

North Carolina Invasive Weeds Awareness Week Event

By Sunny Himes

In celebration of North Carolina Invasive Weeds Awareness Week, the Land Trust for the Little Tennessee and Friends of the Greenway hosted an educational extravaganza about exotic invasive plants and animals on the Little Tennessee River Greenway in Franklin, NC. Over 300 Macon County public school students strolled along the Greenway, visiting educational booths staffed by personnel from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Watershed Association for the Tuckasegee River, Western North Carolina Alliance, Land Trust for the Little Tennessee, Macon Early College, and Debby Boots, an independent contractor. Wells Farm goats were also on the Greenway to demonstrate a natural method for removing exotic invasive plants. The event was funded by Duke Energy.

In addition to learning a lot about exotic invasive plants, insects, mammals, fish, aquatic invertebrates and the harm they cause, students got to taste various foods made from exotic invasive plants, jump kudzu vine jump ropes, conduct water turbidity measurements on the nearby river, and pet the goats. It was a lovely day to be outside and fun was had by all!

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John Odell, Resource Management Coordinator with the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, shows Mountain View Intermediate School students how to use various tools to remove exotic invasive plants.



Roger Clapp, Executive Director of the Watershed Association of the Tuckasegee River, a water-advocacy organization based in Bryson City, shows Macon Middle School students how to measure water turbidity.



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uses if approved by the IPWG” but specific uses have only been approved for cultivars of *Eucalyptus grandis*. Of the 700, 29 have received the Conclusion “Invasive: Not recommended” because they have been predicted to be invasive using the Predictive Tool. 116 species have received the Conclusion “Caution: may be recommended but manage to prevent escape”.

The 2011 FLEPPC list (their most current) has 75 species listed as “Category I” in at least one region (north, central, south). These are defined as “invasive exotics that are altering native plant communities by displacing native species, changing community structure or ecological functions, or hybridizing with natives.” This definition is similar to that of the IFAS Assessment.

It is difficult to directly compare the conclusions of the IFAS Assessment with the FLEPPC List because of differences in zones but, in general, there is good agreement between the two. Twenty species listed as FLEPPC Category I are concluded in the IFAS Assessment as “Not recommended” in any zones where the species is expected to grow based on cold hardiness, and 24 are concluded as “Not recommended” or “Caution” in some zones. Twenty eight are prohibited by State and/or Federal law and, therefore, not assessed with the

IFAS Assessment. There is only one species, *Deparia petersenii*, listed as FLEPPC Category I, which, while determined to be found in undisturbed natural areas, was not concluded to be invasive in any zones. Two species listed as FLEPPC Category I have not been assessed.

Literature Cited

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