

Larson & McGowin, Inc.



Cogongrass: No Field of Dreams

Alabama Cogongrass Control Center

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www.alabamacogongrass.com

Acknowledgments

- Alabama Forestry Commission
- EPPC and SERI
- Cogongrass Technical Committee
- American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA)

Introduction

- Cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) is rapidly spreading
- Affects the framework of Alabama
 - Value reduction – crops
 - Increased cost – treatment and prevention
 - Ecosystem *transformer*



Introduction

- *Prolific* seed producer
- Rhizomatous plant
- Spreads above- and belowground
- New stems arise quickly
 - Four-inch fragment + 2 years = ten-inch deep rhizome mat!





Across the World

- One of the world's worst weeds
- 1.2 billion acres
- 73 countries
- Tropical forest soils most susceptible



Across the US

- Introduced through Mobile in 1912
- In 9 states (known)
- Danger is occupation in *every* state!



Around Alabama

- In 34 of 67 counties
- Majority in SW AL
- Spreading prolifically

<http://www.forestry.state.al.us>



“The Perfect Weed”

- Prolific reproducer/spreader
- Outcompetes almost everything
- Little to no wildlife value
- Kills fire-tolerant plants
- Grow on almost any site
- *Up to \$500/acre for eradication*



Program Inception

- 2007 – no coordinated effort exists
- 2007 - AFC obtains 3-year grant to begin mapping and education
- 2008 – AFC facilitates establishment of Alabama Cogongrass Task Team
 - Goal for a director and 4 sub-teams
 - Limited funding success

Project Inception

- AFC awarded 3-yr, \$6.28 million grant through the ARRA May 2009
- Larson & McGowin awarded coordinator contract from AFC Sept. 2009
- Task Team's structure provides Larson & McGowin with technical resources

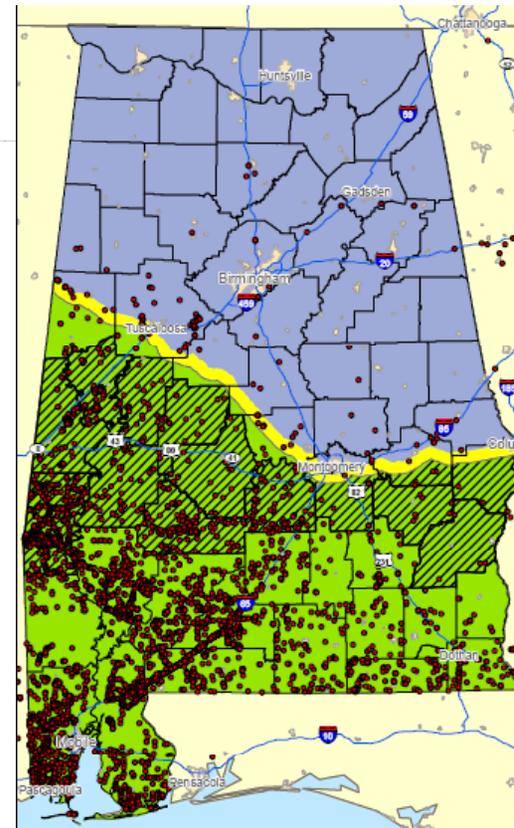
Program Goals

- Create jobs
- Focus efforts to maximize impact
- Enhance cogongrass database
- *Build long-term management program*



Program Overview

- Six Strategies:
 - Detect and Eradicate (20.6%)
 - State Borders (12.4%)
 - Underserved (10.3%)
 - Halt The Spread (6.2%)
 - Habitat Protection (0.2%)
 - Landowner Select (50.3%)
- Not a cost-share program
- Max acres in south Alabama



Program Overview

- This year's objectives
 - Spray June-October in Eradication zone and along the state's borders in the south
 - Increase known locations
 - Enroll landowners
 - Get ready for heavily infested areas next year



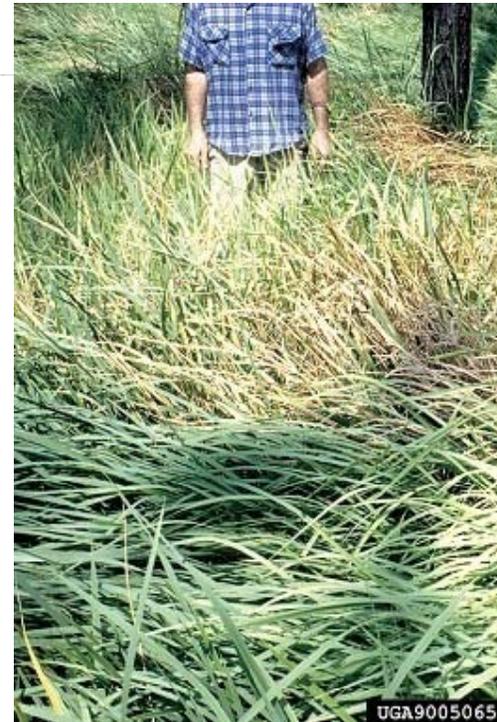
Program Overview

- Landowner enrolls
- Sign access agreement
- **Scout** visits property and writes prescription
- **Vendor** treats/retreats
- **Inspector** reviews job
- All records recorded via custom GPS, managed in GIS



Program Overview

- Use only licensed, insured, local workforces
 - Jobs, jobs, jobs
- Trains workforce with latest technology
 - Treat areas not part of program
 - Increase competitiveness after program



Program Expectations

- \$6 million for the entire state
 - Hard choices made from the outset
 - Greatly infested areas *will not* be eradicated
- Development of a management system and comprehensive program is what will outlive the grant
 - Use of stand-, tract-, and landscape-level decision tools

What You Can Do

- Get the word out!
- Report all cogongrass
- Things you can do now!
 - Don't drive in, operate in, or treat flowering areas
 - Clean equipment
 - Tell landowners and policy makers



How To Contact Us

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Questions?

