



Our Partners

Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) – Bureau of State Parks, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, Pennsylvania Sea Grant, Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), 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 University, Erie County Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Erie County Department of Planning, Pennsylvania State University (PSU), Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (Penn-DOT)

Contact Us

Lake Erie Watershed
Cooperative Weed Management Area

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Cooperative Weed Management Areas



**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.

Our Worst Offenders

Large reed (*Phragmites australis*)



This tall perennial grass reaches up to 15 feet in height and

can rapidly overtake wetland communities, outcompeting native vegetation and altering wildlife habitat.

Garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)



Identified by clusters of four-petaled white flowers and a garlic odor when crushed, this plant invades shaded areas carpeting forest floors. Garlic mustard releases potent chemicals that inhibit seed germination of other plants.

Bush honeysuckles (*Lonicera* sp.)



Originally planted as ornamentals, these 6 to 20 foot tall shrubs

can invade a wide variety of native habitats forming dense thickets that crowd out native plants.

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 plant 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 plant 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 plants within the watershed, and represents an important milestone in regional invasive species control.



You Can Help

We're looking for individuals, school groups, clubs, land trusts, organizations, and corporations to help us stop the spread of invasive plants. If your group or organization owns land and would like it to be considered for a LEW-CWMA project or would like to serve on the LEW-CWMA Advisory Committee, we would like to hear from you. You can also participate by volunteering to pull and cut weeds when sites are being prepared for further control. Contact LEW-CWMA through Pennsylvania Sea Grant at 814-217-9011 x 106.



Track Invasives

An on-line tool, iMapInvasives assists natural resource managers, volunteers, and scientists in their efforts to protect natural resources by providing a system to collect and track invasive species. Organizing information in one location supports early detection of new invasive species populations and analysis of the management strategies needed. To learn more about how you can become involved in iMapInvasives, please visit wwwimapinvasives.org or send an email to imapinvasives@paconserve.org.

Don't Let These Invasives In!

These three invaders have been spotted in Pennsylvania. Please contact us if you see them in the Lake Erie watershed.

Water chestnut (*Tropaeolum natans* L.)



This aquatic plant forms dense floating mats that limit light and oxygen to other species. Water chestnut can outcompete native plants for nutrients and space and offers little nutritional value for wildlife.

Glossy buckthorn (*Rhamnus alnifolia*)



A deciduous shrub or small tree, glossy buckthorn is particularly aggressive in wet areas, rapidly producing a dense shade that eliminates native plants.

European alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)



Reaching heights of 40-60 feet with a narrow pyramidal shape, this tree can colonize wet soils and establish dense stands that outcompete and displace native plants.