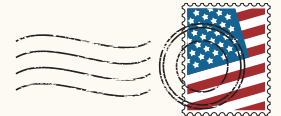


Greetings
from the

FLORIDA STATE

Postcards from FLEPPC

Lot's happening here in Florida, most recently the 23rd Annual Symposium of the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council. The turnout was excellent with almost 200 attendees at the 2-1/2 day event on the St. Johns River in Jacksonville.





Immediate Past Chair, Alison Fox Stocker and Randall Stocker, were presented with a nautical clock with the inscription: Fair winds and following seas. (PHOTO BY JIM CUDA)



Alison and Randall preparing Tregoning for life at sea. (PHOTO BY KAREN BROWN)



Students from the New College Environmental Studies Program in Sarasota attended the FLEPPC Symposium. Standing from left to right: Veronica Hnatiuk, Adam Lubitz, Christine Bowden, Jono Miller (Program Director), Matthew Polzin. Crouching from left to right: Nancy Rose Spector, Peter Hess, Jacob Starks, Dayna Lazarus. Yes, that is cogon grass in the foreground!

The recent 23rd Annual Symposium of the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council was a huge success. There were lots of FLEPPC achievements to report, excellent presentations and posters, informative workshops and field trips, and more.

Dr. Bernd Blossey of Cornell University presented a provocative keynote address, challenging us to examine our assumptions that invasions always result in broad scale negative impacts to all native species. He presented evidence that plant community changes are not always driven by invasive plants and direct competition, but may occur in response to earthworm invasions or overabundant native deer. Using examples from aquatic invertebrates, he also demonstrated that any shift in dominant plants, regardless of whether the invader is native or introduced, will likely result in dramatic shifts in food webs and their trophic structure. Managers of plant invasions need to recognize that human interpretation of these changes in food webs is the major driver and justification of our activities.

Thirty-one oral presentations filled sessions on Exotic Species in the Restoration Context; Tracking and Assessing the Risks of Invasions; Updates on Biological and Herbicidal Controls, and Biological Invasion Research; Program Strategies for Invasive Plant Control, and Building Alliances in the War on Weeds. Three concurrent workshops were held: Using Technology in the War on Weeds, presented by Alison Higgons of The Nature Conservancy; Invasive Plant Identification, presented by Caitlin Elam and Pete Diamond of the Florida Natural Areas Inventory; and a Natural Area Weed Management Training Session, led by Ken Gioeli and Jeffrey Hutchinson, UF/IFAS. Continuing Education Units (CEUs) were awarded in multiple categories by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and the Florida Nursery, Growers & Landscape Association (FNGLA), which offers horticulture certification programs.

A lively one-hour session was devoted to a record-breaking 17 posters, with refreshments and presenters available for discussion. Two posters were presented by Mrs. Atefeh Alizade from Tehran University, Iran – surely our most distant attendee. Another poster was presented by students Jessica Wheeler and Trevor Caughlin, who attended with Environmental Studies Program Director Dr. Jono Miller and 11 fellow students from New College in Sarasota, Florida.

Three field trips took us to Julington Durbin Preserve, a 2,000 acre natural area; Kingsley Plantation on Fort George Island, a historic area on state and federal park property; and the new 119-acre Jacksonville Arboretum. All field trips discussed ongoing

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Incoming chair, Daniel Clark. (PHOTO BY JIM CUDDA)



From Top: 1. and 2. Ft. George Island field trip; 3. One of the best attended FLEPPC board meetings ever; 4. A lively one-hour session was devoted to a record-breaking 17 posters. (PHOTO 1 BY ERIC RAITTS, A.V.C.; PHOTOS 2-4 BY KAREN BROWN)



Chuck Bargeron (left) of the Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council was presented with the FLEPPC Advocate of the Year award. Scott Ditmarsen of Dow AgroSciences was recognized as the FLEPPC Member of the Year. (PHOTOS BY KAREN BROWN)

exotic plant management and restoration efforts on site. Field trip organizer, Donna Watkins, and trip leaders Tony Pernas, Dan Clark, Richard Bryant, J.B. Miller, and Trish Gramajo did an excellent job of providing interesting and informative excursions.

The banquet was held poolside with entertainment provided by FLEPPC's favorite rock and roll band, *The Weeds*. It was a great success despite unexpectedly cold and gusty winds blowing off the St. Johns River. Lots of attendees sported new sweatshirts purchased from the hotel gift shop or wrinkled windbreakers unearthed from work trucks.

The annual general membership meeting saw the departure of our much loved chair, Dr. Alison Fox, and the installation of our new chair, Daniel Clark. Alison and her husband, Dr. Randall Stocker, both recently retired from the University of Florida and, by now, will have cast off on their 41' sailboat, *Tregoning*. They plan to sail the world and visit faraway lands. The FLEPPC board presented them with a nautical clock to mount on their boat, inscribed with the words, "Alison - Fair Winds and Following Seas, FLEPPC 2008." According to the Naval Safety Center, "We bid shipmates farewell with this naval "blessing" because it represents the ideal underway conditions for which sailors yearn." New FLEPPC Chair, Daniel Clark, is a Commander with the U.S. Coast Guard and was inspired to add this inscription. Newly elected board members were welcomed to serve their two year terms with FLEPPC. Jim Burch is a Resources Management Supervisory Botanist for the National Park Service at Big Cypress National Preserve; Adam Grayson works for Lake and Wetland Management, a private company specializing in invasive plant control; Dustin Hormann is a Project Manager in the Ecosystem Restoration Division at EarthBalance; and Kathy O'Reilly-Doyle is a Coordinator for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program in South Florida. All of our new board members are very experienced in exotic pest plant management and well qualified to serve on the FLEPPC board of directors. Read more about them in the Florida EPPC newsletter (Vol. 18 Nbr. 2) available online at www.fleppc.org.

Chuck Bargeron of the Southeast Exotic Pest Plant Council was awarded the FLEPPC Advocate of the Year plaque and Scott Ditmarsen of Dow AgroSciences was recognized as the FLEPPC Member of the Year. Dan Clark stated, "You both have truly given a significant amount of time and effort to further the mission of FLEPPC." Scott has invested much time and energy into our recently formed Finance Committee. Chuck has contributed a great deal of work on the EDDMapS project, the websites, and so much more.

FLEPPC is very fortunate to have a multitude of hard-working volunteers to head up committees and task forces. Dr. Bill Overholt (University of Florida-IFAS) and his eight member *Dioscorea* Task Force announced their recently completed Air Potato Management Plan, which is now online at www.fleppc.org/publications. This brings the number of invasive plant species management plans written by FLEPPC task force members to six: Air potato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*), Old World climbing fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), Melaleuca (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*), Chinese tallow (*Sapium sebiferum*), and Lather leaf (*Colubrina asiatica*). These comprehensive plans provide thorough information on species biology, distribution, ecology, economic impact, management strategies, and case studies. Dr. Jim Cuda, Chair of the Brazilian pepper task force, recently received the following email message from a member of the "Pepper Tree Task Force" in Sarasota County: "...Thank you for referring me to this Management Plan. It is the best single source for info on the peppers. You have helped us a lot!..." This 2006 management plan also received the GOLD Image Award in the Web-based and CD-ROM categories from UF/IFAS.

Our Outreach Committee chair, Ms. Katy Roberts, reported that the FLEPPC booth was displayed at venues with a total attendance of over 20,000 people during the past year. Of course, not all of them flocked to the FLEPPC booth to learn about exotic pest plants, but with events such as the Great Air Potato Roundup, meetings of the Florida Native Plant Society and the Audubon Society, the Tampa Bay Wholesale Growers Show, the Kanapaha Spring Garden Festival and more, we're reaching out to a large and interested group of people. The *FLEPPC 2007 List of Invasive Plant Species*, weed alerts, and issues of *Wildland Weeds* magazine are given away at these events, and exotic pest plants are brought in pots or plastic bags for a hands-on learning experience. Visitors are often shocked to learn that their landscape plants are behaving badly in Florida's natural areas, but local infestation photos tell the truth.

Education Grants Committee chair Jennifer Possley reported that it was difficult to choose only six recipients from the fourteen proposals that were received for the Kathy Craddock Burks Education and Outreach Grant program. A total of \$5,000 was awarded to fund a student-created DVD about Florida's Alien Invaders, the creation and distribution of a one-page Old World climbing fern flyer, the printing of a Tropical Soda Apple IPM field guide for ranchers, traveling trunks of invasive plant educational materials for teachers, reprinting of an ID and control guide for non-natives in east central Florida, and a project for students to

remove invasive exotics and replant natives. Look for reports from awardees in future issues of *Wildland Weeds* or at the next FLEPPC symposium.

Dr. Betsy Von Holle, chair of the FLEPPC Julia Morton Invasive Plant Research Grant Program committee, announced the 2008 awardees: Kerry Bohl, University of South Florida, "Investigating the role of enemy release in invasion by *Eugenia uniflora* in south Florida;" Melinda Donnelly, University of Central Florida, "Recruitment, growth and survival of the exotic Brazilian pepper, *Schinus terebinthifolius*, at restored mosquito impoundments in Mosquito Lagoon, Volusia County, FL;" Melissa R. Martin, University of Florida, "Ecosystem-level consequences of the invasion and management of *Melaleuca quinquenervia*;" and E. Corrie Pieterse, University of Florida, "Integrated Pest Management for Japanese Climbing Fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*)."

FLEPPC is riding on a wave of energy from our members, our board of directors, and committee and task force members. New ideas, partnerships, research projects and management tools continue to flow in. Fair winds and following seas to all!

— KB, editor



Left: Sometimes two gavels are required at FLEPPC board meetings. (PHOTO BY JIM CUDA)

Right: Mrs. Atefeh Alizade traveled from Tehran University, Iran to attend the symposium. (PHOTO BY KAREN BROWN)

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