

A Farewell to Ferriter

Amy Ferriter has been a crucial member of the team fighting exotic pest plants in the state of Florida, both through her efforts with FLEPPC and her job as a senior environmental scientist with the South Florida Water Management District. She, together with her husband and two daughters, recently moved to Boise, Idaho where she already has begun to work on exotic pest plant issues at the Boise State University's Environmental Science and Public Policy Research Institute. Following are comments from a few of her many collaborators over the past 12 plus years.



"Amy Ferriter is passionate and determined in her efforts to protect natural lands. One of her greatest attributes is the influence she exerts on others to work together toward our common goal. I've known Amy since she coerced me into the burgeoning political embranglements between land managers and the "green industry" that was brewing in Collier County. I observed then, and many times since, that she doesn't back away until the mission is complete. Her determination has led to many of the advances that we've made toward protecting Florida's natural areas from invasive plant species. When the day's work is done, Amy is a tribute to her Irish ancestry."

— Ken Langeland, UF-IFAS,
Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants

"Amy came to work for the SFWMD in October of 1992. Her first project included a paper co-published with Francois Laroche estimating the expansion rate of melaleuca in South Florida. This work became the basis for estimating the level of commitment that would be required to bring this pest plant under maintenance control. As we wind down the melaleuca program for the Everglades, we realize that the early predictions based on this study were very close and accurately predicted when we completed the initial work for the 'glades. Amy has been involved with so many projects and so many aspects of the invasive species issue, it is impossible to mention them all. But everyone has been touched by her presence in this profession in some way. We will certainly miss her straightforward, no-nonsense approach to problem solving. She is recognized as a leader not only in south Florida, but on a national level as well. Her career is just lifting off in Idaho, but already she is making a name for herself. We can only hope she remembers us as she moves into bigger and better life adventures. Remember Jane's Place!"

— Dan Thayer, SFWMD

"My first thought is that her colleagues might be able to reach her by phone more easily in Idaho than we could in Florida. Well, at least until she accelerates into her usual high drive, which she probably has done already! Florida's environment and its patrons, servants and students have been very fortunate to have Amy's talents."

— Bob Pemberton, USDA-ARS
Invasive Plants Research Laboratory

"From almost the beginning of our effort to tackle invasives in South Florida, Amy has been involved with almost all aspects of upland plant management—from management plans to FLEPPC. She has left a void that will be hard to fill. In addition, social gatherings at the meetings will never be the same. I cannot see how she can still be a big fan of Carl Hiaasen now that she has left the state. Amy could have stayed and toughed it out—what are a few category 3 and 4 hurricanes anyway?"

— Don Schmitz, Florida DEP –
Bureau of Invasive Plant Management

"Pound for pound, the best beer drinker I know."

— Tony Pernas, National Park Service

"Amy used to call herself "kitten" and referred to her husband as her roommate."

— Bob Doren, Florida International University

"Amy Ferriter and I met at Florida Atlantic University when I served as a member of her Master's committee. Her research was carefully and imaginatively done, and she found something with aerial photography that no one else had documented – Casuarina is spread by water! All previous studies in the USA focused exclusively on wind dispersal.

We worked together periodically on research projects after she joined the SFWMD and were both active in EPPC. Her levelheaded and efficient approach to everything greatly enhanced both organizations.

On several occasions we both attended social functions held by the EPPC. Much to my surprise, Amy held her own with the heaviest drinkers there – but she never seemed to be greatly affected by the alcohol. How does she do that?"

— Daniel F. Austin, Ph.D.,
Book Review Editor, *Economic Botany*

"Amy Ferriter has shown that in the realm of invasive plants, one person can make a big difference."

— Randall Stocker, University of Florida.

"In two words – extremely productive."

— Kris Serbesoff-King, The Nature Conservancy

Editor's Note: I inherited the editorship of *Wildland Weeds* from Amy, who was editor from our Winter 1997 Charter Issue through the Spring 2002 issue. Her efforts with FLEPPC as a whole, including the inception of *Wildland Weeds*, were visionary.