As Wildland Weeds enters its second year of publication, readers will notice fewer Florida-focused articles. I hope this trend continues. When Florida EPPC decided to publish a magazine, the Board of Directors was overwhelmingly supportive of "crossing state lines." We all recognize that invasive plants are not unique to any state, or region, or country—they are a global problem. Today, there are four North American EPPC chapters—California, Tennessee, Pacific Northwest and Florida. More chapters are sure to form as recognition of the problems caused by exotic pest plants continues to grow.

The choice of articles for the first volume was based on availability. Soliciting articles for a new magazine is not easy—the editorial board resorted to harassing the people we knew for material! The authors who contributed to early issues were, by and far, Florida EPPC members, and did so to help the magazine get off the ground. Wildland Weeds is based in Florida, but we hope to make this less obvious in future issues. Please feel free to contact us with articles from your region—alerting others to your weed problems will help prevent budding infestations elsewhere in the world!

—Amy Ferriter

Public Unawareness
OF BIOLOGICAL INVASIONS BY PLANTS

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Public cooperation is crucial to controlling wildland weeds, for the simple reason that people are responsible for spreading them. Unlike any other major environmental problem, a biological invasion can be the handiwork of one, ordinary citizen. A vacationer may return from abroad with seeds of non-native plants on his clothes. A home gardener experimenting with attractive exotics may plant the beachhead for an invasion to follow. The infamous spread purple loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria) through wetlands of the northeast and midwest is just one example of an ornamental turned ugly (Stein and Flack, 1996). There may be no other case in which an unwitting personal act can cause so much ecological harm.

But before people can be expected to be more circumspect in their relations with botanical non-natives, people must believe that biological invasions by plants are a serious problem. Is the public aware of biological invasions by plants? We posed this question through a survey of visitors to the weekly public tours at the University of California Bodega Marine Laboratory in northern California during August 1996. The answer was, essentially, no.

Survey methods
We selected our sample by inviting all those aged 13 or older who came for the lab tours on four successive weeks to complete a 20-minute questionnaire. Of the 206 visitors who did, 28% were of high-school age (13-17), 9% were 18-30 years old, and 61% were over 30 (2% did not indicate their age). Virtually all of those over 22 were high school graduates (99%) and had completed some college (93%); most were college graduates (60%).

The questionnaire asked respondents to: (1) list three weeds; (2) describe a typical weed, the places weeds grow, and the factors that cause them to spread; (3) cite problems that weeds cause them personally and that weeds cause for society or the environment; (4) say whether there should be more efforts to control weeds; (5) score their

Weeds enjoyed a mixed reputation for good and evil.

Only 43% of those surveyed identified water hyacinth as non-native to California, even though it is the object of an active eradication project. Photo by Mike Bodle, SFWM.