

## **Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest**

### **Cooperative Weed Management Areas host Invasive Plant Workshops for Right-of-Way Workers in northern Wisconsin**

Non-native invasive plant species have not only made their way into northern Wisconsin ecosystems, they have also made their way into the minds of highway maintenance managers and workers. Wisconsin's Invasive Species Identification, Classification, and Control Rule, Chapter NR40, gives right-of-way managers a new responsibility as they manage our state and county highways. Road crews are concerned that their mowing and construction practices may transport and spread invasive plants, therefore violating the new NR40 regulations.

To help address the concerns of highway managers and to provide guidance on what they can do to help slow the spread of invasive plants, the Northwoods Cooperative Weed Management Area, in cooperation with the Chequamegon-Nicolet National Forest (CNNF), hosted several Right-of-Way (ROW) workshops April and May. Agenda topics included impacts of invasive species, identification, control methods, new NR40 regulations, and best management practices for right-of-way maintenance. In total, over 100 participants attended from 46 municipalities and various agencies in northern Wisconsin. Overall, participants were appreciative of the information and willing to do their part to help stop the spread of invasive plants.



In northeast Wisconsin, the Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition, represented by Melissa Simpson of the CNNF, connected with ROW managers as part of a five-county highway departments' annual Safety Days. The Safety Days covered topics including first aid, chain saw safety, roadside safety, and roadside invasive plants. There were 80 workers in attendance from Florence, Forest, Vilas, Marinette, and Oneida counties. Invasive species topics included how to identify roadside invasive plants and what hazards to be aware of when working around them, an introduction to Wisconsin's NR-40, and Best Management Practices (BMPs) for right-of-ways. The workers had a lot of great questions and are ready to incorporate the BMPs into their daily activities to help reduce the spread of invasive plant species.