Cogongrass: No Field of Dreams

Alabama Cogongrass Control Center
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www.alabamacogongrass.com
Acknowledgments

- Alabama Forestry Commission
- Alabama Invasive Plant Council
- Cogongrass Technical Committee
- American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA)
Introduce

- 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 US

- In 9 states (known)
- Danger is occupation in every state!
Across the World

- One of the world’s worst weeds
- 1.2 billion acres
- 73 countries
- Tropical forest soils most susceptible
“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
“The Perfect Weed”

What it takes to eradicate

- Herbicides glyphosate and imazapyr
- Initial treatment June-October of year 1
- Retreatment year 2
- Monitoring, and in some cases year 3 treatment
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 to hire a director with 4 sub-teams established in Task Team
  - Limited funding success
Project Inception

- ARRA Grant - 2009
- Larson & McGowin awarded 3-yr, $6.28 million contract September 2009
- Task Team’s structure provides Larson & McGowin with technical resources
Program Goals

- Create jobs (OVERALL STIMULUS OBJECTIVE)
- Meet mandate of Alabama Task Force
- Meet guidelines of Technical Committee
  - Eradication
  - Control/Mitigation
  - Enhancing cogongrass database
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 2011 in south Alabama!!
Program Overview

- Landowner contacts program
- Sign access and treatment agreement
- Verification and prescription
- Treatment/Retreatment
- Inspection
- Monitoring
- All records managed in GIS
Program Overview

- Use only licensed, insured, local workforces
  - Jobs, jobs, jobs
Program Expectations

- $6 million for the entire state
  - Won’t go far
  - 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

- YOU are a key set of eyes and ears
- Any cogongrass should be reported, however small or large
- Things you can do now!
  - Don’t drive in, operate in, or treat flowering areas
  - Clean equipment if and when possible
  - Enroll in our program
  - Be aware of new areas
Where You Come In

- Participation depends on you!
- Let friends and neighbors know
- Tell them about the program and our website
- Invite us to meetings
How To Contact Us

- Hotline: (334) 240-9348
- Website: www.alabamacogongrass.com
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- Email: info@alabamacogongrass.com
Questions?