



News Release

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STATE, FEDERAL, AND PRIVATE AGENCIES JOIN FORCES TO FIGHT HARMFUL WEED

The Georgia Forestry Commission is asking for the public's help to stop a harmful weed from spreading statewide. Cogongrass has taken over millions of acres in the southeast, flourishes in numerous soil types, and has now been found in 20 Georgia counties. Cogongrass also suppresses and eliminates natural vegetation, thereby significantly reducing tree and plant regeneration, wildlife habitat, forage and ecological diversity. It is extremely flammable and difficult to eradicate, due to its dense mats and tremendous root system.

On May 8, a diverse group of government and private agencies and groups participated in a signing ceremony at the Jones Center near Albany, becoming partners in Georgia's Cooperative Weed Management area for cogongrass detection and suppression.

"Our purpose as a group is to address the short and long term negative effects of cogongrass in Georgia," said Robert Farris, Interim Director of the Georgia Forestry Commission. "We want the public to report sightings of this dangerous weed so that our teams of Professionals can take the necessary measures to bring this threat under control."

Group representatives attending the signing ceremony were taken to a nearby site where cogongrass was in its spring growing phase. They got a first hand look at the fluffy white seed heads that are produced immediately following grass "green-up," making detection easier between the months of March and June. Cogongrass has sharp pointed, scaly rhizomes with a very dense root system, and grows in a circular-shaped pattern. It also has an off-centered midrib on leaf blades that measure between one and five feet.

Residents who suspect they have found cogongrass should contact their local GFC office and avoid mowing or disking through or near the area to avoid further spread. Photographs and more information about cogongrass can be found on the GFC website at GaTrees.org.

Partners in this project include the GFC, National Park Service, USDA APHIS Plant Protection & Quarantine, USDA Forest Service, Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources, UGA, USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service, USDA – Farm Service Agency, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Department of Agriculture, Georgia Department of Transportation, Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council, Georgia Forestry Association, Tall Timbers Research Center, Jones Ecological Center, Georgia Power Company, The Nature Conservancy, Georgia Soil & Water Conservation Commission, Georgia Wildlife Federation, The National Wild Turkey Federation, Quality Deer Management Association, Georgia Farm Bureau, Society of American Foresters - Georgia Chapter, and the Governor's Agriculture Liaison.