

TACKLING MULTIFLORA ROSE AT A MULTI-COUNTY LEVEL WITH MULTIPLE STRATEGIES IN WISCONSIN. Steve Kohlstedt, Associate Professor, University of Wisconsin Extension, Richland County, Richland Center, Wisconsin 53581.

Southwestern Wisconsin has been seen multiflora rose thrive over the last thirty years to the point that it is in virtually every woodlot and pasture. In 2000, Extension Educators and Basin Educators in six counties in Southwestern Wisconsin organized regional multiflora rose educational events to build awareness of the severity of the problem and recommend different management measures. The regional meetings were held on three highly managed properties in Grant, Lafayette and Green Counties. These initial meetings focused on chemical demonstrations and cultural control measures, such as rotational grazing.

These regional field days sparked activities in all six counties nearly at once. All counties hosted educational field days and drew large audiences. They used the expertise of specialists to emphasize biology and management techniques for this invasive species.

Several counties even went further and established cost share programs for managing multiflora rose. This opened a new course for awareness and action. These counties built on the success of their landowners and hosted numerous field days highlighting these successes. The cost share programs allowed landowners to experiment with management ideas and share their successes and failures.

The cost share program became the catalyst for a strong network of landowners, who were willing to share their information, experiences and outcomes in network meetings within the counties where they live or own property. So small groups of 10 to 15 landowners would get together and share “how they are managing multiflora rose,” throughout the county.

As producers began to look at their wood lots more carefully, in Richland County, we found other opportunities for education and research. At one site, we discovered a strong infestation of Rose Rosette Disease. The site will be used to monitor the effects and spread of the disease. It will also provide a very unique opportunity to try different management techniques in conjunction with the disease. In the long run this site may provide insight to controlling multiflora rose with a combination of cultural techniques and a naturally occurring condition, rather than with chemicals. Only time and additional research will tell.