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## UNH Researchers Study Economics of Managing Invasive Plants in Private Forests

**UNH TODAY****NEWSROOM (//WWW.UNH.EDU/UNHTODAY/NEWS)**

# UNH Researchers Study Economics of Managing Invasive Plants in Private Forests

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Monday, October 9, 2017

DURHAM, N.H. – Researchers with the NH Agricultural Experiment Station (<http://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes/>) at the University of New Hampshire received a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant to investigate the economics of managing invasive plants in forests owned by private landowners.

“Thirty-five percent of U.S. forests are owned by more than 10 million individuals and families with different goals and motivations and landownership fragmentation is expected to increase. These landowners’ individual invasive management decisions over time and across a forested landscape can either facilitate or impede society’s ability to manage invasions and secure the continued provision of forest ecosystem services that society’s welfare relies upon,” said Shadi Atallah, assistant professor of environmental and resources economics, who will lead the research in collaboration with fellow experiment station researcher Tom Lee, associated professor of environmental conservation and



UNH has conducted extensive research on glossy buckthorn, including planting an orchard of the fast-growing shrub at UNH’s Kingman Farm to determine the life history characteristics of invasive glossy buckthorn under controlled conditions, free from competition with other plants, and free from variation in other environmental factors such as soil or micro-climate.

sustainability.

“Effective management of invasive plants is critical for the long-term ecological health of forest ecosystems and the economic vitality of communities,” Atallah said.

This project builds on extensive research conducted by Lee about glossy buckthorn, a non-native shrub that outcompetes with native plants, including the economically important eastern white pine. According to the North East State Foresters Association, the annual value of sales of New Hampshire’s forest products industry totals nearly \$1.4 billion.

Specifically, researchers plan to map risk of glossy buckthorn invasion in New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts, estimate costs and benefits of available and new glossy buckthorn control strategies, conduct focus groups, surveys, and choice experiments among landowners within the invasion hot spot areas to estimate their willingness to adopt available management strategies, and develop spatial bioeconomic models to understand whether and how landowner characteristics affect negative spillovers in forest plant invasion management.

In addition to Atallah and Lee, the multidisciplinary team of researchers also includes UNH researchers Jenica Allen, assistant professor of quantitative ecology; experiment station researcher Mark Ducey, professor of forest biometrics; Ju-Chin Huang, professor of economics; Karen Bennett, extension professor of forest resources; and Jessica Leahy, associate professor of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources at the University of Maine.

The \$499,883 grant was made by the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), with funding made possible through NIFA’s Agriculture and Food Research Initiative (AFRI) program, authorized by the 2014 Farm Bill.

AFRI is America’s flagship competitive grants program for foundational and translational research, education, and extension projects in the food and agricultural sciences. This is the first round of grants made under the Pests and Beneficial Species in Agricultural Production Systems area of the AFRI Foundational program.

This material is based upon work supported by the NH Agricultural Experiment Station, through joint funding of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the state of New Hampshire. This work also is supported by NIFA’s Agriculture and Food Research Initiative through accession 1012155 and by NIFA McIntire-Stennis accessions 1006668 and 1007007.

Founded in 1887, the NH Agricultural Experiment Station (<http://colsa.unh.edu/nhaes/>) at the UNH College of Life Sciences and Agriculture (<http://www.colsa.unh.edu/aes/>) is UNH’s original research center and an elemental component of New Hampshire’s land-grant university heritage and mission.

The University of New Hampshire is a flagship research university that inspires innovation and transforms lives in our state, nation and world. More than 16,000 students from all 50 states and 71 countries engage with an award-winning faculty in top ranked programs in business, engineering, law, liberal arts and the sciences across more than 200 programs of study. UNH’s research portfolio includes partnerships with NASA, NOAA, NSF and NIH, receiving more than \$100 million in competitive external funding every year to further explore and define the frontiers of land, sea and space.

**Editor’s Notes:**

**PHOTO AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD**

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