



ALIPC GRANT

TO WHEELER WILDLIFE REFUGE
ASSOCIATION (WWRA)

GRANT COORDINATORS



- ❑ **Don Collier, PhD**
 - ❑ **WWRA Board Member**
 - ❑ **Instructor at Calhoun Community College**
 - ❑ **Grant writer**

- ❑ **April Waltz**
 - ❑ **WWRA Board Member**
 - ❑ **Conservation Education Specialist - Outdoor Classroom Coordinator **with the Alabama Wildlife Federation****
 - ❑ **Brochure coordinator**

Project Title: Wheeler Refuge

Invasive Plants Brochure/Guide



- ❑ **GOAL: educate** visitors to the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge about invasive plant species found in and around the Refuge with emphasis on those found around the Refuge Visitor Center.

- ❑ **MEANS:**
 - ❑ Produce a **four-color brochure** that will incorporate photos of the invasives along with descriptions of how they impact the habitat

 - ❑ Use **trail markers to identify** some common invasive plants found around the Visitor Center



Wheeler Wildlife Refuge Association

- ❑ Founded in 1998 by involved local citizens
- ❑ Local non-profit organization interested in **assisting Wheeler NWR** to carry out public use and conservation objectives



Wheeler Wildlife Refuge Association

- Produce a Quarterly Newsletter
- Fund the book/gift shop
- Encourage public involvement with special activities
- Support special refuge projects by fund raising and volunteer efforts
- Provide support on critical issues involving the refuge



Wheeler Wildlife Refuge Association



The Association is part of a network of more than 200 "Friends Groups" nationwide, each associated with one or more national wildlife refuges, all committed to improving and protecting our unique refuge resources.



Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge Complex

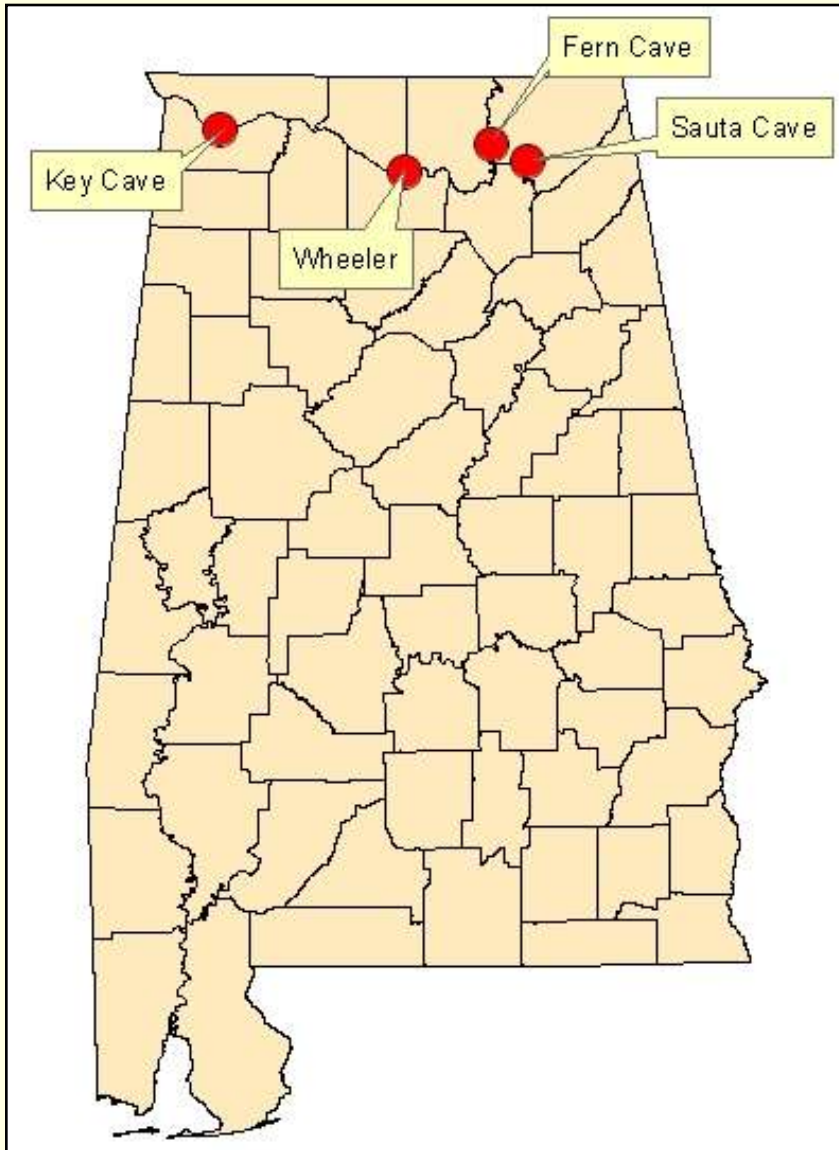
The general public and visitors of the Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center includes approximately 35,000 people per year



Artwork by Bethany Cannon 3rd Place 2004 National Junior Duck Stamp Contest



Wheeler NWR Complex Overview



- ❑ **Wheeler NWR** – Limestone, Madison, Morgan Counties, 35,000 acres
- ❑ **Key Cave NWR** – Lauderdale County, 1060 acres
- ❑ **Sauta Cave NWR** – Jackson County, 264 acres
- ❑ **Fern Cave NWR** – Jackson County, 199 acres

Management of a national wildlife refuge involves



Habitat



Public Use



Partnerships



Public Involvement





Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge

Public Use: “The Big Six”

1. Hunting
2. Fishing
3. Wildlife observation
4. Wildlife photography
5. Environmental education
6. Wildlife interpretation



Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge

Habitat Management for Waterfowl

- ❑ Water Level Management
- ❑ Moist Soil Units \approx 1,500 acres





Wheeler National Wildlife Refuge

Habitat Management for Waterfowl:

- ❑ Cooperative Farming \approx 4,000 acres over the past five years;
- ❑ Corn, millet and soybeans are planted on the Refuge.
- ❑ Control of invasive species



Non-consumptive public use



- ❑ Wildlife Viewing Observation Platform
- ❑ Wildlife Observation Building
- ❑ Five Nature Trails





INVASIVE PLANTS

WHEELER NATIONAL WILDLIFE
REFUGE

Add the words **non-native**

Species that are not native to a given ecosystem and whose introduction to that ecosystem causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health

- Executive Order 13112
February 3, 1999

A photograph of a dense forest. In the foreground, there is a large, vibrant green bush with many small, rounded leaves. The background is filled with tall, dark green trees, including several prominent pine trees. The sky is a pale, overcast white. The text "Invasive Plants Brochure" is overlaid in the center in a yellow, serif font.

Invasive Plants Brochure



Target Plant(s) for the project

Some common invasives found around the Refuge include the following:

1. Two **grasses**, Nepalese browntop and **Johnsongrass**
2. Two trees, **Mimosa** and **Bradford pear**
3. Two **shrubs**: **Chinese privet** and Multiflora rose
4. Five **vines**: Wisteria, **English Ivy**, Japanese honeysuckle, **Kudzu**, and Sweet autumn virginsbower
5. Six **forbs**: Musk thistle, Sicklepod, Purple loosestrife, Sericea lespedeza, Shrubby lespedeza, and Blessed milk thistle and
6. Six **aquatic species**: **Alligatorweed**, Water hyacinth, Hydrilla, Parrot feather milfoil, **Eurasian milfoil**, and Water lily (a native invasive species)

CAVEAT



THE GOOD, THE AVERAGE,
AND THE UGLY

What is invasive?





- ❑ **Every person, bacterium, plant and animal**
 - ❑ At some time
 - ❑ In some place
- ❑ **Perspective**
 - ❑ The good: an organism in a place and amount that is desired
 - ❑ The average: an organism that “fits in with the crowd”
 - ❑ The ugly: an organism that is “too numerous” in a place where its numbers detract from a valued resource

Exceptions to “the rule” on Wheeler Refuge



- ❑ **Watermilfoil**, one of Alabama’s top 10 worst invasive weeds (**the ugly**) is among **the good** on Wheeler Refuge. Why?
 - ❑ **Ducks love it!**
 - ❑ **This is a waterfowl refuge!**



Exceptions to the rule on Wheeler Refuge



- ❑ Two of “**Wheeler’s uglies**” are not listed among the invasives in Alabama because they are natives:

- ❑ **Water lotus**

- ❑ **Black willow**

- ❑ Both of these are serious threats to waterfowl habitat!



WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?



□ EXAPAND THE EDUCATION OUTREACH

- Develop a black and white guide with an accompanying map

□ THE CHALLENGE: INVOLVE THE PUBLIC IN MANAGEMENT EFFORTS

- To identify and coordinate small focused projects that are useful and of interest to volunteers