

SuAsCo CISMA Annual Report: 2019

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the accomplishments of the SuAsCo CISMA for 2019. These accomplishments reflect the Annual Priority Actions taken by the CISMA's subcommittees, which are guided by the priorities outlined in SuAsCo CISMA Invasive Species Management Plan¹.

This report will also help identify baseline metrics for evaluating the value and impact of the CISMA within the watershed. These metrics will be reviewed by the Steering Committee and applied to CISMA projects proposed for 2020.

General Highlights of 2019

- First full year of the Coordinator being housed at Sudbury Valley Trustees
- Four new organizations elected to the Steering Committee (Three Year Term/2022)
 - o Town of Maynard Conservation Commission (John Dwyer)
 - o Native Plant Trust (Bud Sechler)
 - o Mass Audubon Society (Amber Carr, rescinded position due to staffing changes, seat currently vacant)
 - o Town of Wayland Conservation Department (Ryan Brown)
- New Steering Committee Officers – Terms expire December 2019
 - o Amber Carr – Chair
 - o Ryan Brown – Vice Chair
 - o Gerry DiBello – Treasurer
 - o Stacy Carter – Secretary
 - o Kathy Sferra – Co-Secretary
- Two full membership meetings were hosted by the Steering Committee
 - o Spring Meeting – Featuring glyphosate presentation by Wjinja Hotzel
 - o Fall Meeting – Featuring goats as invasive control presentations and discussions
- Annual Priority Actions return, on hiatus since 2013
- New subcommittee incorporated
 - o Policy and Permitting Subcommittee
- Subcommittee name changes
 - o Water Chestnut Subcommittee changed to Aquatic Invasives Management (AIM) Subcommittee
 - o Early Detection and Rapid Response and Control Subcommittee changed to Early Detection and Control (EDC) Subcommittee

¹ See Appendix Item A: SuAsCo CISMA Invasive Species Management Plan

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Annual Priority Actions 2019

As defined in the SuAsCo CISMA MOU, Annual Priority Actions (APAs) are the prioritized list of action items for the upcoming year. These actions are based on the short- and long-term objectives identified in the Invasive Species Management Plan. The APAs will identify manageable projects or phases of projects to be accomplished within the next 12 months. APAs for each subcommittee are provided below, with proposed actions appearing in standard script and accomplishments appearing in bold.

Aquatics Invasive Management Subcommittee: Chairperson, Alison Field-Juma (OARS).

The purpose of the Aquatics Invasive Management Subcommittee is as follow:

1. Oversee implementation of the Water Chestnut Management Action Plan.
2. Coordinate management efforts undertaken taken on by various stakeholders in the watershed.
3. Update the watershed-wide information (see water chestnut survey).
4. Encourage monitoring and logistical support from towns.
5. Share updates on control techniques, research, and funding sources.
6. Collaborate on outreach and education materials and efforts.
7. Review and revise the Management Plan to adapt its methods and recommendations to changes in field conditions, including the effects of ongoing management, and any new research or management options.
8. Draft applications for funding for regional planning and implementation.

2019 Annual Priority Actions for the Aquatics Invasive Management Subcommittee. Proposed actions appearing in standard script and accomplishments appearing in bold.

- Collaborate with DCR, SOLitude, and Towns for information on infestation, especially for smaller water bodies within watershed
 - **Collaboration ongoing**
- Continue to work on permitting issues for water chestnut, hoping for a general watershed permit
 - **This has been taken over by LAPs and applied for a grant that would fund the Coordinator's time to push this through**
- Will continue to pursue mapping with drones as a more efficient mapping method
 - **Developing citizen science app to track water chestnut- drones too costly right now**
- Additional Actions Taken
 - **Subcommittee meets in spring and fall to coordinate water chestnut efforts throughout watershed and review techniques used for success or failures**
 - **Still working on watershed-wide monitoring of aquatic invasives**
 - **Several towns not managing aquatic invasives themselves paid OARS to pull water chestnut on Sudbury River this summer**

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- **Applied for the Antioch University graduate program to develop a watershed wide approach to aquatic invasives management, but was denied.**

Early Detection and Control Subcommittee: Chairperson Stacy Carter (Lincoln Conservation Department). The purpose of the Early Detection and Control Subcommittee is as follows:

1. Gather information on potential new invasive species and pathways of their introduction and spread.
2. Identify and work with target communities and user groups to reduce likelihood of new invasions.
3. Design a “Keep Clean Areas Clean” program through the promotion of educational resources regarding prevention of new invasive species within the watershed.
4. Provide information to interested parties on identification of Early Detection species.
5. Recruit a trained cadre of professional and volunteer naturalists able to identify potential new invaders.
6. Create a network and a mechanism for contacting and mobilizing professional and volunteer efforts to eradicate new infestations as they occur.
7. Map and monitor new infestations using CISMA standards to ensure invasive species has been eradicated.
8. Establish relationships with and learn from other organizations involved in Early Detection/Rapid Response efforts outside of watershed.
9. Plan, support, commit available resources to treatment of invasive species in high priority sites, and treatment of high priority species as adopted by CISMA.
10. Encourage and support mapping of existing infestations within the watershed using CISMA standards where feasible.
11. Encourage and support monitoring of treated areas over time using standards developed by CISMA.
12. Develop and maintain a system for information sharing (possible tools include a website, list-serve, web-mapping and on-line database).
13. Solicit and share available information on areas inventoried and mapped for invasive species within the watershed.
14. Solicit and share methodology for invasive control, management projects, mapping and monitoring standards.
15. Solicit and share results of management practices, current research and control projects.
16. As feasible and mutually desirable, share available resources such as equipment, volunteer resources and information on licensed pesticide applicators.

2019 Annual Priority Actions for the Early Detection and Control Subcommittee. Proposed actions appearing in standard script and accomplishments appearing in bold.

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- Will be analyzing and implementing results of survey
 - **Review of survey prompted management planning workshop**
 - **Hosted management planning workshop with 11 participants. Was meant to yield project proposals to the small grant program, but did not.**
 - **Of those that took the survey a random participant (Steele Farm Advisory Committee, Boxoborough) was given a consultation on invasive management**
- Hope to offer an EdMapps training
 - **Did not do this though the need to use it was highlighted in the newsletter**
- Working on developing list of high priority ecological sites that are important for State listed plants and in need of management within the watershed
 - **Will not be pursuing invasives control around rare plant sites as state does not consider it a priority**
- Offer trainings for creating invasive species management plans
 - **Held two- one was in the field in fall the other was in spring**

Education and Outreach Subcommittee: Chairperson Ryan Brown (Wayland Conservation Department). The purpose of the Education and Outreach Subcommittee is as follows:

1. Raise awareness of the impacts of invasive species in the local community by providing general information about invasive species and how they affect the watershed.
2. Build knowledge of invasive species identification and control through presentations aimed at adults and school children and innovative educational materials.
3. Provide printed publications and a focused list of online resources on invasive species identification and control promoting best practices for homeowners.
4. Raise awareness of invasive species treatment techniques and effectiveness through hands on invasive species education programs at demonstration sites within the watershed.
5. Promote invasive species control to private landowners by offering backyard identification and management advice.
6. Develop a web site for SuAsCo CISMA.

2019 Annual Priority Actions for the Education and Outreach Subcommittee. Proposed actions appearing in standard script and accomplishments appearing in bold.

- Recover lost website content from transition
 - **Completed, mostly photos from a Flickr account**
- Implement input from membership on how to improve the website:
 - Add visual calendar
 - **Completed**
 - Add in subcommittee presentations from fall meeting
 - **To be completed**

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- Create google sheet for CISMA members where we can house contractor list
 - **To be released**
- Create TripTik brochure/hand out to advertise CISMA
 - **Completed²**
- Additional Actions Taken
 - **Established a Google Analytics page**

Policy and Permitting Subcommittee: Chairperson Delia Kaye (Concord Natural Resources), Priscilla Ryder (City of Marlborough), Kathy Sfera (Town of Stow), Alison Field-Juma (OARS) and Rob McArthur (City of Framingham)

The purpose of the Policy and Permitting Subcommittee is as follows:

1. Improve local permitting through developing general permits for aquatic and terrestrial invasives control.
2. Investigate potential for limited herbicide applicator license to ease the burden of invasives control for everyone.
3. Continue to support draft legislation filed by Senator Jehlen for state-level invasive species control.

2019 Annual Priority Actions for the Policy and Permitting Subcommittee. Proposed actions appearing in standard script and accomplishments appearing in bold.

- To address permitting issues regarding invasives?
 - **Still working on finding an easier path for homeowners to control invasives on their property with a general notice-of-intent form**
- Water chestnut general permitting.
 - **Waiting to see how the general permit for terrestrial aquatic management is received by DEP**
- Ease of regulations in regards to Land Trusts, would like to be able to apply herbicide as a land owner instead of having to have a pesticide applicators license and insurance. Insurance is the big hurdle. Makes herbicide a cost prohibitive management tool.
 - **In progress, though not much has been made**
- New legislation currently drafted by State Senator Patricia Jehlen's office to create state coordinator and funding for invasive management
 - **Continuing to follow Senator Jehlen's statewide coordinator bill**

Administrative Subcommittee: Chairperson Ryan Brown (Wayland Conservation Department). The purpose of the Administrative Subcommittee is as follows:

² See Appendix Item B: CISMA Brochure

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1. Create and maintain Steering Committee to develop, prioritize, and endorse cooperative invasive species projects; and develop community support, education, and training initiatives.
2. Create and maintain subcommittees to facilitate invasive species management, education and outreach initiatives.
3. Develop Annual Priority Actions which, as defined in the MOU, direct the efforts of the CISMA partnership for the year.
4. Apply to appropriate grants or other funding sources to sustain CISMA organization.
5. Employ CISMA coordinator to collaborate watershed-wide efforts related to CISMA.
6. Engage in community outreach to build support for CISMA.

2019 Annual Priority Actions for the Administrative Subcommittee. Proposed actions appearing in standard script and accomplishments appearing in bold.

- Create annual report of accomplishments and send to signatories and SVT by end of December 2019
 - **Completed**
- Develop metrics for invasive removal projects to be used to report accomplishments for 2020
 - **Completed**
- Schedule/coordinate two annual meetings open to all and quarterly steering committee meetings
 - **Completed**
- Administration of small grants projects
 - **SWEET and Wayland - provide outline of key accomplishments and lessons learned**
- Additional Actions Taken
 - ***Applied for RSC Partner Grant³***
 - ***Applied for the Great Outdoors Fund to fund coordinator time to assist with the creating and getting a generic invasive plant treatment permit approved by DEP. Have not heard status.***

RSC Partner Grant 2019/2020

The funds provided with this grant will support basic administrative costs, additional support to CISMA members by the Coordinator, SVT's Director of Stewardship and the EDC team, support of invasive plant control at rare plant locations in the watershed, and the 7th annual CISMA small grants program.

- **Administrative functions:** The annual website maintenance fee and liability insurance for the CISMA canoes, kayaks, trailer, and storage shed will be paid for in 2020.

³ See Appendix Item C: RSC Partner Grant

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- Pursue invasive plant management at rare plant locations: The CISMA Steering Committee and Native Plant Trust determined that the pursuit of this goal would not be the most efficient use of CISMA's efforts.
- Provide onsite guidance and direct support to at least five CISMA members: The CISMA Coordinator in conjunction with the Early Detection and Control Subcommittee have already begun providing guidance and support to the Town of Natick to develop a management plan for battling two invasives new to our region.
- Small Grant Program: The CISMA Steering Committee has received five applications from CISMA members and will be reviewing and allocating funds at the upcoming Steering Committee meeting on January 14th 2020.

SuAsCo CISMA Small Grant 2019

The Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Wild and Scenic River Stewardship Council provided \$3,500 to the SuAsCo CISMA to administer as funds for the small grant program. Two projects within the watershed were funded using this amount.

The first project funded through the small grant program was for SWEET⁴ (Sudbury Weed Eradication and Education Team) to provide garden waste bags to store pulled garlic mustard, to create and maintain pollinator gardens and the local high school, and to remove black swallow-wort. The SuAsCo CISMA Steering Committee awarded \$1,500 to fund this project.

The second project funded through the small grant program was for the Town of Wayland's Conservation Department⁵ to purchase native plants to restore an area disturbed by invasive vegetation removal. The Wayland Conservation Department was awarded \$2,000 by the SuAsCo CISMA Steering Committee for the purchase of native restoration species.

⁴ See Appendix Item D: SWEET Final Report

⁵ See Appendix Item E: Wayland Conservation Final Report

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Google Analytics

Beginning in September 2019, Google Analytics began recording visitor traffic to the SuAsCo CISMA website. What follows is an overview of traffic from September 2019 through December 2019 with results evaluating audience, acquisition, location, devices, and pages⁶.

Audience

- 996 users
- 1,196 sessions
- 1.2 sessions per user
- 1,832 page views
- 1.53 pages viewed per session
- 1 minute average session duration

Acquisition – How an individual accessed the website.

- 582 direct acquisitions (visitors accessed the site directly, not through a search engine)
- 395 organic search (visitors were directed to the site via an inquiry through a search engine), top five searches provided below
 - o (Not provided) – accounts for roughly 90% of all organic searches
 - o CISMA – 2% of organic searches
 - o (Not Set) – 1.2% of organic searches
 - o Amazon – .48% of organic searches
 - o Invasive species removal - .24%
- 21 referrals (acquisitions made through links), top five referrals provided below
 - o Mail.google.com
 - o Oars3rivers.org
 - o Wayland.ma.us
 - o Actonconservationtrust.org
 - o Actoninvasives.org
- 8 Social media links, all were through Facebook.

Location – Where an individual accessed the website from.

- United States – 87% of visits came from locations within the USA
 - o Illinois – 40% of visits within the USA (Chicago being the primary hub)
 - o Massachusetts – 27% of visits within the USA (SuAsCo Watershed and Boston being the primary hubs)
- Canada – 3.24%
- Brazil – 1.75%
- United Kingdom – 1.5%
- China – 1.2%

⁶ See Appendix Item F: Google Reports

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Devices – The type of digital device was used to access the website.

- Desktop access – 90%
- Mobile – 8.2 %
- Tablet – 1.6%

Pages – Pages viewed by individuals visiting the website.

- Homepage 25.98%
- Invasives / Control-Methods 8.24%
- Invasives / Tree-of-heaven 4.9%
- Invasives / Priority Invasives 3.1%
- Projects / Grants / Current Grants 3.1%
- About SuAsCo CISMA 2.9%

Baseline Metrics

In order to better evaluate the effectiveness of the SuAsCo CISMA and its influence within the watershed the following metrics could be adopted. These metrics will be discussed amongst the Steering Committee and applied to CISMA projects in 2020.

- Number of events held
 - o This metric would include meetings, trainings, workshops, etc
- Number of individuals in attendance
 - o Record the number of individuals attending meetings, workshops, trainings, etc
- Area of impact
 - o Numbers of acres or square feet impacted by direct or indirect action of the CISMA through invasive removal events, grants, etc
- Number of individuals influenced by CISMA
 - o This metric would include those reached by the newsletter, social media, the website, etc