

# **Memorandum of Understanding Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team**

A cooperative invasive species management partnership dedicated to early detection & rapid response

## **Section I. Purpose**

Project partners, through the terms set forth in this MOU, agree to work cooperatively to fulfill the goals of the *Central Jersey Invasive Species Strike Team (CJISST)*, which will utilize the Early Detection / Rapid Response (ED / RR) methodology to preempt the spread of invasive species within central New Jersey. Partners agree that a cooperative approach provides mutual benefit.

The purpose of this document is to establish the basis for partners to communicate, coordinate activities and share resources necessary for the prevention and control of invasive species on public and private lands within central New Jersey. For the purpose of this MOU, Central New Jersey has been defined as Essex, Hudson, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris, Somerset and Union counties.

This MOU does not impose any legal obligations onto the partners and does not require the partners to complete a pre-designated amount of work. This MOU in no way restricts partners from participating in similar activities with other public or private agencies, organizations or individuals.

## **Section II. Statement of Mutual Benefit and Interest**

The partners of this MOU have mutual interest in preventing the establishment and spread of invasive species and share the following common goals:

1. EDUCATION - Increase public awareness of invasive species.
2. PREVENTION - Prevent the establishment of new or regionally uncommon invasive plant, pest and pathogen infestations and prevent the continued spread of common invasive species.
3. CONTROL - Promote the effective, integrated eradication or management of priority invasive species.
4. INFORMATION EXCHANGE - Share technical information regarding distribution of invasive species and control methods.
5. COOPERATION - Facilitate regional invasive species management by sharing, strategy, expertise, results and resources when available.
6. FUNDING - As appropriate, partners will seek joint funding for projects of mutual interest and benefit.

## **Section III. Partner Responsibilities**

All public or private landowners and managers within central New Jersey are invited to become a partner of the CJISST. Each partner has a primary responsibility to its own governing body and lands under its jurisdiction. Partners are encouraged to work together to enhance their resource management capabilities and to generally advance the state of knowledge of emerging invasive species within central New Jersey. Partners are not required to commit any specific amount of time or data; each group/ person is encouraged to submit as much time/ resources as available.

A) All partners agree that the basic tenets of ED / RR consist of the following actions:

- Conduct surveys for emerging populations of invasive species;
- Record survey and eradication data on mutually accepted data sheets;
- Collect locational data using GPS;

- Using mutually accepted formats, submit spatial and tabular survey and eradication data to CJISST;
- To the extent feasible, eradicate all detected emerging populations. Partners will contact CJISST to seek assistance with large eradications of priority species.

B) All partners agree to participate in the following subject to approval by the partner's governing body:

- As available, support invasive species management efforts. This support may include:
  - Training staff and/or volunteers in invasive species identification and survey methods;
  - Conducting ED/RR on land under its jurisdiction and submit data to CJISST;
  - Access to land for surveys;
  - Sharing scientific/ technical expertise and pertinent information;
  - Participation in control efforts;
  - Collaborating on joint eradication work days;
  - Contribution of staff time;
  - Sharing of resources when possible, including volunteers, maps, imagery, reports, surveys and equipment;
  - In-kind support.
- Attend CJISST annual meeting, which will occur in March of each year.

C) Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space (FoHVOS) and the Upper Raritan Watershed Association (URWA) agree to take a lead role in organization and implementation of CJISST. Each organization agrees to participate in the following subject to approval by the partner's governing body:

- Actively pursue Early Detection & Rapid Response.
- Coordinate and train volunteers to assist with invasive species surveys and eradications.
- Collaborate on joint eradication work days.
- Conduct training and education/outreach activities.
- Co-host an annual meeting between all project partners.
- Provide information to the public via CJISST link on organizational websites.
- As resources allow, synthesize all data collected within central New Jersey; create GIS maps; provide public access to all data and maps.
  - a. URWA agrees to take the primary role of managing spatial data and receiving electronically submitted data forms and GPS information.
  - b. FoHVOS agrees to summarize tabular data and provide a report that can be utilized for decision-making by the partners.

#### **Section IV. Steering Committee Organization**

The Steering Committee will organize and prioritize the long term goals and annual tasks of CJISST through the development of an annually updated Cooperative Invasive Species Management Plan. This plan will provide a prioritized list of invasive species to focus survey and eradication efforts and report results of the previous year. The Committee will be comprised of co-chairs and general Steering Committee representatives. CJISST will initially be co-chaired by Michael Van Clef of the Friends of Hopewell Valley Open Space and Melissa Almendinger of the Upper Raritan Watershed Association. Subsequent Steering Committee co-chairs will be appointed by the partners. Intervals of such appointments shall be at the discretion of the Steering Committee. The Committee will be comprised of a single representative from each of the partner organizations listed in Section V. Additional partners will be actively recruited on a continual basis.

This MOU will be reviewed annually by CJISST partners and updated as necessary.

## **Section V. Partner Representatives**

All partners listed below acknowledge that they will actively abide by the terms of this MOU.

For the current list of partners and funders for this project, please visit <http://www.urwa.org/stewardship/CJISST/partners.html>.