



ALIPC's Bits and Pieces

*News and Information provided by the Alabama Invasive Plant Council
January 2011*

This newsletter is intended for the membership of the Alabama Invasive Plant Council. If you are not currently a member, we hope you will find the information provided valuable and will consider membership with our organization. To join simply go to the web address provided <http://www.se-eppc.org/alab/membership/tr.pdf> or click on <http://www.se-eppc.org/> and follow the links for Alabama.

INTRODUCTION

Well it's that time again. The weather is getting cooler and the Privet is getting greener, or at least it seems to be due to the lack of other green foliage. I hope this finds everyone Merry from Christmas and Happy that the New Year has begun.

I wish I could say that things have slowed down and we are enjoying winter hibernation, but it is just the reverse. We have been busy planning the Annual ALIPC meeting along with our other many obligations, many of which are highlighted in the articles below. I hope as you sit by the fire and read this newsletter you find some information that will help you in the New Year. - Jacob Hodnett

!!!UPCOMING EVENTS!!!

ALIPC Annual Conference - April 20, 2011. Auburn, AL. The conference will be held at the Auburn Hotel and Conference Center, the same location as last year's meeting. Stay tuned for additional information!

Joint meeting of the **13th Annual SE-EPPC Conference and the 2nd Kentucky Invasive Species Conference** - May 3-5, 2011, Lexington, KY. For more information, see <http://www.ca.uky.edu/invasives/>.

ALIPC ACTIVITIES

ALIPC EDUCATION AND OUTREACH GRANT PROGRAM

Congratulations are in order to Elizabeth Johnson with the Alabama Wildlife Federation, the winner of this year's ALIPC Education and Outreach Grant. The \$1000 Grant will be used to conduct a training class for the Alabama Nature Center (ANC) staff on invasive species identification and management. The ANC staff will use this training to inform nearly 10,000 children, parents and teachers that visit the ANC Lanark facility on an annual base, about invasive plants.

We would also like to thank the other individuals that sent in grant proposals. There were many good ideas and we wish we were able to give everyone a grant, but please don't let this discourage you from submitting proposals for next year's grant.

Grant proposals are due by October 31, 2011. The application form and additional information about this grant opportunity can be found on the Alabama Invasive Plant Council website (www.se-eppc.org/alabama) under the heading Request for Proposals.

We also would like to take this opportunity to pat the **Walker County Soil and Water Conservation District**, last year's winner of the ALIPC Education and Outreach Grant, on the back. They hosted another Weeds Gone Wild workshop using grant money they had left over from last year. The workshop was attended by 100+ people and focused on control of kudzu, privet and cogongrass. Keep up the good work!!

HAINES ISLAND PARK PROJECT: A COOPERATIVE PROJECT BETWEEN ALIPC AND THE ALABAMA PLANT CONSERVATION ALLIANCE (APCA)

Haines Island Park is 480 acres of land located on the Alabama River in Monroe County and is owned and managed by the Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Alabama River Lakes water resources development project. The park is



situated in the Southern Red Hills region of the East Gulf Coastal Plain and is home to some rare plant and animal species, including the Red Hills salamander, a federally-listed species.

In 2009, the Alabama Invasive Plant Council (ALIPC) and the Alabama Plant Conservation Alliance (APCA) decided to partner on a project to accomplish several goals toward preserving the ecological integrity of the park, including the following:

- Schedule a series of work days for locating and removing invasive exotic plants from the park.
- Conduct a comprehensive plant survey within the park and provide the list to the Corps and others who may find it useful.
- Make recommendations to the Corps on addressing issues that are exacerbating the exotics problem.

Invasive exotic plants are in the early stages of becoming established in a few areas of the park. Exotics include silktree (*Albizia julibrissin*), Chinese privet (*Ligustrum sinense*), thorny olive (*Elaeagnus pungens*), Japanese climbing fern (*Lygodium japonicum*), and Chinaberry (*Melia azedarach*).



[M.Jordan - exotics slayer extraordinaire.](#)

After coordination with the Corps of Engineers Resource Manager, Jason Haynes, a joint APCA/ALIPC work day to kill invasive exotics was held on April 30. Although the group of participants was small, a lot of work was accomplished. However, it became obvious at that time that additional, on-going efforts would be required to control invasive exotic species in the park.



[Graves Lovell, Gena Todia, and Bobby Green](#)

On November 12, a group of 10 ALIPC and APCA members and Corps Park Ranger Jason Ledbetter participated in a second very productive work day. Participants were Harry Larsen, Fred Nation, Michael Jordan, Dee Smith, Patrick Thompson, Graves Lovell, Dana McReynolds, Bobby Green, Bob Boyd, and Gena Todia. Invasive plant species control efforts

concentrated primarily on silktree, Chinese privet, and thorny olive. With the assistance of Fred and Patrick, Dr. Larsen began compiling a list of plant species that occur in the park. This list will be expanded on subsequent trips as this project continues.

While a date has not yet been set, we anticipate that the next work day will be scheduled in the spring. We hope you can join us! - Gena Todia
(photos by Gena Todia and Michael Jordan)

ALIPC/FRCA PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE PROJECT

A beautiful flowering perennial, purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) a non-native invasive, is gaining a toe hold in the southern states. The first population of loosestrife in Alabama, found in the Gurley area of Madison County, was estimated to have been started in the early-mid 1970's by a bee keeper. Purple loosestrife has a persistent tap root and spreading rootstock which competes with native plants, completely displacing natives in some habitats. According to EDDMAPS, it is currently found in 47 states in the U.S. Its reproductive capacity is bountiful--a mature 7-8 feet tall plant can produce up to 2 million seeds. It thrives on disturbed, moist soils, and is found in ditches along roads in west Gurley, all of which are subject to drainage maintenance. Sand Branch, a small tributary of Hurricane Creek near the confluence of the Flint River northeast of Huntsville, is the primary area of infestation. EDDMAPS indicates that loosestrife now also occurs in Jackson and Mobile Counties, likely spread by humans enamored with the beautiful dark pink flowers, or in the butterflies they attract.



The loosestrife in Gurley was discovered in 1991 during Advance Identification of Wetlands (ADID), a research and planning program funded by the EPA. The City of Huntsville was responsible for this research while Susan Weber, the ecologist for the project, found the loosestrife and made an attempt to enlist partners from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Wheeler NWR), TVA, the City of Huntsville, The Madison County Commission, Waterways Experiment Station, and Ducks Unlimited to control this new population. Two years of spraying were frustrated when the lessee farmer cleaned the ditches, releasing tens of

thousands of seedlings from the seed bank. Discouraged by lack of control over a project on private land, all efforts were abandoned.

In 2004 the USFWS offered a Partner's in Wildlife Grant to the Flint River Conservation Association (FRCA) to continue the control Effort. Rob Hurt of Wheeler NWR was very interested to see this project resume as all downstream waters are potentially threatened by purple loosestrife. If loosestrife became established at Wheeler NWR, it could be a biological disaster with possible adverse effects to refuge waterfowl populations and management. A flood event, combined with available downstream habitat (disturbed soils) could also ignite other populations in Madison County and along the Tennessee River, possibly all the way to the Mississippi River.

A change of land ownership caused a 2 year hiatus from 2008-2009 in the control effort, and the loosestrife came back strong as ever. It took nearly two years to convince the new landowner to allow control under the grant, as he could still sell his land under the Partners for Wildlife agreement. About the same time, ALIPC Chairman-elect, Dr. Stephen Enloe recommended the use of Habitat which would work more slowly but have better long term success on this species. Indeed, Habitat made a huge difference in root kill, although it took over 3 weeks to see the demise of sprayed loosestrife. By September, volunteers and some paid A&M University students eliminated at least 90% of the mature plants on approximately 2.5 miles of ditches and streams during the summer heat wave hitting at the height of the blooming season.

Susan joined the board of ALIPC the fall of 2010, and asked the board if ALIPC could join as a partner in the project. This will boost the credibility of this project and of ALIPC's other work around the state. With help from local folks, we look forward to knocking out the other 10% of mature purple loosestrife individuals and the new seedlings that are recruited in 2011.

If you would like to assist in this project, please contact Susan Weber at 256-509-1219 or at susan.weber@huntsvilleal.gov — *Soos Weber* (photo by Soos Weber).

INITIATIVE TARGETS PIGWEED IN FIVE ALABAMA COUNTIES

AUBURN, Ala. Sept. 14, 2010 - USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist Dr. William Puckett today announced an initiative under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) designed to help agricultural producers control Palmer amaranth, a species of Pigweed.

Palmer amaranth has developed resistance to glyphosate and can quickly spread from a few plants into a major infestation if not quickly controlled. Puckett said, "A major concern is the loss of conservation tillage acreage as producers revert to tillage to control this weed. In this initiative, we encourage the use of conservation tillage methods, integrated pest management principles and diversification of herbicide chemistries. We have allocated special funds to target Palmer amaranth in five Alabama counties: Barbour, Lauderdale, Limestone, Madison, and Russell." Agricultural producers in the targeted counties must submit applications on or before October 30, 2010, to receive consideration for funding in FY-2011. Applications received after October 30, 2010, will still be accepted, but will be "deferred" to the next funding cycle.

EQIP is a voluntary program that provides financial and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers who face threats to soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. The 2008 Farm Bill authorized special emphasis funding for: Beginning, Socially Disadvantaged, and Limited Resource Farmers and Ranchers. Applying for EQIP is continuous; however, selecting applications for funding is completed periodically through batching periods with specific cutoff dates.

Interested producers should visit their nearest USDA Service Center to determine eligibility. Individuals are not eligible for EQIP until they have completed the Farm Bill eligibility requirements. Contact your local NRCS or Farm Service Agency Office to begin this process. NRCS field offices are listed in the telephone directory under U.S. Department of Agriculture or on-line at <http://offices.sc.egov.usda.gov> For information about EQIP visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip.

This year represents the 75th year of NRCS "Helping People Help the Land." Since its inception the NRCS conservation delivery system has advanced a unique partnership with state and local governments and private landowners delivering conservation based on specific, local conservation needs, while accommodating state and national interests.

Success Stories, Information, or Announcements? LET US KNOW!!!

If you have interesting stories, on the ground projects, or other "bits and pieces" you would like to share with other members of the Alabama Invasive Plant Council please forward the information to me (hodnettj@dot.state.al.us) and we'll try to include it in the next release of ALIPC's "Bits and Pieces" newsletter.