



Tide Turns in War on Melaleuca

Ceremony celebrates completion of the initial treatment of melaleuca in Big Cypress National Preserve

National Park Service Director Fran P. Mainella waits, herbicide in hand, as forestry technician Bill Snyder performs the symbolic cutting of the last mature melaleuca tree in the 729,000 acre Big Cypress National Preserve in south Florida. "The National Park Service has been treating melaleuca in Big Cypress National Preserve since 1984 and has dealt with about 14 million stems at last count," said Mainella. "We know this war will go on but we are marking a major victory in the initial effort to eradicate this difficult exotic species."

The Park Service has used Integrated Pest Management in its treatment of melaleuca, including biological, chemical, controlled fire and mechanical methods. Big Cypress Superintendent John J. Donahue says the national preserve has spent approximately \$3.5 million on contracts and in-house crews since 1984 to bring the species under control. The cutting of the last mature melaleuca means "we are not treating new infestations in the preserve, but rather revisiting treated sites to ensure no seedlings are re-establishing new stands," he said. "There still is a need for continued funding for re-treatment of melaleuca to ensure it stays under control. However, this success proves that it can be contained and eliminated."

-Compiled from a National Park Service news release



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