



Strategic Plan (Updated December 2025)

Mission Statement

The Genesee-Lapeer-Livingston-Shiawassee Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (GiLLS CISMA) serves to protect natural resources, the economy, and human health through collaborative outreach, education, community engagement, and technical assistance and management of invasive species.

Geographic Scope

The geographic scope of the GiLLS CISMA is defined as the four-county area of Genesee, Lapeer, Livingston, and Shiawassee counties in southeast Michigan's Lower Peninsula. The combined population of this area is 756,790 (2020 census), covering 2,438.33 square miles. We aim to serve all members of our service area.

This area includes parts of the of the Flint, Shiawassee, and Huron River watersheds. The GiLLS area houses the urban landscape of Flint, abundant forested areas and parks systems, and acres of agricultural lands. The area has a diverse range of plants, wildlife, and habitats. Invasive species threaten to outcompete the diverse flora and fauna of our area, as well as impede recreational activities which can result in economic losses.

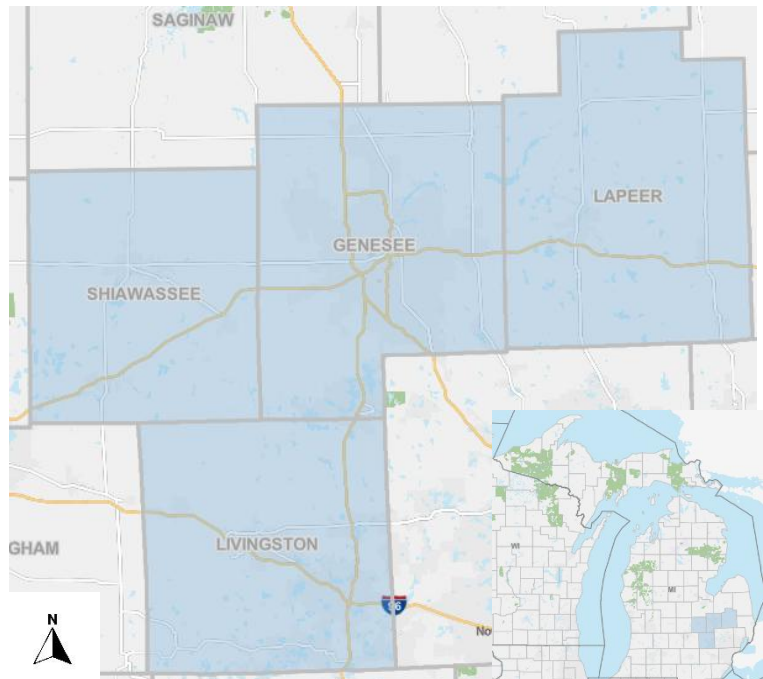


Figure 1. Map of GiLLS CISMA service area.

Strategic Scope

The GiLLS CISMA works with partners to manage invasive species in the most efficient and effective manner. Our scope emphasizes education, outreach, management, and early detection and rapid response of invasive species. Place-based education, including identification of invasive species and how to report sightings, will be used to help encourage stewardship from our local communities and partners regarding invasive species management. We anticipate the public to

assist us in many aspects of invasive species management including reporting, surveying, and volunteering. We wish to form a mutually beneficial relationship with our collaborators and the environment in our efforts to manage invasive species. Our ultimate goal is to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species in the GiLLS CISMA region by facilitating cooperative management among all willing stakeholders and landowners.

Roles and Responsibilities

Coordinator – The coordinator is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the CISMA. Guided by the strategic plan and deliverables as required by grants funding, the coordinator is the face of the CISMA, connecting with the public and providing technical assistance and outreach.

Fiduciary (Genesee Conservation District) – Since GiLLS CISMA is not an independent entity but rather a collaborative, the fiduciary is responsible for housing and advising the coordinator, managing grants, and financial reporting, including administering the budget and providing reimbursements.

Strike Team – Under the primary direction of the coordinator and as funding/resources are available, a team will be assembled to assist in invasive species treatment/removal as guided by the goals of the strategic plan.

Leadership Team - All counties are represented on the leadership team. The leadership team will meet quarterly to ensure quality progress is being made, deliverables are being met, and to discuss any new opportunities for the CISMA. Not responsible for day-to-day actions.

Partners – The success of the GiLLS CISMA relies on its collaboration with partners. Partners are agencies/individuals/businesses within the service area interested in collaborating for the control of invasive species. Partners allow us to expand our management practices, education, and advertising to different audiences and enable us to carry out our mission and objectives. Not responsible for day-to-day decisions.

Outcome Objectives and Strategies

We will use the following strategies to achieve the desired outcomes aligned to our strategic scope and mission statement:

Objective 1: Promote and maintain the GiLLS CISMA

- 1.1 Maintain CISMA webpage with up-to-date information
- 1.2 Develop social media campaigns
- 1.3 Coordinator will facilitate CISMA activities and organization
- 1.4 Hold leadership and partner meetings
- 1.5 Support partner capacity by leveraging their events to reach broader audiences
- 1.6 Provide administration and management of other CISMA or multi-CISMA projects
- 1.7 Create connections with partners and work to keep them engaged and supportive of the CISMA
- 1.8 Ensure that funding is available to carry out the mission of the CISMA

Objective 2: Educate and inform the public

- 2.1 Design educational materials and programs for the general public and classrooms
- 2.2 Hold outreach events including presentations, workshops, trainings, volunteer workdays, guided paddles, and boat launch landing blitzes throughout the community and in schools
- 2.3 Provide outreach through social and traditional media
- 2.4 Update or create new informational print materials (e.g., brochures, flyers, etc.)
- 2.5 Implement social media, webpage, and print materials for outreach and for partner use
- 2.6 Represent the CISMA via booths or displays at relevant events and conferences

Objective 3: Support and implement invasive species management

- 3.1 Provide site visits and management plans for landowners seeking assistance with invasive species
- 3.2 Support restoration efforts after invasive species removal (provide information about native species, best management practices, survey for invasive species etc.)
- 3.3 Collect and submit management data to the Midwest Invasive Species Information Network
- 3.4 Assess and update management goals for CISMA priority species in area as needed
- 3.5 Prioritize surveys and management for specific species (Table 1) and priority areas:
 - 3.5.1 Mutli-ecosystems
 - 3.5.2 Wetlands
 - 3.5.3 Open prairies
 - 3.5.4 Upland forest
 - 3.5.5 High quality natural areas
 - 3.5.6 Protected properties
 - 3.5.7 Highly visible locations
 - 3.5.8 High traffic areas
 - 3.5.9 High cost-share potential

Objective 4: Serve as a regional hub for Go Beyond Beauty

- 4.1 Promote the mission of Go Beyond Beauty
- 4.2 Recruit new businesses and individuals to join the program
- 4.3 Serve as a resource for businesses and individuals in the GiLLS service area
- 4.4 Provide outreach materials and presentations about ornamental invasive plants to the community

Performance Indicators

Through grant funding, the GiLLS CISMA has an expected number of outreach efforts, acres surveyed/managed, events hosted, etc. Performance will be based on how those numbers are met, public interaction/attitudes/perceptions, and partner engagement.

Table 1. GiLLS CISMA Invasive Species Priority List

Common Name	Scientific Name	Habitat
Tier 1: Early Detection and Rapid Response		
Beech Leaf Disease*	<i>Litylenchus crenatae</i>	Terrestrial
Brazilian Elodea	<i>Egeria densa</i>	Aquatic
Cinnamon Vine	<i>Dioscorea polystacha</i>	Terrestrial
European Frogbit	<i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i>	Aquatic
Giant Hogweed*	<i>Heracleum mantegazzanum</i>	Terrestrial
Hydrilla	<i>Hydrilla verticillate</i>	Aquatic
Kudzu	<i>Pueraria montana var. lobate</i>	Terrestrial
Lesser Celandine*	<i>Ficaria verna</i>	Terrestrial
Lyme Grass^	<i>Leymus arinareus</i>	Terrestrial
Mile-a-minute Weed	<i>Persicaria perfoliate</i>	Terrestrial
Parrot Feather	<i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>	Aquatic
Red Swamp Crayfish*	<i>Procambus clarkii</i>	Aquatic
Spotted Lanternfly	<i>Lycorma delicatula</i>	Insect
Stiltgrass	<i>Microstegium vimineum</i>	Terrestrial
Water Hyacinth^	<i>Eichhornia crassipes</i>	Aquatic
Water Lettuce^	<i>Pistia stratiotes</i>	Aquatic
Yellow Floating Heart	<i>Nymphoides peltata</i>	Aquatic
Tier 2: Priority Species		
Flowering Rush*	<i>Butomus umbellatus</i>	Aquatic
Black and Pale Swallow-wort*	<i>Vinetoicum</i> spp.	Terrestrial
Knotweeds*	<i>Fallopia/Reynoutria/Polygonum</i> spp.	Terrestrial
Oak Wilt	<i>Ceratocytis fagacearum</i>	Terrestrial
Phragmites*	<i>Phragmites australis</i>	Aquatic
Starry Stonewort*	<i>Nitellopis obtuse</i>	Aquatic
Tier 3: Common for Landowner Education/Management		
Autumn Olive*	<i>Elaeagnus</i> spp.	Terrestrial
Callery/Bradford Pear*^	<i>Pyrus calleryana</i>	Terrestrial
Curly Leaf Pondweed*	<i>Potamogeton crispus</i>	Aquatic
Eurasian Watermilfoil*	<i>Myriophyllum spicatum</i>	Aquatic
Garlic Mustard*	<i>Alliaria petiolaria</i>	Terrestrial
Invasive Honeysuckles*^	<i>Lonicera</i> spp.	Terrestrial
Invasive Buckthorns*^	<i>Rhamnus</i> spp. and <i>Frangula</i> spp.	Terrestrial
Invasive Bittersweet*^	<i>Celastrus orbiculatus</i>	Terrestrial
Japanese Barberry*^	<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Terrestrial
Tree of Heaven*	<i>Ailanthus altissima</i>	Terrestrial
Watercress*	<i>Nasturtium officinale</i>	Aquatic
Tier 4: Low Priority Education		
Baby's Breath^	<i>Gysophilia paniculata</i>	Terrestrial
Bittersweet Nightshade*	<i>Solanum dulcamara</i>	Terrestrial
Bull Thistle*	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Terrestrial
Canada Thistle*	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Terrestrial
Cow Vetch*	<i>Vicia cracca</i>	Terrestrial
Dame's Rocket*^	<i>Hesperis matronalis</i>	Terrestrial
Moneywort/Creeping Jenny*^	<i>Lysimachia nummularia</i>	Terrestrial

Multiflora Rose*	<i>Rosa multiflora</i>	Terrestrial
Purple Loosestrife*	<i>Lythrum salicaria</i>	Aquatic
Reed Canary Grass**^	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	Terrestrial
Spotted Knapweed*	<i>Centaurea stoebe</i>	Terrestrial

*indicates presence in the GiLLS CISMA area

^Go Beyond Beauty species

Tier Justification

Tier 1: Early Detection and Rapid Response Species. These species either have not been observed in the GiLLS CISMA area or their observation has been limited to a few isolated occurrences

Tier 2: These species are located in the GiLLS CISMA area. They are a priority for our partners and are difficult for the general landowner to treat.

Tier 3: These species are located in the GiLLS CISMA area. They are more of an education priority because they are abundant and the general landowner is better able to treat them on their own.

Tier 4: These species are located in the GiLLS CISMA area.

List of Partners

East Michigan Native Plants (Go Beyond Beauty Business)
 Davison Township Parks
 Friends of the Shiawassee River Trail
 Genesee County Land Bank
 Genesee County Parks
 - Flint River Watershed Coalition
 - For-Mar Nature Preserve and Arboretum
 - Keep Genesee County Beautiful
 Lapeer Conservation District
 Livingston Conservation District
 Livingston Land Conservancy
 Livingston County Planning/Parks and Open Spaces
 Michigan State University Extension
 Mid-Michigan Land Conservancy
 Seven Ponds Nature Center
 Sierra Club
 Shiawassee Conservation District
 Pheasants Forever

Interested in becoming a partner? Email gillscisma@gmail.com with information about you/your organization and how it is impacted by invasive species for a chance to collaborate.

Leadership Team

Angela Warren, Genesee Conservation District
Katie Laur, Lapeer Conservation District
Melissa Higbee, Shiawassee Conservation District
Sara Thomas, Livingston Land Conservancy
Patrick Scanlon, Genesee County Health Department
Barslund Judd, Michigan State University Extension

Coordinator

Molly Wozniak, Genesee Conservation District

The strategic plan is a living document and will be reviewed by the Coordinator and Leadership Team at least once a year or as needed.