



Strategic Management Plan 2023-2027

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Contact and Steering Committee

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L2L CISMA Steering Committee

Representatives from the following L2L CISMA partner organizations create the steering committee:

- UPRC&D Council
- Alger Conservation District
- Marquette County Conservation District
- Schoolcraft Conservation District
- The Nature Conservancy
- GEI Consultants
- Hiawatha National Forest

This committee has the ability to change through the duration of this document, and updates will be made accordingly if committee representation changes.

Website and social media addresses

- www.l2lcisma.org
- [www.facebook.com/L2L CISMA](https://www.facebook.com/L2L-CISMA)
- Instagram: [@l2lcisma](https://www.instagram.com/l2lcisma)

Introduction

The Lake to Lake Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (L2L CISMA) is a partnership of federal, state, non-profit groups, and businesses working to strategically manage non-native invasive species (NNIS) across a four-county coverage area. These partners are brought together under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) document, first created in 2008 under an agreement with the Hiawatha National Forest. From 2008 through 2017, the name of this partnership was the Central Upper Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area (CUPCWMA). In 2018, the partnership's name was changed to Lake to Lake Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area, along with the creation of a new logo and rebranding during the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan creation and implementation.

Mission Statement:

The mission of L2L CISMA is to provide long-term protection of native habitats by reducing the threat from non-native invasive species through coordination of efforts among partners to educate and engage the public, detect and manage invasions, restore invasion sites, and increase organizational and public capacity through sharing of knowledge and resources.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Statement:

The success of our work depends on the inclusion of all involved. We strive to consider and rectify historical and systemic injustices, ensuring that vulnerable and marginalized communities do not bear a disproportionate burden of environmental degradation. Historically, underserved populations, including those in rural communities, low-income communities, veterans, and people of color, have been excluded from conversations about how to approach and distribute conservation efforts. As a result, large disparities exist in the environmental benefits these efforts have yielded.

Within the Lake to Lake CISMA service area, we are increasingly aware of the relationship between our ecosystems and the ancestral and current human inhabitants of this region. We make a concerted effort to implement DEIJ principles that emphasize providing equal opportunities and access to resources for all communities, irrespective of their socioeconomic status, identity, or background. We acknowledge that to advocate for our ecosystems means to advocate for the people who inhabit and use them; this fact underlies all that we do.

Geographic Area:

L2L CISMA covers Alger, Delta, Marquette and Schoolcraft counties in the central Upper Peninsula of Michigan. This area covers approximately 5,065 square miles of land (US Census Bureau, 2016) totaling 3,242,176 acres. This includes protected areas under various jurisdictions including the US Forest Service, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy of Michigan, the State of Michigan, and many others. Hiawatha National Forest lands encompass 894,836 total acres of land (US Forest Service, 2012) with the west zone reaching into all four counties, and Ottawa National Forest's McCormick Tract Wilderness overlapping the far northwest corner of Marquette County. The National Park Service manages Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Alger County, comprising 73,236 acres of land and 42 miles of Lake Superior shoreline (US DOI, 2018). Seney National Wildlife Refuge under the management of the US Fish and Wildlife Service in Schoolcraft County covers 95,238 (USFWS, 2018) acres and includes Strangmoor Bog, a registered National Natural Landmark (US NPS, 2018). In private landscapes, The Nature Conservancy manages 9 nature preserves and forest reserve lands

(Cantway, 2018) and the Michigan Nature Association manages 13 sanctuaries in the area (MNA, 2018). Also present are tribal lands, state-managed lands, and lands owned privately by individual citizens, forest management groups, and other private land conservancies.

All of the counties lie within the Laurentian Mixed Forest Ecoregion (Bailey, 1995). The ecoregion is diverse and contains an exceptional array of ecosystem types including many forest types, dunes, agricultural landscapes, wetlands, shoreline, and other habitats. Together, the four counties have 444 miles of Great Lakes shoreline and approximately 3,800 miles of rivers and streams in the Lake Michigan and Lake Superior Great Lakes watersheds.

While this ecoregion is defined by the presence of certain types of ecosystems and habitats, we acknowledge that through the coming decades there is a high chance of those habitats shifting their native ranges due to the impacts from climate change. In these circumstances, we also expect to see invasive species movements into regions where they were previously buffered by unsuitable habitats. According to the Northern Institute for Applied Climate Sciences report Climate Change Field Guide for Northern Michigan Forests, “It is generally expected that invasive plants will disproportionately benefit under climate change, because they readily track environmental changes” (NIACS 2022). As we work cross jurisdictionally within our region and throughout our partnership, we can aim to assist in meeting strategies, goals and objectives outlined in this report and other similar modeling reports to buffer the worst impacts of climate change, and preserve distinct native habitats for which our ecoregion is known.

Within these landscapes there are seven federally listed threatened and endangered species including Pitcher’s thistle (*Cirsium pitcheri*), piping plover (*Charadrius melodus*), long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), American burying-beetle (*Nicrophorus americanus*), dwarf lake iris (*Iris lacustris*), Kirtland’s warbler (*Setophaga kirtlandii*), and Houghton’s goldenrod (*Solidago houghtonii*), as listed by the Michigan Natural Features Inventory (2017). In addition, there are many state-listed species. These species are found across the landscape furthering the need to promote their protection through proper land management and NNIS detection and control measures.

Goals

Goal One: Education

One of the most crucial aspects of a successful invasive species management program is engagement with the public through education. Recognition of methods of dispersal of NNIS material, decontamination protocol, proper NNIS identification, and native restoration methods all rely on education and awareness. L2L CISMA will provide educational opportunities and will disseminate relevant and up-to-date information regarding the latest research on all aspects of NNIS including best management practices (BMPs).

- L2L CISMA will engage and educate diverse school groups through hands-on workshops, presentations, and classroom projects.
- L2L CISMA will engage and educate the general public and special interest groups through presentations, workshops, field trips and volunteer work days. In the Upper Peninsula, we are fortunate to have a public that values outdoor resources, and outdoor-focused groups and conservation organizations are key partners in our mission and efforts.

- L2L CISMA will follow BMPs in all aspects of NNIS management by keeping abreast of the latest research and information on invasive species and topics. L2L CISMA is in a prime position to be the means by which this information can be translated to public groups and community members.
- The Coordinator will attend trainings to keep up to date on relevant available information.

Goal Two: Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR)

L2L CISMA, and other CISMAs throughout the State of Michigan, provide local expertise and valuable resources for protecting the native and natural ecosystems found in Michigan. State and federal agencies look to CISMAs to detect and make action plans for watch list species. Through the partnership, L2L CISMA has a diverse network of resources to report and contain EDRR infestations. As we seek to bolster the resiliency of native ecosystems in the face of climate change, early detection of invasive species that would be detrimental to these habitats is crucial. By responding early in the detection stages of introduced species, we gain an advantage of assisting already-stressed native habitats in maintaining ecosystem functions.

- L2L CISMA will survey for new infestations of watch list and priority species within the four-county service area. Surveys will be used to detect new infestations at their earliest and most manageable state. Rapid and effective management response will be conducted when feasible.
- L2L CISMA will encourage identification and reporting of infestations by the public.
- L2L CISMA will locate, identify, and confirm new infestations as reported.
- L2L CISMA personnel will send confirmed NNIS species reports to the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network (MISIN) and other regional databases for NNIS infestations. Database alerts will be utilized to obtain locations of EDRR species reported by the public.

Goal Three: Control and Management

By utilizing established best management practices (BMPs), L2L CISMA will manage NNIS invasions within the service area. While total eradication isn't considered practical management, control and containment of populations can reduce abundance and spread and mitigate negative ecological impacts.

- L2L CISMA will follow current BMPs when managing each new infestation of NNIS found within the service area.
- Control methods include manual and mechanical methods, biocontrol options, and chemical applications. The appropriate control method to be utilized will be determined at each infestation site.
 - Manual and mechanical control may consist of hand-pulling, cutting, digging, or other appropriate methods, followed by proper disposal.
 - Biocontrol consists of a release of a federally approved biological control agent under approved permits.

- Chemical control will follow the label law, and will only be performed by or under the direct supervision of a certified pesticide applicator in accordance with state and federal regulation.
- L2L CISMA will not perform any management or restoration activity without the express documented permission of the owning entity of the property.
- Management of invasions of NNIS will follow the L2L CISMA prioritization tool, as adapted from the EGLE Phragmites Prioritization tool.
- As part of ongoing efforts, L2L CISMA will encourage landowner stewardship of confirmed infestations
 - Where applicable and as funding permits, L2L CISMA will implement a landowner cost-share program to assist citizens in the stewardship of their property.
 - L2L CISMA will assist and educate landowners to continue management of infestations.

Goal Four: Restoration and Monitoring

As part of an integrated pest management program, L2L CISMA seeks to restore NNIS treatment areas to thriving native habitat. While there has been evidence of natural native regeneration after NNIS treatments, often a site will need active restoration efforts to restore it to a pre-infestation status.

- Restoration will include proper site preparation followed by plantings of native seed mixes, native plant plugs, or native shrubs and trees, dependent on the needs of the site.
- All native species to be planted will be acquired from a reputable source, ensuring non-native cultivars are not included in restoration efforts.
- Periodic monitoring for recurring infestations in restored sites will be conducted to ensure success of management efforts.
- L2L CISMA will implement pre- and post-treatment monitoring protocols into management strategies. Monitoring of treatment areas will provide a measure of success or failure of treatment.
- NNIS infestations will continue to be monitored to search for satellite populations and re-growth.

Goal Five: Organizational Capacity

As a partnership, L2L CISMA exists to facilitate networking, resource sharing and management of NNIS within the four-county service area. Partners in L2L CISMA assist in reporting infestations, leveraging funds, and aiding in boots-on-the-ground work. In turn, L2L CISMA assists partners by providing up-to-date information, bringing awareness of NNIS to their groups and, and as funding allows, aiding with management efforts via the L2L CISMA strike team and supply sharing.

- All partners are encouraged to engage in the reporting of NNIS infestations which allows for coordination of management efforts and opportunities for assistance in management of NNIS.
- L2L CISMA will provide partners with information regarding BMPs, and if funding allows, will provide assistance with treatment of NNIS on partner organization's lands.
- Partnership meetings will be held annually to update partners about L2L CISMA accomplishments, provide opportunities to share new information, host a platform to collaborate in future work, and to invite new potential partners to increase capacity.
- Monthly steering team meetings will ensure that the L2L CISMA Coordinator and fiscal agents receive support from a broad base of L2L CISMA partners.

Appendix A

Standard Operating Procedures of L2L CISMA

L2L CISMA will remain open and flexible to changing environments, including changes in partnership and steering committee membership, and changes in funding. This document will be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

○ Coordinator Expectations and Employment

L2L CISMA's Coordinator serves as the spokesperson and primary contact for the organization and represents the partnership to the public. This position serves as a contact for private landowners needing assistance and for the organizations within the partnership. The Coordinator is also the contact for state, federal, private and non-profit agencies to communicate with the partnership.

The Coordinator is responsible for the daily inner workings of the partnership. Responsibilities include seeking new and continued funding through grant writing and reporting to support NNIS management activities. The Coordinator organizes and executes prioritized field activities through the hiring and managing of seasonal field crews. The Coordinator is also expected to assist in performing field work, and to become a certified pesticide applicator to better assist with management activities, where feasible and if necessary. The Coordinator organizes the steering committee and partnership meetings, updates the website and social media pages, and conducts other tasks as needed. The Coordinator is responsible for maintaining and updating internal organizational documents such as the Strategic Five-Year Plan, Annual Work Plan, and the MOU document.

The Coordinator will be housed within the Marquette County Conservation District (MCCD) office as a district employee, as voted upon by the partnership. If there is to be a change in personnel in the Coordinator position, steps will be taken to advertise and fill the role, as follows:

- MCCD will solicit for employment, acquire resumes, and pre-screen all applicants for the Coordinator role.
- MCCD will provide a compilation of the best-qualified applicants to the steering committee for input.
- The MCCD district manager and board of directors will make the final hiring decision based on feedback from the Steering Committee.
- If a need arises that the Coordinator be terminated from their position, it is expected that MCCD will bring their reasoning and findings to the Steering Committee, and come a decision with input from the Committee.
- Unless a formal proposal for a change in the housing of the Coordinator is brought forward, MCCD will continue to house and be the employer of record for the Coordinator. If there is a proposal for change, the proposal will be voted upon by the

entire partnership with a simple majority of the partnership determining the outcome of the vote.

- For the sake of organizational stability, any proposal brought forth to change the housing of the Coordinator should be intended to be a long-term, sustainable change and should not be suggested unless a certain and urgent need presented itself. Any organization partner that cannot demonstrate such stability may be asked to withdraw a proposal to house the Coordinator.
- In taking the responsibility of fiduciary agency for employment of the Coordinator, measures should be kept in place to ensure retention of personnel. Being that the Coordinator is funded through the acquisition of grant funds, there is the possibility that there may be a lapse in available funds to support the Coordinator. To resolve temporary funding lapses and to maintain Coordinator continuity, it is expected that a portion of indirect funds from L2L CISMA grant programs be allocated to a rainy-day fund to support the preservation of employment for the Coordinator.
 - The fund is to be maintained at a \$10,000.00 threshold in the form of a savings account, held through MCCD.
 - Should funds need to be utilized from this reserve, it is expected that upon renewal of additional grant funding, the balance will be returned to refresh the \$10,000.00 ceiling as soon as possible as funding allows.
 - If funding does not resume in a timely fashion, or if the rainy-day fund is depleted prior to resolution of lapsed funding, the Coordinator will begin unemployment.
 - If this fund is needed to temporarily support the Coordinator role, it will be used to continue employment at the most current documented hourly rate, at full time hours, to ensure the Coordinator has the full capability to complete tasks related to continuing the CISMA partnership and attend to resolving funding needs.

○ Steering Committee

L2L CISMA is guided by a steering committee comprised of representatives from formal partner organizations who help guide the motives, principles and actions carried out by the organization.

- Representatives should include a representative from each of the four counties covered in the CISMA service area, federal partners, state partners, and others.
- Membership is limited to 10 members, with no more than one formal representative from each participating organization.
- Subcommittees will be formed as necessary from the members of the steering committee and from other formal partners as applicable to content and needs of the subcommittee.

- As a member of the steering committee, participation in monthly meetings and other occurrences where steering committee input is needed is expected. If a member cannot attend, they should be in contact with the Coordinator to provide input and to receive updates on items missed. Regular lack of participation may lead to review of membership and potential forfeit of position on the committee to allow other interested participants to join the steering committee.

○ Grant acquisition and support

L2L CISMA is funded through the acquisition of federal, state, and private grant and/or contract awards. Future exploration of grant opportunities and securing of funds is the responsibility of the Coordinator, with encouragement for cooperation from partnership entities on behalf of the CISMA.

- As appropriate new grant opportunities arise, proposals should be submitted using the following process:
 - Prior to submission, all proposals must be reviewed by the steering committee and Coordinator. A two-week timeframe prior to submission is requested to give enough time for feedback and edits before proposal submissions. If two weeks is not possible due to grant deadline constraints, there will be a minimum of 5 business days to give feedback and edits prior to submission.
 - All proposals must receive steering committee, Coordinator, and any involved partners' approval prior to submission of the proposal to the grantor. Letters of support are encouraged in this process if applicable.
- Outreach documents and informational packets should be consistent between grant activities. The L2L CISMA logo, contact for the Coordinator, and mission statement will remain the same on all published material, regardless of fiduciary agency administering the grant.
- Letters of support requests from L2L CISMA from partnering organizations are encouraged as potential grant opportunities arise within their organization. A letter of support should be requested of the Coordinator, who shall compose the letter on the premise that the request be brought to the steering committee for input. Letters will support projects that are aligned with L2L CISMA's goals relating to NNIS management. Partner organizations are also encouraged to write a letter on behalf of their individual organization if they choose to.
- As the L2L CISMA partnership has evolved, the CISMA is often finding itself the recipient of subawards to encourage collaboration at landscape-scale level projects, held by entities other than MCCD. This method of grant acquisition and further partnership is encouraged, so long as full transparency, support, and permission has been given from L2L CISMA, the Coordinator, and has support of MCCD and the Steering Committee.

- As grant activities are carried out, fiduciary agents will regularly provide updates to the steering committee and sub-awardees for all grants they are administering. This will provide an update on grant progress.
- To provide transparency, a google drive has been created for the steering committee. This enables timely sharing and greater accessibility to grant documents when requested. All current and important documents should be uploaded to the drive by the Coordinator, who shall maintain the Drive.

○ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Document and Partnerships

L2L CISMA currently has 28 partners, both formal and informal. These partnerships strengthen the CISMA and provide the opportunity to have a greater positive impact on our surrounding native ecosystems.

MOU Document:

- During the inception of the L2L CISMA in 2008, it created a MOU document with the Hiawatha National Forest to allow for cross-jurisdictional activities and further its capacity for NNIS management.

Partnerships:

- To be considered a formal partner, the organization will need to have signed a signatory page under our MOU document. As a formal partner, the representative organization will have the ability to vote on partnership activities and have the option to sit on the steering committee.
- Organizations that are informal partners are able to work with L2L CISMA by partnering in educational events or workshops, holding workdays with field crews, or other general supporting activities.
- To be added as a new partner to L2L CISMA, a request should be made by the proposed organization to the Coordinator. The Coordinator will then solicit a notice and a call for any conflicts of interest (COI) from the existing partners. The partnership has 30 days to bring forward any COI, and if none exist, the organization can move forward in the process.
- Once the COI period has passed, an organization can then request a signatory page for the MOU document. This page will include the name of the requesting organization, a primary contact for that organization with their signature, the Coordinator's signature, and the US Forest Service signature.
- The organization will then sign, the Coordinator will sign an approval on behalf of the entire CISMA partnership, and a representative from Hiawatha National Forest will sign and complete the process.
- If a COI arises, the conflict will be brought to the partnership to hear out the conflict and how it may impact the CISMA, or organizations currently added to the MOU document

in a negative manner. A vote will be called of the entire partnership to settle the COI, with a majority vote as the decision mechanism.

○ Voting Procedures

All MOU signatories have one vote and are encouraged to provide input on proposed changes and procedures to L2L CISMA as needed. Majority rule shall decide the outcome of voted upon topics.

- The Coordinator will call a vote of all formal partner organizations as changes are proposed.
- If a partner does not wish to cast a vote, they are not obligated to. Additionally, if a conflict of interest exists by voting, the partner is encouraged to abstain.

For adopting changes to the partnership framework documents (Strategic Management Plan and Memorandum of Understanding):

- Upon annual review and, as internal framework documents expire, input will be sought from formal partners.
 - A subcommittee will be formed to review and revise documents with edits implemented by the Coordinator.
 - The Coordinator will send the subcommittee's final draft to the full partnership for one week of review.
 - The subcommittee will carefully consider input from the partnership and present a final revised document to the partnership for adoption.

Appendix B L2L CISMA Species of Concern

Common Name	Latin Name	Priority Status
autumn olive	<i>Elaeagnus umbellata</i>	Medium
baby's breath	<i>Gypsophila paniculata</i>	High
bull thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Medium
butterbur	<i>Petasites hybridus</i>	High
Canada thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Medium
common St. Johnswort	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	Low*
Eurasian water milfoil	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>	High
European frogbit	<i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i>	High
flowering rush	<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>	High
garden valerian	<i>Valeriana officinalis</i>	High
garlic mustard	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>	High
Himalayan balsam	<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>	High
Japanese barberry	<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Medium
leafy spurge	<i>Euphorbia esula</i>	Medium
marsh thistle	<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	Medium
non-native buckthorns	<i>Rhamnus spp.</i>	Medium
non-native common reed	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	High
non-native honeysuckles	<i>Lonicera spp.</i>	Medium
non-native knapweeds	<i>Centaurea spp.</i>	Low*
non-native knotweeds	<i>Polygonum spp.</i>	High
purple loosestrife	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	High
reed canary grass	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	Medium
sweet clover	<i>Melilotus spp.</i>	Low*
wild parsnip	<i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	High

*Low priority species may be of ecological concern and higher priority if found in a specialized habitat regions

While this list is specific to the needs within L2L CISMA's service area and the landscape concerns of our region, L2L CISMA consistently has all species found on the Michigan Watchlist as the highest concern. A link to these species can be found in the text below.

○ Other NNIS Resources

- [Midwest Invasive Species Information Network \(MISIN\)](#)
- [Michigan DNR](#)
- [Midwest Invasive Plant Network \(MIPN\)](#)
- [MIPN Control Database](#)
- [Michigan Invasive Species Coalition](#)

Appendix C

Partners of L2L CISMA

- Alger Conservation District
- Common Coast Research and Conservation
- Delta Conservation District
- US Forest Service – Hiawatha National Forest
- GEI Consultants Inc.
- Marquette Board of Light and Power
- Marquette County Conservation District
- Michigan DNR Gwinn Forest Management Unit
- Michigan DNR – Van Riper/Craig Lake/Laughing Whitefish Falls State Park/Blueberry Ridge/Little Presque Isle Recreation Area
- Michigan Nature Association
- Michigan State University Extension
- National Park Service – Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore
- Noquemanon Trail Network
- Schoolcraft Conservation District
- US Fish and Wildlife Service – Seney National Wildlife Refuge
- Superior Watershed Partnership
- The Forestland Group
- The Nature Conservancy – Michigan Chapter
- Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy
- Upper Peninsula Resource Conservation and Development Council
- Lyme Great Lakes Timber Holdings, LLC.
- Yellow Dog Watershed Preserve

Appendix D

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