

# Recreation BMPs for Invasive Species in Wisconsin Forests

## Overview

As a sub-committee of the Wisconsin Council on Forestry, the Forestry Invasives Leadership Team (FILT) is charged with identifying and recommending policies and actions to protect Wisconsin's forests from invasive species. FILT is establishing a process for development of a comprehensive set of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for Invasive Species.

This process will be a suite of efforts that raise awareness and identify appropriate actions to address the threat of invasive species for all those who depend on healthy forests and healthy trees in Wisconsin.

Wisconsin's forest resources (including urban forests) are extensive and variable in size, habitat, uses, and the demographics of ownership. Any comprehensive effort to address invasive species will require multiple strategies and will need to influence the behavior of a wide spectrum of professionals, user groups and citizens.

Recreation BMPs are one part of a process being developed by FILT for addressing the threat of invasive species. The multi-faceted approach includes the development of FOUR parallel BMP processes (Tracks), each of which is focused on a segment of the forest resource and associated user groups.

The four BMP Tracks for addressing Invasive Species in Wisconsin Forests are:

- I - Forestry BMPs for Invasive Species
- II - Recreational Forest User BMPs for Invasive Species
- III - Urban Forestry BMPs for Invasive Species
- IV - Utility and Transportation Right-of-Way BMPs for Invasive Species

## Goals

The overall goal of Recreation Best Management Practices for Invasive Species in Wisconsin Forests is a well-developed and broadly accepted set of voluntary conventions that guide the activities of outdoor enthusiasts (including hikers, hunters, anglers, birders, bikers, horseback and motorized vehicle riders), and that influence the behavior of forest users.

When enacted in concert with broader BMPs for Invasive Species in Wisconsin, Recreation BMPs will foster the on-the ground ethics necessary for helping to contain the spread of invasive species. Engaging user groups and the general public through consensus-oriented BMPs is an essential component of a comprehensive approach that also includes strategies based around policy and legislation, financial resources, clarifying the role of various agencies, research needs, regional assessment and coordination, early detection and response and a strong campaign of information and education.

Successful adoption of effective and appropriate BMPs will have the following benefits:

- Increase awareness among recreational forest users of the threats posed by invasive species and appropriate actions to minimize their spread.
- Incorporate invasive species considerations into the routine practices of recreational users whose activities depend on healthy forests.
- Eliminate or minimize the spread of invasive species BETWEEN sites by recreational users.
- Eliminate or limit the spread of early-stage invasions WITHIN sites by forest users or recreational equipment.
- Improve the level of cooperation between agencies, recreational stakeholders and neighboring landowners.
- Foster public support for more comprehensive control of invasive species.
- Conserve the health and productivity of Wisconsin's forests, and the resources and jobs they support.