

KP-CWMA Charter

Pulling Together

The Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area (KP-CWMA) is intended to bring together those responsible for managing invasive plants across the Kenai Peninsula:

- to develop common management objectives;
- to set realistic management priorities;
- to facilitate effective treatment;
- to coordinate efforts along logical geographic boundaries with similar land types, use patterns and problem species.

By effectively eliminating political and geographic management and ownership boundaries in addressing the problem of invasive plants, we can successfully combat the spread of the plants that invade regardless of those boundaries.

Purpose

The purpose of the KP-CWMA is to facilitate collaboration and cooperation among all land managers and land owners so that invasive plant problems across the Peninsula are handled in a consistent manner that addresses the seriousness of the threat, the life cycle of the specific plant(s) and the appropriate manners of prevention, control and eradication.

By pooling the talents, specific knowledge, expertise and resources of the cooperating partners, also known as stakeholders, the CWMA serves to increase communication and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of management efforts. Also, it will increase public awareness regarding the devastating affects that invasive plants have on natural ecosystems, land productivity and private property values. This heightened awareness often leads to more preventative measures, minimizing the spread of invasive plants. Additionally, by organizing cooperatively, we improve our prospects for seeking broader and sustainable funding opportunities. On the whole, the group's achievements should satisfy both individual and collective needs.

The overall goal of the cooperative weed management area is to prevent the introduction, reproduction and spread of invasive plants into and within the CWMA.

The Area Included within the Kenai Peninsula CWMA

The initial group involved in the creation of this CWMA agreed that it should include the entire contiguous Kenai Peninsula. Although this is a large area, including the entire Peninsula will encompass all areas of immediate concern, will allow for maximum impact of time invested in planning, and will help prioritize city and borough invasive plant resources. Recognizing that different regions within the Peninsula may have different specific invasive plant problems and slightly different scopes of interest, regional units within the CWMA will provide localized support and coordination in order to maintain a long-term sense of stewardship for a particular area. We suggest the following:

- Southern Region – Homer Soil and Water Conservation District
- Central Region – Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District
- Eastern Region – Seward Ranger District, Chugach National Forest

Background and Authority

A small group of interested local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) met with the US Forest Service's Forest Health Protection - State and Private Forestry Division in the summer of 2003 to begin organizing a cooperative weed management area for the Kenai Peninsula. The Alaska, Homer and Kenai Districts comprised that initial group, working with Michael Shephard from State and Private Forestry, USDA Forest Service. The Homer and Kenai SWCDs have taken the lead on establishing the KP-CWMA, with a small grant for purposes of developing the organization, based on successful CWMA efforts Outside and on the emerging Juneau CWMA effort, begun a year earlier in the summer of 2002.

In Alaska, SWCDs are organized under state law AS 41.10 and are considered local entities of state government. They partner closely with their local office of the federal Natural Resource Conservation Service. They are each lead by a local volunteer Board representing community landowners. In addition, SWCDs in Alaska are members of the non-profit statewide association (AACD), providing the capability to receive broader project funding.

As a result, SWCDs have a local, state and national precedent for involvement in important local natural resource management issues and activities including area-wide watershed plans, soil and snow surveys, wildlife habitat improvement projects and invasive plants management. Given their charge and their history, the local SWCD has the authority to work with local organizations, landowners and agency staff to establish a CWMA for the Kenai Peninsula.

Structure of the Kenai Peninsula Cooperative Weed Management Area

The KP-CWMA will be made up of pertinent and interested agencies, organizations, tribal landowners and private landowners throughout the Peninsula through a signed cooperative agreement, referred to as the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which formally recognizes the organization and intent of the group.

The KP-CWMA will be organized under a managing Council with a supporting Technical Advisory Committee and Action Work Group. The Council will be the lead for establishing the goals, objectives and cooperative agreement, and for reviewing the strategic and annual plans for the organization. The Technical Advisory Committee will be directly involved in developing the strategic plan and subsequent annual plans, including collaborative activities, for the organization. The Action Work Group will be comprised of the volunteer core, by region, that are the frontline force undertaking specific activities and events for the organization. All KP-CWMA volunteers will be signed up through the NRCS Earth Team Volunteer Program, providing the organization with the necessary liability coverage.

Council – composed of one board member and staff person from each District:

Alaska Soil and Water Conservation District – Rachel Morse and Jim VanOss;
Kenai Soil and Water Conservation District – Sue True and Abby Ala;
Homer Soil and Water Conservation District – Hansel Klausner and Otto Kilcher.

Technical Advisory Committee – composed of interested agency or organizational staff and knowledgeable, concerned individuals, such as the following:

Federal: USFS (Chugach NF - Seward RD; State and Private Forestry);
FWS (Kenai NWR);
NPS (Kenai Fjords NP);
NRCS (Homer and Kenai field offices).

State: DOT - Peninsula Superintendent, Sterling Highway Maintenance stations;
ADF&G - Invasive Species Program, Kachemak Bay Research Reserve;
DNR Habitat – Kenai Area office;
DNR State Parks – Kenai Area Superintendent Office, KBSP office;
DNR Forestry – Kenai/Kodiak Area Office, Soldotna;
University of Alaska - Cooperative Extension, Soldotna;
KPC, Soldotna;
KBB, Homer.

KP Borough: Planning Department,
Coastal Management Program.

Cities: Homer,
Kenai,
Soldotna,
Seward.

Tribal entities: Port Graham,
Nanwalek;
Seldovia;
Ninilchik;
Kenaitze;
Salamatof.

Utilities: HEA – Homer, Kenai offices.

NGOs: Alaska Farm Bureau - Kenai Chapter,
Alaska Wilderness Recreation Trails Association,
Center for Alaskan Coastal Studies,
Cook Inlet Keeper,
Eastern Kenai Peninsula Environmental Action Association,
Friends of Kachemak Bay State Park,
Kachemak Bay Conservation Society,
Kachemak Heritage Land Trust,
Kenai Watershed Forum,
Pratt Museum.

Other: Interested and/or expert individuals and community groups such as - master gardeners, garden clubs, greenhouses and nurseries, farmer's market, trail groups, school groups.

Action Work Group – made up of volunteers supplied by all active stakeholders signing MOU. This group will conduct on-the-ground control work and public outreach efforts. To include such as:

youth groups (Alaska Youth Environmental Action, Boys & Girls Club, 4H);
scouting groups (Boys Scouts, Girls Scouts);
service groups (Outward Bound, Kenai Youth Restoration Corps);
garden or equestrian groups (Homer Garden Club, Farmer's Market, Kachemak Cowgirls);
trail users (Nordic Ski Club);
school groups (NRT class, FFA, CACS, Community Schools, etc.);
other community members, etc.