

Florida CISMAs and FWC Upland Invasive Plant Management Working Groups – What’s the Difference?

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Question: What is the difference between the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Invasive Plant Management Section (IPMS) Upland Invasive Plant Management Working Groups and the Florida Invasive Species Partnership (FISP) Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs)?

Answer: The IPMS Upland Invasive Plant Management Working Groups were created by FWC as a tool for reviewing and ranking proposals submitted for agency funding to control invasive plants on public conservation land. The CISMAs were created to build voluntary collaboration between public and private landowners, as well as to seek other funds or resources to work on issues and/or lands whether conservation or not, public or private) that have been prioritized by the CISMA membership. The Working Groups focus only on invasive plants; CISMAs can focus on all invasive species (plants, animals, pests). The Working Groups are comprised of public land managers from all levels of government (city to federal) and serve as a peer review for prioritizing proposals for FWC funding. The CISMAs include individuals from many agencies (including FWC), non-profit groups, private landowners, and other interested parties. Thus, the Working Groups and CISMAs serve different, but complementary, purposes in controlling invasive species at a landscape level.

Let’s break it down:

- The main things to remember are that both the FWC IPMS Upland Invasive Plant Working Groups and CISMAs exist; they are NOT redundant; and they are mutually beneficial although they serve different purposes.
- There are 17 CISMAs in Florida (Fig. 1) and 11 regional FWC Upland Invasive Plant Management Working Groups (Fig. 2). There is much overlapping of boundaries, which can be confusing.
- Both the Working Groups and CISMAs work within a defined regional geographic boundary. Administratively, however, both organizations have state-level coordination (FWC for Working Groups; FISP for CISMAs) and both organizations cooperate and collaborate on invasive species issues throughout Florida.

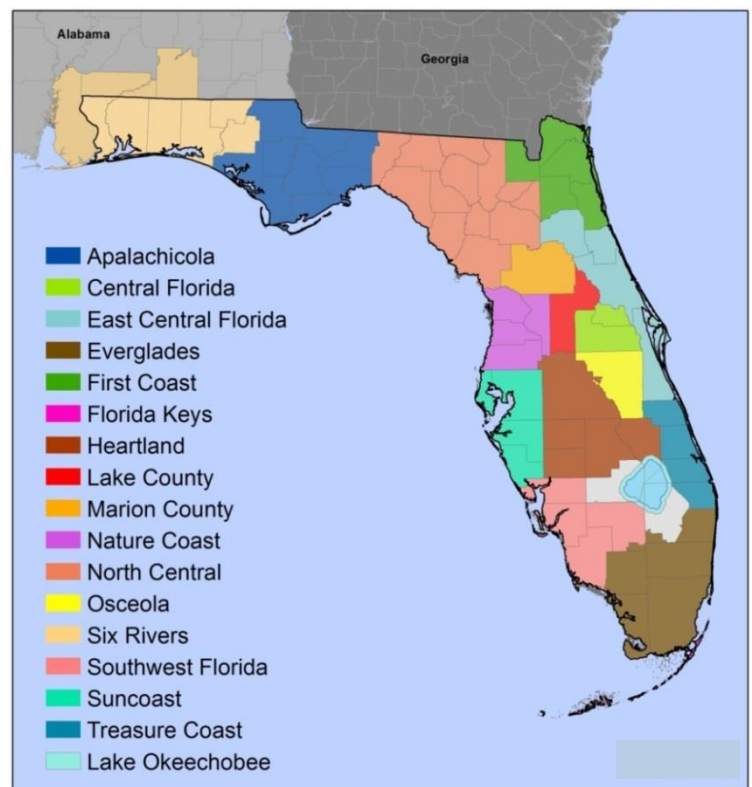


Figure 1 Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMAs) in Florida



- FWC IPMS Working Groups have multi-agency representation. They decide how state money allocated for invasive plant management on public conservation lands is spent. Working Groups use statewide criteria for reviewing proposals, but also work together to develop additional regional criteria. They meet at least once per year to review and vote on proposals. Each Working Group sends their prioritized list of proposals to FWC Upland Program staff in Tallahassee. Each group's priority 1 projects are funded, then priority 2, then 3, etc., until allocated funds run out.
- CISMAs are locally led volunteer partnerships that involve private landowners and land managers in a geographic area. CISMAs encourage local partners to meet throughout the year to work on invasive species projects and priorities. In contrast to Working Groups, CISMAs also address invasive animals and include lands other than public conservation lands.
- FWC funds can only be used on public conservation lands but CISMAs can address the other side of the fence. While Working Groups meet to fund management efforts on public conservation lands, CISMAs meet to address adjacent private lands, rights-of-ways, etc., so that reinfestation is less likely to occur and state dollars and efforts are not wasted.
- The FWC Upland Working Groups pre-date the CISMAs although the first CISMA (Florida Keys Invasive Exotic Task Force) was formed concurrently with one of the first Working Groups. Early on, the FWC Upland Working Groups were used to help facilitate the creation of CISMAs and now the CISMAs are used to help spread the word about the Working Groups.

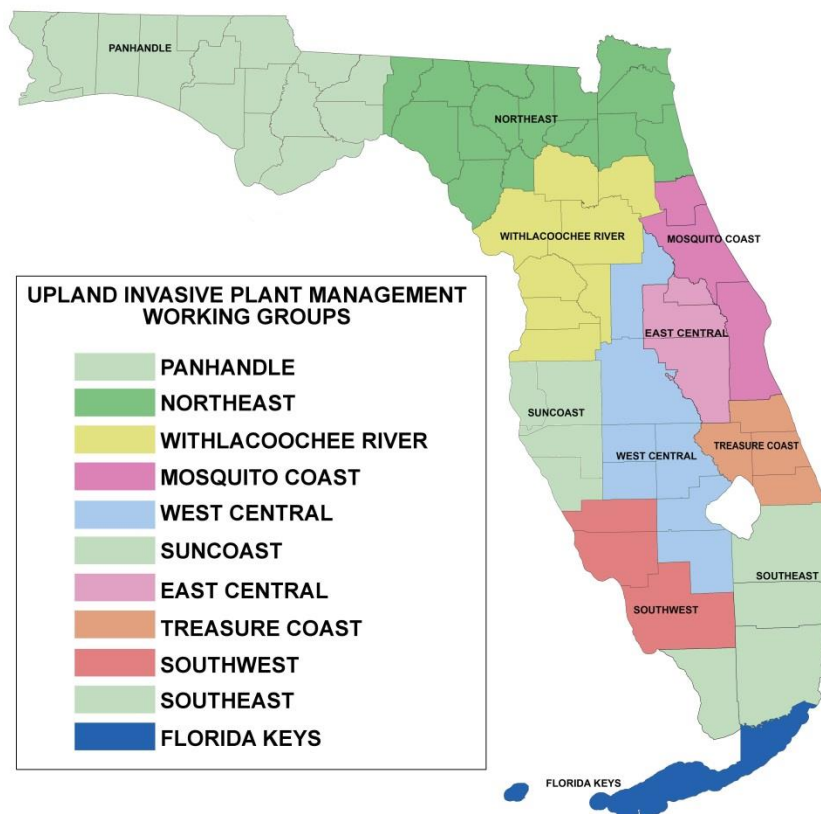


Figure 2 Upland Invasive Plant Management Working Groups

More information on FWC Upland Invasive Plant Management Working Groups can be found at:

floridainvasives.org/toolbox/projects/index.html

More information on Florida CISMAs can be found at:

floridainvasives.org/cismas.html

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