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Combating Invasive Plants Across Boundaries - *The Appalachian Ohio Weed Control Partnership*

Invasive plants can be found throughout the woodlands of Ohio and are a forest health issue that impacts nearly every woodland owner in the state. From multiflora rose to Ailanthus (or tree-of-heaven) to kudzu, the list of non-native invasive plants seems to be ever-growing. These plants do not recognize political or property boundaries, and do not discriminate among demographics. Projects designed to control invasive plants, however, are all too often limited by these man-made boundaries.

The Appalachian Ohio Weed Control Partnership (AOWCP) is a cooperative weed management area (CWMA) that was formed on June 26, 2012. CWMAs are local organizations that work to bring together landowners and land managers to share resources and expertise, and to coordinate actions to manage invasive plants. There are many CWMAs throughout the nation. These groups allow for cooperation across boundaries to develop regional plans for addressing invasive plants. They also provide opportunities for education and training, and can assist with regional efforts such as mapping invasive species and detecting new invasives early.

The AOWCP is located in 16 counties of southeastern Ohio: Athens, Gallia, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton, and Washington counties. It consists of private landowners as well as local, state, federal, and private agencies and organizations working together to increase the awareness and control of invasive plants at a landscape level. By coordinating the efforts of these various land owners and managers, the AOWCP attempts to cross boundaries and deal with invasive plants on a broader scale.

The goals for the group are to increase regional awareness of invasive plants, map invasive plant distributions, detect new invasives in early stages of invasion, strategically control invasive plants, obtain grants and funding sources, and develop a strategic plan for establishing long-term direction and priorities for the group. These goals are accomplished by working with partners to promote land stewardship, conduct research, and exchange information about invasive plants. With an increasing network of partners, the AOWCP is able to pool resources from a variety of sources to combat invasive plant problems throughout the AOWCP boundaries.

If you are interested in joining, volunteering, or learning more about the AOWCP, or would like to know more about invasive plants, visit their website at www.appalachianohioweeds.org, or contact Eric Boyda at appalachianohioweeds@gmail.com or 740-534-6578. ◆

Kyle Cooper, Hocking College intern, controls Japanese stiltgrass on a gas pipeline road. Photo courtesy of Eric Boyda.

Eric Boyda, AOWCP coordinator, helps landowners distinguish multiflora rose from the native swamp rose. Photo courtesy of Lynda Andrews.