

Florida Summary Report

Progress through partnerships

January 2010

Florida: The Sunshine (and Invasive Species) State

- Florida's ecosystem deterioration due to invasive plants is greater than all other states with the exception of Hawaii.
- It is estimated that more than 1.7 million acres of Florida's remaining natural areas have become infested with non-native plant species.
- Hospitable climate: tropical and sub tropical with few freezes
- Point of entry for almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the plants imported into the U.S.

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- According to the Nature Conservancy, the cost of managing invasive plants in Florida is estimated at \$100 million each year.
- An estimated \$30 million taxpayer dollars are spent annually on invasive plant management on natural areas and waterways. (DOF)
- Approximately \$60 million annually is spent managing plant invaders in Florida's waterways. (IFAS, 2008)
- Kudzu causes an estimated \$500 million in lost farm and timber production annually, and Japanese Climbing fern infestations have resulted in the abandonment of leased pine stands by pine straw producers.

Regulation

- Federal Noxious Weed Act / CFR 360 .200 (b) and (c) – Hydrilla, Cogon Grass, Climbing Ferns, Melaleuca, Tropical Soda Apple
- (FDACS) Florida Noxious Weed List: 5b-57.007 - Australian Pine, Chinese Tallow, Air Potato
- (DEP) F.A.C. Chapter 62C-52. Aquatic Plant Rule – Water Hyacinth, Brazilian Pepper

Regulation

- Brevard County adopted a Non-native Noxious Invasive Plants Ordinance. (2002) targeting 6 of their worst invaders.
- Miami Dade County has an Landscape Code prohibiting an extensive list of known pest plants
- Palm Beach County has code requiring the removal of and prohibiting the planting of 9 of the worst pest plants

Organizations playing active roles:

- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- The Nature Conservancy
- UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
- Water Management Districts
- FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
- FL Department of Environmental Protection
- FL Department of Transportation
- FL Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DOF, DPI)

USACE

Invasive Species Management Branch

- The Rivers and Harbors Appropriations Act of 1899 tasked the USACE with controlling water hyacinth in federal navigation waterways in the states of Florida and Louisiana.
- The Jacksonville District is home the Corps-wide Aquatic Plant Control Operations Support Center.
- The Corps controls Water Hyacinth, Water Lettuce, Hydrilla, and Alligatorweed.
- Many areas they control are under “Maintenance Control”



UF Institute of Food and Agricultural Science

- Major resource for both the public and the industries.
- The IFAS Assessment – A predictive assessment tool to determine the invasive potential of plants.
- Based on assessments used in Australia and New Zealand.
- Created out of an effort to reconcile public and business concerns as well as in house debate on plant recommendations.
- A plant must pass through the assessment to be recommended by IFAS staff.

Water Management Districts

- Promote Florida Friendly Landscaping – primarily for water conservation, but in turn educates about the removal of invasives for alternatives “Right plants, Right place”
- Operate “Control Maintenance” programs similar to USACE

FL Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

- Invasive Plant Management – Regulatory, permitting, and funding
- Upland and Aquatic Plant management programs
- Education – more geared toward reptile programs

Department of Transportation

- Important because traditionally a means of introduction and spread.
- “Historically, roadsides on state highways were managed to prevent roadway erosion and enhance travel safety. Now, roadside vegetation is being planted and managed to conserve energy, protect ground water, reduce storm water runoff, increase and improve wildlife habitat, eliminate invasive species, enhance aesthetics, and improve relationships with neighbors. Recent strategies include management of natural areas, re-establishment and management of native plants, prescribed burns, and application of composted materials.”

Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

- The front line and primary regulatory agency – 30 ports of entry, over 85% of plants imported to the U.S. go through Miami, over 6 million tons of perishable cargo enters Florida each year and over 50 million people visit each year.
- Division of Plant Industry
- Bureau of Plant Inspection
- Entomology, Nematology and Plant Pathology

Local Level Examples

St. Johns County

- One land manager working in partnership with the GTM Research Reserve.
- SCA volunteer project: Inner city kids spent a week doing invasive species removal
- The media coverage gave the program momentum and monthly workdays were established
- Then private partnerships began to form.



Brazilian pepper tree
Schinus terebinthifolius
Photo by A. Murray
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The Great Air Potato Round-up

Gainesville

- A hugely successful event, 11 years running.
- Spawned similar events all over the state.
- 30 – 35 site event with thousands of volunteers.
- Over the past 10 years, 152,937 pounds of tubers have been collected.



Dioscorea bulbifera

photo by Glenn Fleming
USF Herbarium Slide Collection



Dioscorea bulbifera

Air potato
Photo by Vic Ramey
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Florida Invasive Species Partnership

All of these agencies and organizations can come together!

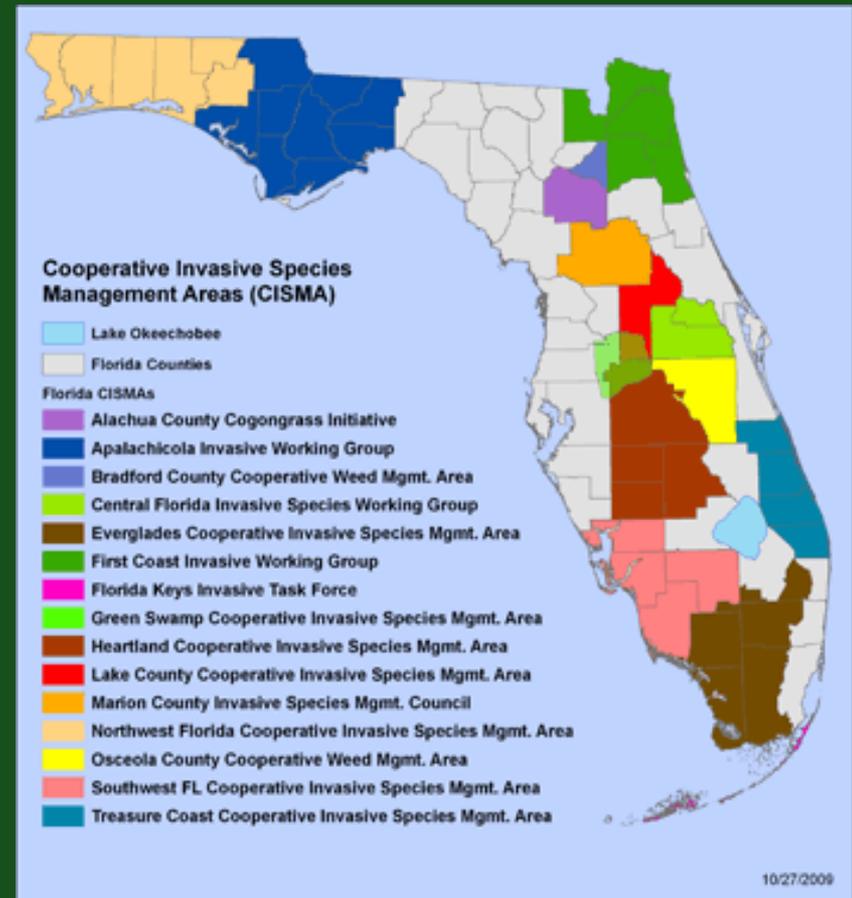


Florida Invasive Species Partnership

- A group of representatives from agencies and organizations, that advises and helps implement the work of the Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas (CISMA).
- Co-chaired by the Nature Conservancy and the US Fish and Wildlife Service
- There are 15 CISMAs in the state

Cooperative Invasive Species Management Areas

- Bring everyone to the table
- Helps to facilitate communication and develop partnerships
- Allows groups to share expertise and resources



Florida Invasive Species Partnership

- Created www.floridainvasives.org for public and private landowners
- An online resource of management assistance programs to help in your fight against problematic plant species.
- Up to date calendar of events statewide
- Links to EDDMaps Monitoring and Mapping
- Provides an interactive database of Landowners Incentive Programs
- Houses websites and contact information for the CISMAs

Why this matters...

- Easier to share vital information, eliminate duplication, and less reinvention
- Movement towards collaboration and crossing political and organizational boundaries
- Invasive plants do not stop at county, city, state lines

Resources

<http://www.nature.org/wherewework/northamerica/states/florida/science/index.html>

http://www.fl-dof.com/forest_management/fh_invasives_laws.html

http://www.myfwc.com/WILDLIFEHABITATS/Nonnative_index.htm

<http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/pi/>

<http://www.fleppc.org/list/List-WW-F09-final.pdf>

http://solutionsforyourlife.ufl.edu/environment/invasive_species.html