

## FROM THE FLEPPC CHAIR

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On reflection...

This issue of *Wildland Weeds* includes the FLEPPC 2007 List of Invasive Plant Species, and we are very grateful to Keith Bradley and the Plant List Committee for helping FLEPPC to maintain the biennial revisions to this important product of our professional organization. To accompany this, there is an article by long-term FLEPPC Plant List Committee member Dan Ward, providing his personal perspectives and recollections of how the listing process started and evolved. I believe that this is an illuminating insight into an important concept that has been emulated and adapted throughout the US.

Some of our readers may be wondering what has prompted the recent spate of reminiscences and who is supposed to benefit from such institutional introspection. While these articles were the original ideas of their authors, the decisions to publish them have been influenced by a desire of mine, and other FLEPPC Board members, to start an archive and history of our Council. While there is a risk that such efforts can appear self-absorbed and cliquish, some of us fear that as the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of FLEPPC's incorporation approaches in 2008, failure to try now to collate what records and recollections we can would result in irretrievable loss as the key players retire and move on. Six months ago, I started organizing my own collection of FLEPPC newsletters, programs, and magazines, and developing lists of officers, committee chairs, symposia locations, and other notable information. But my involvement with FLEPPC is conspicuously absent prior to the mid-1990s so it is time to cast wider for materials and information about the "early years." Ideally, a volunteer would leap forth to take on this task (please email me) so that by the 2008 Symposium we would have a more complete record. We could then look for some of the foresighted professionals who became FLEPPC's founders to fill in the gaps.

Compelling histories are based not only on the cold, hard facts of dates, names, and symposium timetables. They also include the stories and characters that make the history personal and tangible. Like any professional organization that has forged its own way into existence and survival, FLEPPC has its share of egos, characters, and conflicting memories and perspectives, and this part of our history is not written in the articles of incorporation.

Perhaps in my enthusiasm to fulfill the objective of documenting all aspects of FLEPPC's history, I have not paid enough attention to some other issues. Since much of what is published in *Wildland Weeds* is factual documentation of research studies, etc., we must be sure to clearly indicate which articles are based primarily on the opinions and recollections of the authors. While unconventional opinions and personal perspectives can stimulate interesting and informative responses via "Letters to the Editor," we must always be sure to balance appropriately the wishes of the authors (volunteers all) with the comfort of our readers. As FLEPPC Chair, I take ultimate responsibility for confusion and offense that we have unintentionally caused.

FLEPPC is a volunteer organization that has always been run by dedicated and highly professional people, motivated by a common desire to improve the conservation of our natural resources. Specifically, we have been lucky enough to have had two incredibly hard-working and inspired editors of *Wildland Weeds* and, believe me, such enthusiastic commitment is a very rare find. Our organization has had to adapt to external influences and there are times of constraint when these make everything seem more scrutinized, precarious, and sober. But we should never take ourselves so seriously as to not be able to rock with "The Weeds" at a symposium or chuckle at the fantastic adventures described in "Notes from the Disturbed Edge" (*Wildland Weeds*, Summer 2001 to Winter 2004). And if we don't always get the tone just right, we are here to learn "on the job"...our volunteer jobs...and I would ask you to let the FLEPPC Chair (until April that is me at amfox@ifas.ufl.edu) know if we can serve you, and our FLEPPC mission, better.

Best wishes,

