

Confronting Cogongrass Across the South

Over 350 resource managers and other professionals from forestry, agriculture, natural areas, transportation, research, turf grass and nurseries, recreation, energy, private land ownership, and governmental agencies gathered in Mobile, AL on November 7-8, 2007 for the first workshop of its kind, Confronting Cogongrass Across the South. Two days of presentations by twenty experts were devoted solely to the understanding, management and prevention of cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) in the southern United States.

The meeting location was not far from Grand Bay, AL where, in 1911, this invasive, exotic plant first was established in the US. Since then, human activities and the grass' own biological characteristics continue to facilitate its spread along right-of-way corridors and into disturbed areas, and then out into the natural landscape. Currently, cogongrass can be found from east Texas to South Carolina with Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi having the most widespread infestations.

Active eradication programs are underway in Louisiana and Georgia. Since the rate of spread occurs at thousands of acres per year, it is crucial that North Carolina, Tennessee and Arkansas intercept it at their borders. However, most of the US, except for sites in high altitudes or near the Canadian border, is believed to be susceptible to infestations of cogongrass.

Dr. Jim Miller, US Forest Service, Research & Development, opened the conference by putting the South's cogongrass crisis in context. Speakers presented findings from the most up-to-date cogongrass research, current operational programs, and collaborative efforts. On the second day Miller summarized management and containment strategies before symposium participants headed out to view successful on-the-ground cogongrass management programs in a longleaf pine restoration site and a loblolly pine establishment site.

Dr. Nancy J. Loewenstein, Auburn University, Assistant Professor of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, and Dr. Miller have compiled the presentations into the *Proceedings of the Regional Cogongrass Conference: A Cogongrass Management Guide – Confronting the Cogongrass Crisis Across the South*. Abstracts and PowerPoint presentations are posted at <http://www.cogongrass.org/conference.cfm>. Hard copies of the proceedings can be obtained by contacting Dr. Loewenstein at loewenj@auburn.edu. Recordings of each of the speaker's presentations should soon be available at the website.

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