

SE-EPPC E-NEWS February 2008 Volume 2.2

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1. An Early Detection and Rapid Response System for Invasive Plants in South Carolina.

- Robin Mackie, USDA Forest Service, Columbia, South Carolina, and Randy Westbrooks, USGS BRD Whiteville, North Carolina.

Like a number of other state and provincial interagency partner groups throughout the U.S. and Canada, the South Carolina Exotic Pest Plant Council (SC-EPPC), is working to develop new capacity for early detection and rapid response (EDDR) to new invasive plants. In 2007, SC-EPPC formed an Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) Coordinating Committee, and is currently developing a State EDRR Work Plan. The plan outlines individual roles and steps that must be taken to prevent the establishment and spread of new plant invaders in South Carolina – particularly non-regulated species [e.g., as bush killer (*Cayratia japonica*) a new invasive vine in North Carolina]. The SC-EPPC EDRR Plan was adapted from a generic EDRR work plan that had been developed over the past seven years to assist EDRR partner groups throughout the U.S. and Canada.

In South Carolina, EDRR methods developed in the USDA/Carolinas Witchweed (*Striga asiatica*) Eradication Program and other federal/state weed eradication projects are currently being used to address beach vitex (*Vitex rotundifolia*), a serious new invader from Korea that poses a threat to native dune plants and animals along the Carolina coast.

Getting started in developing a state EDRR network has included the following key steps:

- **Establish a state EDRR Coordinating Committee.**
- **Develop a list of EDRR target species.**
- **Develop an Early Detection and Reporting Network.**
- **Train your Early Detection Network.**
- **Report suspected new plants to appropriate state and federal officials.**
- **Archive Confirmed New Invasive Plant Records in the Southeast in EDDMaps.**
- **Conduct Rapid Assessments.**
- **Don't Hesitate, Weeds Won't Wait!**

Connecting the dots – getting agencies and organizations to work together – is likely the key to success in EDRR at all levels – from international down to the local. No single agency has the resources, expertise, or authority to address all types of invasive plants. It is hoped that what is accomplished this year and next year to prevent the establishment and spread of new invasive plants in South Carolina will have a big impact on our natural and managed resources for decades to come.

Note: The SC-EPPC EDRR Coordinating Committee Work Plan and other EDRR guidance documents are available upon request from Robin Mackie or Randy Westbrooks.

2. State Report: Alabama Invasive Plant Council – Nancy Loewenstein, ALIPC Board of Directors

The highlight of 2007 for ALIPC was hosting over 100 people at our 5th annual conference in April 2007. Speakers discussed research results, invasive plant control and restoration efforts. Several additions to Alabama's list of invasive plants were also presented and approved at the conference. Conference presentations, the updated invasive plant list, and a brochure describing the new additions can be viewed on ALIPC's web page.

Other activities during 2007 included sponsorship of three important events: the 4th Annual Tennessee Valley Invasive Plant Symposium, the Cogongrass Conference, and an invasive plant workday where over 60 volunteers helped remove invasive species encroaching on the Auburn University Arboretum.

ALIPC's 6th annual conference will be held on May 13th at the Alabama 4-H Center in Columbiana. The program will include a session on Adaptive Collaborative Restoration, highlighting Alabama's new cogongrass task force, a session on the use of invasive plants as biofuels, and a workshop on invasive plant ID, control and mapping.

3. 2007 Texas Invasive Plant Conference - Damon Waitt, Conference Organizer

On November 14th, 15th and 16th, 2007, the *Pulling Together Initiative* - a Texas-sized partnership to manage invasive plants - hosted its second statewide invasive plant conference in Texas. The *Pulling Together Initiative* is a collaborative project between the Texas Forest Service, the Forest Health Protection branch of the USDA Forest Service, the Central Southwest Gulf Coast Information Node of the National Biological Information Infrastructure at the Houston Advanced Research Center, and the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. The conference was held at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas.

The goals of the 2007 conference were to:

- Facilitate communication among the state's invasive plant stakeholders;
- Develop a coordinated response to address invasive plant issues on a statewide level;
- Provide a venue for sharing information about key invasive plant strategies;
- Raise public awareness of the problems posed by invasive plants in Texas; and
- Establish a statewide organization with diverse interests that shares in the common goal to protect Texas from the threat of invasive pests and plants.

Conference Program

Keynote Speakers – The conference kicked off with three plenary addresses emphasizing both a statewide and national perspective on invasive species issues. Carter Smith, Texas State Director for The Nature Conservancy, spoke about the impact of invasive species on Texas' Natural Heritage. Smith was followed by Linda Drees, Chief Invasive Species Branch for the National Park Service, who talked about the National Park Service's Exotic Plant

Management Teams and Tony Pernas, also with the National Park Service, who talked about The National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Councils.

Update on Texas Coalitions – Earl Chilton with Texas Parks and Wildlife gave participants an update on the status of the Texas Invasive Species Coordinating Committee (TISCC). This committee exists by memorandum of agreement between eight state agencies. Its purpose is to foster cooperation among regulatory agencies in invasive species funding, control and management. Damon Waitt with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center made the case to establish a multi-stakeholder, statewide council to serve as a professional organization for those working on invasive species issues. Tentatively titled the Texas Invasive Plant and Pest Council (TX-IPPC), the organization would be modeled after other successful councils such as the California Invasive Plant Council and the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council. Waitt made a motion from the floor to establish said council and received unanimous support from participants. A petition to join the newly formed council was circulated during the conference and 96 participants signed up to become founding members. In addition, a steering committee was established to develop the organization's bylaws, work on organizational structure, and organize a general election for officers.

Abstract Presentations – There were 43 abstracts presented (including 3 posters) organized into sessions and based on key strategies from the National Invasive Species Council's National Management Plan for invasive species: Early Detection & Rapid Response (4 abstracts), Control & Management (10), Research (9), Information Management (4), and Education & Public Awareness (4). In addition, there were ten presentations in a specially organized Old World Bluestem Symposium. At the conclusion of the conference, the six session chairs gave an overview of presentations in their sessions and hosted a question and answer discussion. All participants in the conference received a 60-page publication containing the conference program and published abstracts.

Workshops, Field Trips, and List Discussion – In 2007, an extra 1/2 day was added for three special activities: 1) a field trip to the Lower Bear Creek and Onion Creek Management Units hosted by City of Austin Water Quality Protection staff; 2) a lab-based workshop on the Identification of Exotic and Native Species of Aquatic and Wetland Plants by Bob Howells; and 3) a discussion to begin developing an invasive species list for Texas moderated by Norma Fowler. All activities were well received and well attended.

4. NAEPPC Update – Brian Bowen, NAEPPC vice president

The National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Council activity is coalescing around planning for the 2008 Natural Areas Association (NAA)/NAEPPC Conference in Nashville. With half of the 08 conference dedicated to invasive species issues, there is much activity related to planning the program as well as developing various NAEPPC products for presentation at the conference. These include a logo, a conference display, NAEPPC banner, and an electronic media display that will be created from educational and outreach materials that all the EPPC's contribute.

Members of EPPC chapters in NAEPPC will be extensively involved as both session coordinators and as invited speakers, who will address a broad array of topics. The program chair, Lisa Smith, MA-EPPC and

conference chair, Brian Bowen, will meet again with the program subcommittee in Washington D.C at the National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week on February 25th.

A Call for Papers will be mailed out the beginning of March and EPPC members are strongly encouraged to submit abstracts to be considered for presentation in the contributing papers and/or poster sessions. NAEPPC conference organizers are hopeful that SE-EPPC will support the conference through sponsorship and attendance. Updates and conference information will be available on the SE-EPPC, NAA, and NAEPPC websites. Stay tuned, the conference website should be live by the beginning of March.

5. Upcoming Events and Opportunities

National Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA) Conference: April 15 – 17, 2008

The conference will be held at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno, NV. It will conclude with an all-day field trip to sites in the Reno area. The event is organized by the Center for Invasive Plant Management. For more information, visit

http://www.weedcenter.org/CWMAconf/cwma_conf.htm

Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council 10th Annual Symposium Hosted by the Mississippi Exotic Pest Plant Council “Managing Invasive Plants in Disturbed Landscapes” May 20-22, 2008 Imperial Palace Casinos Biloxi, Mississippi

The symposium will offer a timely forum for considering how best to manage invasive plants in disturbed landscapes. Ecological disturbances, such as Hurricane Katrina and the 2007 wildfires in southern Georgia and northern Florida, should raise awareness of these events in the southeastern United States. Two important issues arise out of these disturbances:

- Understanding the responses of invasive plants to natural disturbances and associated recovery and salvage efforts.
- Coordinating ecological restoration of disturbance regimes with the management of invasive plants.

The program of the 10th Annual SE-EPPC Symposium will emphasize, but is not limited to, presentations addressing how invasive plants respond to natural and man-made disturbances and how local communities and stakeholders take action to anticipate and respond to the increased threats posed by invasive non-native plants following such disturbances. The symposium will include plenary sessions, workshops, and field trips.

Registration

Information on registration and a registration form will soon be available on the SE-EPPC Website, www.se-eppc.org.

Additional Information

For additional conference information, visit the SE-EPPC Website, www.se-eppc.org, or contact either John Madsen, jmadsen@gri.msstate.edu or Lisa Yager lisa.yager@mmns.state.ms.us

35th Natural Areas Conference - Natural Areas Revival In Music City: Tuning into a changing climate and biological invasion *A joint conference of the Natural Areas Association and the National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Councils*

The Doubletree Hotel - Nashville, Tennessee

The 2008 Natural Areas Conference will be a joint conference of the Natural Areas Association (NAA) and the National Association of Exotic Pest Plant Councils (NAEPPC). The conference will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the NAA and will be an inaugural national conference for NAEPPC. The conference will focus on ecological management themes with an emphasis on invasive exotic species issues. The NAEPPC will bring its invasive species expertise to the conference and the two organizations will provide synergy in organizing what is expected to be an outstanding conference. Join us for an informative and rewarding experience.

**Ninth Annual National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week February 24 - 29, 2008
Washington, D.C.**

The Ninth Annual National Invasive Weeds Awareness Week (NIWAW 9) will be held in Washington, D.C. the week of February 24 to February 29, 2008 to bring people and groups from across the country together to focus national attention on the severe impacts caused by invasive weeds. Individuals and organizations interested in this issue are invited to participate in this event and help build on the success of NIWAW activities in previous years. NIWAW 9 events are designed to focus on the important roles the Federal government must play to help the U.S. deal with invasive weed problems. We have also designed the schedule to provide ample time for attendees to meet with their Congressional delegations, individual federal agencies and each other.

For More Details Please Visit The NIWAW 9 Website

http://www.nawma.org/niwaw/niwaw_index.htm Points by Sheraton Hotel 1201 K Street NW, Washington, DC is the Headquarters Hotel for NIWAW 9 **For additional information on NIWAW 9 contact:** Dr. Nelroy Jackson (951-279-7787) or nelroyjackson@sbcglobal.net

Biofuels Conference: March 10, 2008, the Ecological Society of America will host a one-day conference on the Ecological Dimensions of Biofuels at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center Washington, D.C. A keynote address will be delivered by Dr. Jose Goldemberg, Co-President of the Global Energy Assessment (GEA) Council and Professor at the Universidade de Sao Paulo. Although invasive species are not the focus of this meeting, topic related to invasive species, such as alternative biofuel crop selection and production will be discussed. More information, including an agenda, confirmed speakers, registration information, and sponsorship opportunities, is available at <http://esa.org/biofuels>