They say, is history.

Areas Program (MNAP) within the state’s Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The rest, as invasive species that is supported by the Maine Natural Areas Program (MNAP) within the state’s Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

researched online and came across invasive plant situation in Harpswell was a thorn in his side (sometimes literally, in the case of thorny multiflora rose (Rosa multiflora) bushes). While walking the trails and driving the roads in his community, Stann was saddened to see the tangles of climbing Asiatic bittersweet vines (Celastrus orbiculatus) choking the trees, the dense thickets of shrubby honeysuckle (Lonicera morrowii and L. tatarica) crowding out the native shrubs, and the walls of Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica) encroaching on the road edges. He knew native plants would provide better wildlife habitat and more biodiversity than these invaders.

Stann and his friends were volunteers with the Harpswell Invasive Plant Partnership (HIPP), and they knew that the right tool appeared at the right time. Stann and his friends were volunteers with the Harpswell Invasive Plant Partnership (HIPP), and they knew that the right tool appeared at the right time. The Harpswell Invasive Plant Partnership (HIPP) within the state’s Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Their work on invasive plants has aggregated a wealth of information about invasive species distributions statewide. For example, while it wasn’t news to anyone that multiflora rose and Japanese knotweed were present in Harpswell, the HIPP volunteers were the first to document ornamental jewelweed (Impatiens glandulifera) and garlic mustard (Alliaria petiolata) in their area.

This information—which is now publicly available in iMap county-level distribution maps—has improved our statewide understanding of the extent of invasion by these species. Land trusts, conservation commissions, landowners, and homeowners have better knowledge about which invasive plants are knocking on their doorsteps, thanks to HIP volunteers and many other iMap citizen scientists who contribute data from their properties, from public lands, or, with landowner permission, from private land.

Using iMap, 18 HIPP volunteers surveyed three Harpswell Heritage Land Trust properties, two Town of Harpswell properties, and 28 miles of road edges in 2015. iMap allowed each volunteer to see the work of the entire group, and project leaders could generate reports for each site. These reports and maps will be invaluable as the group plans the next step of treating select populations, and iMap will also help them keep track of management efforts.

Here and only a fraction of those naturalized plants are invasive. We are fortunate that Maine’s low population density and undeveloped North Woods mean parts of our state are less infested with invasive plants.

Taking Action Throughout the State

Many nonnative plants are brought to Maine, on purpose or accidentally, but only a fraction of those become naturalized (able to establish and persist without human assistance) here. And only a fraction of those naturalized plants are invasive. We are fortunate that Maine’s low population density and undeveloped North Woods mean parts of our state are less infested with invasive plants.

Nevertheless, the efforts of citizen scientists and professionals are needed throughout the state to ensure that areas not currently infested with invasive plants can be kept clean, and that efforts to identify and manage invaded areas are monitored and followed-up on.

By facilitating iMap for Maine, MNAP is providing a method for everyone to document invasive plant presence and management. MNAP is doing this on state lands and helping professionals use iMap to manage infestations on their own land. Input from citizen scientists around the state will be crucial to help us better understand what invasive plants occur where, so all of us can think strategically about which tangles to wade into.

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To learn more about iMap, visit www.imapinvasives.org. For Maine-specific county distribution maps, visit http://login.imapinvasives.org/mmeim/i/map/.

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