

West Michigan Conservation Network 2022

MISSION STATEMENT

The West Michigan Conservation Network is an effective, diverse, and sustainable partnership of environmental groups, educational institutions, governmental organizations, and private citizens working to conserve and enhance our natural communities through ecosystem restoration and public education.

The West Michigan Conservation Network (WMCN) was formalized in 2016 as a way to provide an all-encompassing structure reflective of the full organizational body of work. Under this new organization, there are three subcommittees; Habitat Restoration & Management, Learning & Engagement, and Structure & Function. Together, these three committees help address conservation issues in West Michigan

HABITAT RESTORATION & MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

During the 2022 field season, the Habitat Restoration & Management Subcommittee continued to advance invasive species management in West Michigan. Three Strike Teams and one Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Crew worked diligently to survey and treat invasive species.

The Strike Teams work to address a variety of invasive plants on both public and private properties. The Teams focused on several species including Japanese knotweed, garlic mustard, Phragmites, European Frog-bit, and more.

The HWA Crew treated 24,931 hemlock trees during the 2022 field season. The Technicians spend the winter months surveying and collecting data in preparation for the summer treatment season.



WMCN ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WMCISMA STRIKE TEAMS

292 - Sites Surveyed & Treated
1,368 - Acres Surveyed & Treated

WMCISMA HWA CREW

23,191 - Trees Surveyed
1,592 - Acres Surveyed
24,931 - Trees Treated
888 - Acres Treated

EDUCATION, OUTREACH, & GRANTS

8 - Outreach Activities
3 - Grants Awarded
2 - Grants Completed

PARTNER METRICS

1,948 - Trees Planted
323 - Trees Treated
78.1 - Acres Restored
3,475 - Acres Treated
3 - Grants Awarded
1 - Grant Closed
20,800 - Individuals Reached
223 - Partner Events

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LEARNING & ENGAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

WMCN's Learning and Engagement continued to amp up the coordination of conservation outreach and education. Over 200 events were posted on WMCN's calendar by twelve different organizations in 2023. Events ranged from volunteer opportunities with native plants and invasive species removal, to presentations on stewardship of our natural resources.

WMCN offered presentations to the public to continue to educate the communities of West Michigan about topics of greatest conservation need. Additionally, trainings, such as managing for oak wilt, were offered to partners to build WMCN's knowledge base of current best management practices. In total, 8 programs were facilitated with WMCN's support.



STRUCTURE AND FUNCTION SUBCOMMITTEE

The Structure and Function sub-committee meets quarterly. On March 18, the sub-committee developed a leadership calendar to ensure that the WMCN holds regular meetings throughout the year and encourages all partners to participate on subcommittees or in other ways. Additionally, we developed Steering committee member job descriptions and responsibilities. Each Steering committee member (there are 7 total) is asked to serve on one of the three subcommittees or take up another type of responsibility. If a steering committee member misses more than three meetings they will be asked to step down.

Last year on June 23, WMCN partners came together for our annual meeting to be inspired and share accomplishments. We closed the year by hosting a December 14th meeting to discuss the potential creation of a WMCN Coordinator position. The Coordinator would report to all seven counties and expand our work beyond grant-driven invasive species work to focus on restoration and partner connectivity as well as provide leadership and collaboration.



LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023

In the fall of 2022, the West Michigan Cisma received \$200,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to carry out retreatments of Japanese knotweed, invasive bittersweet, and Phragmites in the Pere Marquette, Muskegon, and Lower Grand River watersheds! We are excited to start this project and continue invasive species management!

SUBCOMMITTEE CONTACTS

We encourage everyone to join our subcommittees! Please contact the committee leads with questions.

Habitat Restoration and Management

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Learning and Engagement

Melanie Manion: mmanion@miottawa.org

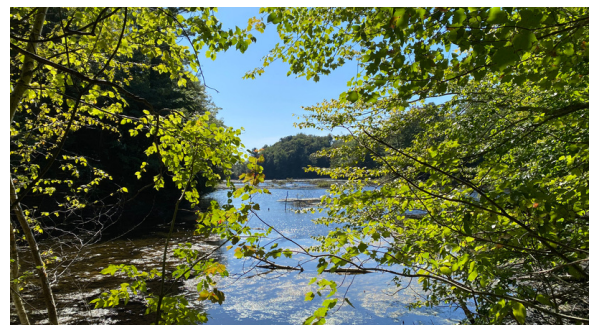
Structure and Function

Jessie Schulte: jessie.schulte@macd.org

NEW FOR 2022

The West Michigan Cisma is excited to partner with the United States Forest Service through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative program to provide survey and treatment for Phragmites on the Macatawa River, Kalamazoo River, Grand River, Muskegon River, and Pentwater River. Surveys began in the fall of 2021 and treatments will occur during the fall of 2022.

The West Michigan Cisma has been partnering with the North Country Cisma and Mason-Lake Conservation District to increase capacity for HWA survey and treatments. This partnership will allow for more hemlocks to be protected in West Michigan.



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