

MAPPING THE EXTENT OF INVASIVE PLANT SPECIES ON WISCONSIN STATE FOREST LAND. Sarah K. Herrick, Invasive Plant Survey Coordinator, WDNR, Division of Forestry, Madison, WI 53703.

Invasive plants pose a serious ecological and economic threat to Wisconsin's valuable forest resources. These pests reduce biodiversity by out-competing native species, degrade fish and wildlife habitat, reduce agricultural yields, prevent forest regeneration and may alter important ecological processes like hydrology, nitrogen fixation, and natural fire cycles. During the 2006 field season, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry completed a GIS based inventory of terrestrial invasive plant species within Wisconsin's State Forests. The objective of the survey was to collect information on the ecology of invasive plants within Wisconsin's State Forests, including the location and area of infestations, spread patterns, new and common invaders, and to map the current existence and extent of invasive plant infestations on state forest land. Each State Forest identified a list of priority search areas for invasive plant surveys. Priority areas included corridors along roads and trails, homesteads, boat landings, river ways, timber sales, gravel pits, recreational sites and campgrounds. These areas were surveyed in as close to their entirety as was feasible, and were visited at least twice during the field season to ensure proper identification of plants based on the phenology of the target species. Data collected during the survey will be used to establish a baseline database to aid in the development of invasive plant management goals and objectives and in measuring the progress of future management programs on state forest land.