



Recent Activities in the Southeast EPPC

by Brian Bowen, President SE-EPPC

The Southeast EPPC has seen much activity during the past several months. The Board met this past spring in Lexington, Kentucky prior to the 5th Annual Southeast EPPC Symposium and then met again on July 25th in Columbia, South Carolina. Both meetings were fruitful and provided SE-EPPC impetus to continue growing as an organization to raise awareness about the threat of invasive plants to natural areas.

First and foremost, Kentucky EPPC should be congratulated for hosting yet another successful SE-EPPC annual symposium (see page 11). As usual, the agenda was informative and interesting with a wide variety of speakers sharing valuable knowledge on numerous topics. The meeting was also a huge finan-

cial success with more than \$10,000 in sponsorship support received, and with revenues from registration exceeding symposium expenses. Furthermore, Kentucky held a successful silent auction that was the first of its kind at a SE-EPPC symposium. The KY-EPPC Board deserves much credit for all the hard work in making the symposium a great success.

Some important news emerging during these past few months includes the establishment of the **Alabama Invasive Plant Council** and the **South Carolina EPPC**. The Alabama organization actually began organizing in the spring of 2002 as David Teem, one of its cofounders, attended the SE-EPPC Board meeting in Nashville. Alabama's first organizational meeting was held last fall in Montgomery and then a 1st annual meeting was held in spring 2003 where they elected officers, adopted bylaws, and formally became an organization. Keith Tassin, Director of Stewardship for The Nature Conservancy of Alabama, was elected as Alabama's first president.

In South Carolina, the SC-EPPC was established on June 5 in Greenville at the *Terrestrial Plant Invasions in the Temperate South Conference* (see p. 12). SC had formerly been an affiliate member of SE-EPPC through the SC Native Plant Society. A steering committee was formed which began reviewing bylaws. At the July 25th meeting, the SC Board was elected, and Robin Roecker, botanist for the US Forest Service in South Carolina, was elected president.

The Columbia meeting on July 25 coincided with the summer SE-EPPC Board meeting. The SE-EPPC Board met jointly for half a day with SC-EPPC participants. This type of joint meeting gives newly forming organizations an understanding of how SE-EPPC functions and provides an opportunity for

everyone to get acquainted. The SE-EPPC Board met in Birmingham with the Alabama participants the year before and found this beneficial for everyone.

SE-EPPC continues to grow with eight state chapters now in the region. As we grow, ideas are emerging to make us more proactive. The Board has agreed to launch a regional initiative to begin an interaction with Wal-Mart and the other largest chain nursery retailers to raise awareness about invasive plants. It is the intent of SE-EPPC that through a cooperative effort, these major retailers will begin removing the worst invasive species from their retail inventory. This initiative will be regional in scope and will rely on assistance from our state chapters.

A couple of final notes: next year's annual symposium will be held on the Gulf coast (final location and date yet to be determined). While the symposium will have its usual presentations that are regional in scope, it will focus on some of the major threats in the coastal plain section of our region. This is a very broad section of the Southeast extending north along the Mississippi Embayment into west Tennessee and along the east coast into Florida, SC, NC and VA and, of course, the Gulf coast states.

Last but not least, please check out the SE-EPPC web site: www.seeppc.org. Several new items will be found there, including comprehensive links with other information sources, the new SE-EPPC Vegetation Management Manual, links to Upcoming Events, as well as a calendar of upcoming events and a composite of all the invasive plant lists in the Southeast. You also will find that the State Chapter sections are becoming very informative. We hope you will use this web site and make suggestions for improvements. The contact information for your state web site coordinator is there for your feedback.

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