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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **The NEW Southwest Wisconsin Invasive Species Coalition: Battling Invasives**

A new chapter has begun on exotic invasive species management in Southwest Wisconsin. SWISC (Southwest Wisconsin Invasive Species Coalition) was recently formed from a group of agencies, organizations, and individuals to combat the negative effects of non-native organisms that have been brought here and are causing damage to the ecology and economy of the region. Once exotic invasive species take hold in an area (often brought here by humans) they explode in their population due to biological capabilities and lack of natural controls. They cause harm to the ecology and economy by displacing native species (plants, animals, fungi, etc) that have vital roles in the appropriate working web of life that we have come to exist in. Species such as garlic mustard, buckthorn, zebra mussel, emerald ash borer, etc have all been in the news for a while and have all had negative economic effects to our region.

SWISC is made up of federal agencies (US Fish & Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service), state agencies (WI DNR, UW-Extension), ten counties of Southwest Wisconsin, numerous conservation organizations, private businesses, and concerned individual landowners. They see the collaborative effort as networking between active managers, strengthening existing programs, supporting good treatment work and outreach efforts and possibly stimulating more funding to come into our area for invasive species management. Southwest Badger Resource Conservation & Development has led the coordination so far, but soon the coalition will be led by a small steering committee who will work with the many coalition partners.

This new coalition acknowledges that some of these invasive species have become so established that complete removal is unrealistic. However, they see a need to continue working to aid our native species so that all ecological niches remain intact and the system as a whole can continue to function properly. They also want to make sure that individuals who have taken up

the fight do not become overwhelmed or quit. Prioritization and cooperation will be the mission and a healthy ecosystem is the goal.

For more information about the Southwest Wisconsin Invasive Species Coalition, contact Southwest Badger at [swbadger@swbadger.org](mailto:swbadger@swbadger.org) or (608) 637-5479.