



Phil munching on 'Godum' (lygodium)

Philip Myers 8/04/1964 – 4/30/2006

On April 30, 2006 the environmental community lost a dedicated steward whose passion for the environment will be sorely missed. Philip Myers, a Florida Park Service Biologist, was killed by a motorist while riding his bicycle, a hobby that he loved.

Phil's professional efforts and accomplishments in the field of exotic plant removal in south Florida are well known. He was very skilled at forming partnerships, securing funding (over one million dollars in 2005 alone), and creating enthusiasm for the cause. From the years prior to his arrival, to the most recent year of record, he increased the number of acres treated for exotic plant species in his district by over 400%. The programs that he established have served as models for the Florida Park Service and other local agencies. He was responsible for the organization of many multi-agency exotic plant removal workdays throughout south Florida from Fort Pierce to the Florida Keys, and mentored numerous people in various land management activities. His mentorship, with the knowledge that he was always willing to share and his "get it done" work ethic, has given his employees and coworkers an opportunity to continue his legacy.

Phil will greatly be missed on a personal level as well. He had great stories to share about his travels during his Peace Corps days, his trips to Europe to watch the Tour de France, as well as his adventures at Jazz Fest in New Orleans. These stories and his sense of humor (some of his jokes were not original, but he would let you know ahead of time) are what many will remember him for. His coworkers are still not sure whether his tales were truly to share his adventures or simply to take their minds off chopping lygodium in knee high muck for eight hours a day during the middle of summer. Either way, the story telling, the sense of humor, and his one syllable "HA!" laughter will be greatly missed. He was a valuable colleague and a good friend to many who crossed his path.

Phil also will be remembered for his love of music, socializing with friends, repeating the jokes from the previous night's episode of *The Simpsons* (verbatim) and especially, his personal dedication to the conservation of the environment. His passion was truly global in nature, from the family he adopted in Ecuador and his 400-acre rain forest project there, to contacts in France and the various conservation efforts that he supported around the world. Phil's legacy will continue through the many programs that he helped establish and personally supported, and his professional dedication and friendship will be missed by all.

In memory of Philip, donations may be made to: Philip's Rain Forest Project, c/o 8430 Shell House Road, Edisto Island, SC 29438.

– Greg Kaufman, Florida Park Service

Phil's work ethic and love for fieldwork are legend among those of us fortunate to have known him. Phil and I became friends instantly due to our "Carolina roots," a love for fieldwork, a hatred for Old World climbing fern and other invasive plants, and an appreciation for beer. In fact, Phil's enthusiasm in managing invasive plants eventually led me to pursue a degree in Weed Science. We worked together for two very short years in Hobe Sound, initially (and naively) taking on a large Australian pine removal project at St. Lucie Inlet Preserve State Park. We kayaked about 1.5 miles into the interior of the preserve at least 40 times carrying coolers with drinks and food, chainsaws, machetes, and several gallons of Garlon 4 spray mix. At the end of many days, after hacking and squirting hundreds of Australian pines and Brazilian peppers, I remember sitting on the edge of the mangrove / hammock ecotone being eaten by no-see-ums and trying to get enough energy to paddle back. We always made it and looked forward to doing it again. My most vivid memory of Phil, however, was that I never once heard him complain. Rest in peace, brother; I already miss you very much.

– Jeff Hutchinson, University of Florida-IFAS, Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants



Phil Myers – A Personal Note