

MONROE COUNTY - IDENTIFY AND REDUCE INVASIVE SPECIES


ANNUAL REPORT
FOR 2021



PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

2021 was a transformational year for MC-IRIS. After twelve years working as an informal group, we incorporated as a not-for-profit in July and received our tax exempt status in September. Our current board consists of Mary Welz (Treasurer), Gillian Field (Secretary), and myself (President).

In addition to all the educational events, Weed Wrangles, neighborhood organizing, invasive plant surveys, and other traditional activities of MC-IRIS, we held our first native plant sale. This allowed us to raise funds for our work as well as get native plants to landowners in Monroe County. Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers who helped with all our activities this year. Please read on to learn the specifics of all our work this year, and thank you for your support!



ELLEN JACQUART

President

*MC-IRIS is a nonprofit tax-exempt organization in compliance
with Section 501(c)(3) of the IRS code*

WEED WRANGLES

We held over 100 Weed Wrangles with our partners, more than ever before. A sampling:

- Pate Hollow/Hayes trail with U. S. Forest Service on Hoosier National Forest – held 3 garlic mustard pulls and 10 Japanese stiltgrass pulls, 206.5 volunteer hours.
- First Saturday with City of Bloomington Parks and Recreation – held eight three-hour events at six different city parks, 240 volunteer hours
- Southeast Park – 41 events, 376 volunteer hours
- Wapehani Park – 3 events, 50 volunteer hours
- Park Ridge East Weed Wrangle and Native seedling transplant events – 5 events, 69.5 volunteer hours
- Winslow Woods – 5 events, 14.5 volunteer hours
- Bloomington Rail Trail – 1 event, 16 volunteer hours
- Rose Hill Cemetery – 2 events, 38 volunteer hours

Total – 1,010.5 volunteer hours



INVASIVE PLANT SURVEYS

We provided more invasive plant surveys to Monroe County landowners than any previous year. Fifty two surveys covering 641.9 acres were conducted, with invasive management plans being provided to the landowners after the survey.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS AND GRANTS

West Side/Maple Heights/Trail Side Neighborhood, Prairie Green, Near West Side, Edgewood Neighborhood HOA, Rush Ridge Neighborhood, and Eastern Heights received MC-IRIS education presentations on identifying and controlling invasive plants.

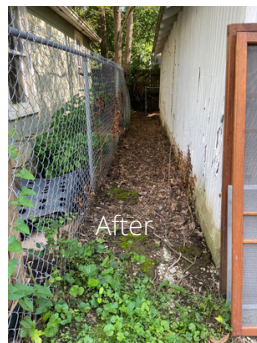
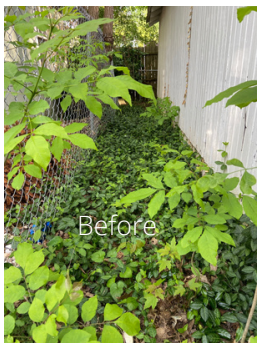
We continued to help neighborhoods apply for and get Small and Simple Grants from Housing and Neighborhood Development to work on invasive species control and native plantings. Elm Heights, Blue Ridge, and Arden Place received grants.

TOOL KIT LOANS

After creating eight tool kits in 2020, we continued to loan these kits across the county. The kits, which include pruners, loppers, folding saw, soil knife and sheath, Pullerbear, and a bag of herbicide application supplies, were loaned out a total of 40 times in 2021. The tool kit borrowers used them to control invasives on their land, with an estimated 228 total hours of labor put in.



REDUCE ONE INVASIVE SPECIES CHALLENGE 2021



Forty people signed up for the Reduce One Invasive Species Challenge 2021, in which landowners agree to reduce the amount of the challenge species (in this year's case, purple wintercreeper) on their land. In exchange for their work, we handed out 147 free plants of star sedge, golden ragwort, plantain-leaved sedge, wild geraniums, woodland stonecrops, and wild strawberries to those who participated.



Reduce One Invasive Species Challenge | **2021 Purple Wintercreeper**

RESEARCH

- Worked with Dr. Heather Reynolds on the IU Preparing for Environmental Change RESTORE grant, lining up 20 landowners in Monroe County and establishing plots to evaluate impact of deer cages on native plantings. Approximately 200 hours spent on establishing plots, controlling invasives, planting natives, putting up cages, and revisiting plots in the fall.
- Worked with City Parks to set up 50 plots (2 transects with 25 plots each) at Sherwood Oaks Park and collect pretreatment data on lesser celandine. Plots will be treated March-April 2022 with different herbicide sprays.



WORKING WITH SCHOOLS & UNIVERSITIES

- Biodiverse-City Class (Dr. Heather Reynolds, Indiana University) students provided service hours and created two educational videos for MC-IRIS.
- Systems Analysis and Design Class (Dr. Noriko Hari, Indiana University) students studied MC-IRIS organizational systems and provided a report.
- Worked with Annie King (Dr. Jon Eldon intern, Indiana University) to advise her on mapping Indiana University-Bloomington campus invasives
- Taught Take Control Workshop to Brian Forist's Intensive Freshman Seminar class August 4 and had them cut invasives in Dunn's Woods August 11.
- Taught Take Control Workshop to Dr. Brian Forist's Integrated Resource Management class (Indiana University October 1 and had them pull wintercreeper at Dunn's Woods October 29.
- Co-led Themester invasive control workday at the O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs woodlot (Indiana University) with Dr. Jon Eldon on October 30.
- Joined Clear Creek Elementary School 5th and 6th graders to teach them about invasive plants and have them help control purple wintercreeper on their campus on October 29
- Led Environment and People class (Les Wadzinski, Indiana University class to Dunn's Woods on November 3 to teach them how to identify and pull purple wintercreeper.



EARLY DETECTION/RAPID RESPONSE EFFORTS

- Mile a minute monitoring and control – three visits to the only site for mile-a-minute in Indiana to spray and remove vines.
- Kudzu monitoring on three sites – continued monitoring found no kudzu this year, after years of treatment.
- Purple loosestrife control at Ellettsville Starbucks – we adopted this high profile occurrence of this uncommon invasive in our area, receiving permission from the landowner to treat it. There were two visits to spray the purple loosestrife as well as the parrot feather (aquatic invasive) found on site. Both are from a failed nursery operation that used to be on this site.

MC-IRIS NATIVE PLANT SALE

Dozens of volunteers and thousands of native plants came together to put on the first MC-IRIS Native Plant Sale on September 11. It was a great success, with hundreds of customers that started lining up a half hour before the doors open. We sold 129 different native plant species, from butterflyweed to Kentucky coffee trees. Not only did the sale raise funds for the work of MC-IRIS, thousands of native plants went home and got planted, providing habitat for pollinators and providing other ecosystem services.



EDUCATIONAL EVENTS

- **Four Virtual Seasonal Weed Labs** – We developed four seasonal Weed Labs - Vicious Villains, Flowering Fiends, Midsummer Marauders, and Autumn Awwfuls – with details on the invasive plants to ID and control in each season, all available now on the MC-IRIS Youtube channel. An estimated total of 150 people attended these Weed Labs presented through Zoom.
- **Earth Day** - We partnered with seven organizations at Southeast Park to host an educational Earth Day event. MC-IRIS reached 295 people by Facebook Live (original count) and attendees in person. 79 people stopped by the City Natural Resource table. The city gave away ~500 bareroot trees and 147 plant plugs.

FIGHTIN' IRIS AWARDS

These annual awards go to individuals, groups, or businesses that are working to decrease the impact of invasive species in Monroe County. This year the awards went to:

- Don Eggert – Action Award
- Cheryl Coon – Partner Award
- Linda Thompson - Partner Award
- Judith Brennan – Action Award

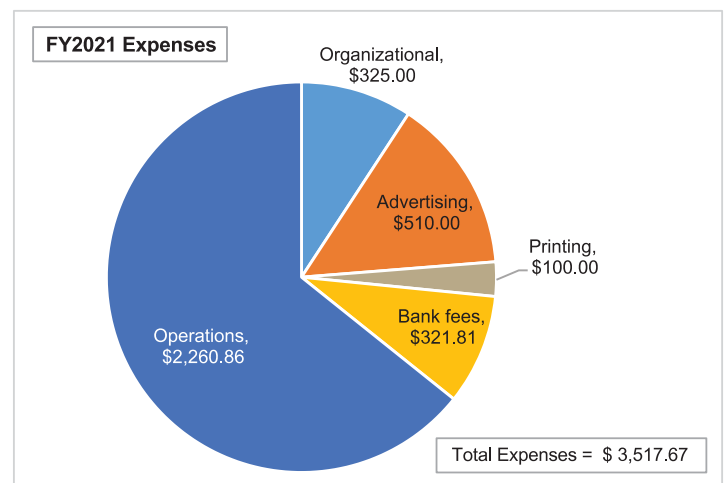
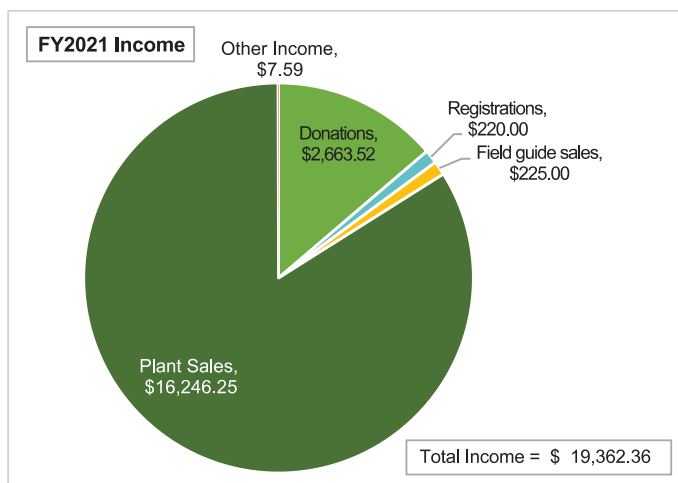


FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

In keeping with our status as a newly-fledged not-for-profit organization, we share this financial overview for 2021. MC-IRIS was able to greatly increase its financial reserves through the very successful Native Plant Sale in September 2021 while keeping expenses low for the year.



2021 MC-IRIS Treasurer's Report



This Financial Statement Activity was developed by the MC-IRIS Treasurer, Mary Welz, and is true to the best of her knowledge and belief.