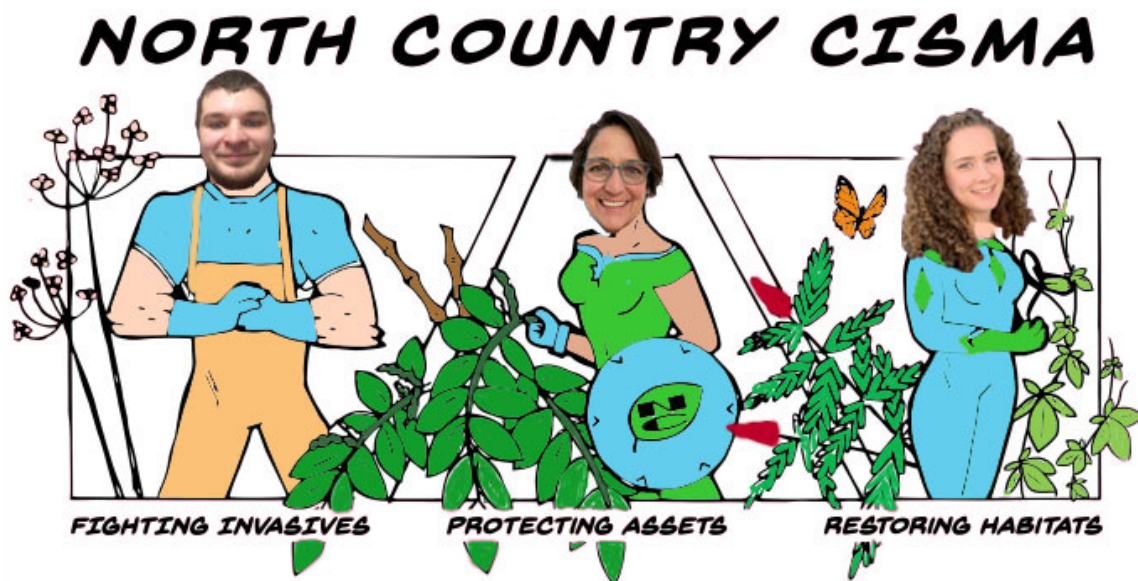
Donna Kirchhoff, Missaukee County Resident

Chris Woodley, Baker College

Carolyn Henne, Huron-Manistee National Forest

Josh Shields, FAP Forester

Erin Lizotte, Michigan State University Extension



NCCISMA's team is looking forward to continuing to serve the residents of Lake, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Osceola, and Wexford Counties in 2021!