



# COOK COUNTY INVASIVES TEAM

## FIVE YEARS OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

### 2011-2015

### Cook County Invasives Team

In the spring of 2011 a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by local, state, federal, tribal, and non-profit organizations to officially form the Cook County Invasive Team (CCIT). This document created a framework for continued cooperation between member organizations and has allowed long-term invasive species strategies to be carried out across ecological, rather than political, boundaries. Through the CCIT, organizations can share resources, expenses, knowledge, contacts, and education to limit the impact of non-native species in northeastern Minnesota.

The formal establishment of the CCIT has allowed us to increase our inventory and control capacity and fostered a noticeable increase in public awareness on the threats of non-native invasive plants in this region.

Over its first five years from 2011 through 2015, the CCIT has accomplished a great deal with respect to locating and monitoring invasive species populations, control and management of invasive plants, outreach and education, and restoration.



A. Edgerton, 2013

#### CCIT Objectives

1. Locate and inventory invasive species in Cook County, MN.
2. Provide education that assists in prevention and early detection of invasive species
3. Use an integrated approach to manage current infestations.
4. Seek funding opportunities to support CCIT partnership activities.
5. Participate on committees to help raise awareness, prioritize, and increase agency and group efforts to manage and control invasive species.

### Members



## Locating and Monitoring

The efforts of CCIT member organizations have resulted in maps that accurately depict the distribution of 12 species of invasive plants within Cook County. These maps are updated annually with the most current data and are used to guide control activities. Invasive plant surveying and monitoring activities have improved early detection of new populations within the county. Invasive plant population and treatment data has been shared with EDDMapS ([www.eddmaps.org](http://www.eddmaps.org)), a nation-wide invasive species reporting site, which enables the public and other organizations to easily access it.



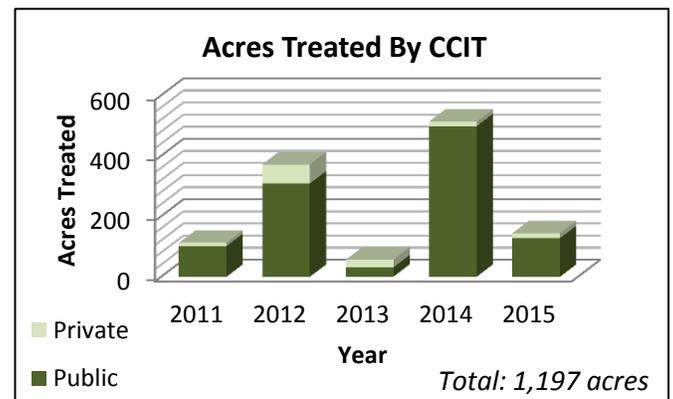
## Outreach and Education

In the past five years, the CCIT has helped to raise awareness about invasive species issues throughout the county. Outreach and education programs have included: informational booths at special events (Fisherman's Picnic, Cook County Fair, etc.); presentations to local interest groups (garden clubs, etc.); interviews on the local radio station and in the newspaper; sign and boot brush station installation. The CCIT has also made connections with younger generations by speaking to school groups and providing hands-on learning opportunities. The Team's website is a source of information about CCIT events and regional invasive species and control options.



## Control and Management

From 2011 through 2015, CCIT member organizations and programs treated 1,197 acres of invasive plant species in Cook County. Treatments on public lands have included mowing along county roads and control of common tansy, spotted knapweed and Canada thistle in gravel pits. Volunteer days and coordinated efforts with local schools have focused on invasive plant control in community spaces. Conservation Corps of Minnesota crews were hired to remove invasive plants from the property of 19 private landowners. The CCIT uses a wide variety of methods to control invasive plants including biocontrol. Spotted knapweed biocontrol releases were implemented at the Cook County Airport in 2011 and 2013.



## Restoration

CCIT activities such as tree planting workshops have provided landowners with the knowledge and skills to complete restoration projects on their own property. A total of 23 private landowners have completed trainings through the Community Forest Restoration Shed at Sugarloaf Cove and borrowed equipment and herbicide for use in personal projects. The CCIT has also facilitated the creation of restoration projects in public areas. One restoration project was completed in cooperation with the Cook Co. High School where Siberian pea shrub was removed from school property and tree seedlings were planted. Another project with Cook Co. Soil & Water Conservation District restored an eroded streambank with native plants.

