

ISN 2016 Annual Report

Another year of *protecting, enhancing, and promoting northwest Michigan's natural communities through terrestrial invasive plant management and outreach* in Benzie, Grand Traverse, Leelanau, and Manistee counties has come to a close, and ISN workers and volunteers have been quite the busy bees!

In addition to continued funding through the first Michigan Invasive Species Grant Program (MISGP) cycle, ISN was awarded additional financing through the EPA (Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, GLRI) and US Forest Service, as well as a second grant from MISGP. Together, these grants allowed ISN to focus on growing *Go Beyond Beauty* and target source populations of high-priority invasive plants in addition to continuing ISN's ongoing work.

THIS YEAR ISN HAS:

- Surveyed over 1,600 acres of high-quality habitats for Top 20 invasive species
 - Plus 197 mi road, 30 mi shoreline, and 60 mi river
- Treated over 600 acres of high-priority invasive species at over 250 sites
- Coordinated 12 workbees and 15 other events
 - Engaged over 200 volunteers for 500 volunteer hrs
- Contacted over 2,200 people directly and over 680,000 indirectly
 - 41 presentations, 27 events, and 2 Partner Meetings
 - Plus smaller meetings, social media, and press work
- 4 Early Detection and Response efforts:
 - 1 mistaken giant hogweed, 1 true giant hogweed (treated), 1 true black jetbead, and 1 mistaken hydrilla
 - Dozens of responses to mistaken reports handled over the phone/email



New branding and resources are in store for *Go Beyond Beauty* participants!

The EPA GLRI grant is focused on outreach and education, specifically highlighting ISN's groundbreaking *Go Beyond Beauty* program to voluntarily remove invasive ornamental plants from trade. ISN is now able to offer more resources than ever before to assist businesses, and more changes are in the works; stay tuned! We're already seeing success: since October 2015, 2 new businesses have joined the program. Check out which businesses have made this awesome commitment on our website:

www.HabitatMatters.org/Go-Beyond-Beauty/ A survey crew was also funded, allowing ISN to look for invasives in a massive amount of the four counties' area.

The grants from MISGP and the US Forest Service combined to allow ISN to tackle some otherwise insurmountable obstacles: the Japanese knotweed on roadsides—especially Veterans Oak Grove Drive—in the City of Manistee, baby's breath near Elberta Beach, and the invasive *Phragmites* in Betsie Bay, Arcadia Marsh, and Manistee Lake. In 2016, ISN focused on obtaining permission to treat these species on public and private lands, with our first big push of treatments taking place in August, and continuing through the fall. In 2017, we'll be able to hit the ground running with treatments, and add restoration work (planting native plants in high-risk areas) to our to-do list.



ISN crew sprays Japanese knotweed at Veterans Oak Grove Drive (Manistee County)



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In addition to these special projects, ISN's "normal" work continued. Outreach and education efforts in our four counties progressed, with numerous presentations, workbees, workshops, and media interviews. A "check-out" crew targeted ISN's Top 20 Species (<http://habitatmatters.org/challenges/top-invasive-species/>) for treatment, working side-by-side with partners and private landowners.



Volunteers pull garlic mustard at Clay Cliffs Natural Area (Leelanau County)



Budding naturalists learn about habitat at Nuts 4 Nature Daycamp (Benzie Conservation District)

Our grant success has allowed us to bring two new members on to the ISN team: Fields Ratliff, our Habitat Management Specialist, and Miriam Owsley, our Outreach Assistant. Fields is from Antrim County, where he now lives with his family of four, and has an extensive background in on-the-ground invasive species management; at work he's focused on treatments and field work. Miriam, hailing from Leelanau County, has experience in marketing, outreach, and public involvement and education in Freshwater Studies focusing on policy; she's been presenting to municipalities, assisting with *Go Beyond Beauty*, and assisting with permissions and behind-the-scenes work. We're excited to have Fields and Miriam, and all the expertise and enthusiasm they bring, on the ISN team.

If you have questions, want to get involved, or wish to schedule an engaging presentation to an interested group (school group, garden club, interest group, local government, or other) contact Katie Grzesiak at kgrzesiak@gtcd.org or (231) 941-0960 x29 or visit HabitatMatters.org.