



Florida EPPC

2007 Research Awards fund three new studies of exotic pest plants

The FLEPPC has awarded a total of \$3,405 in funding for three new student research projects in 2007. Each of these projects addresses a critical management need for scientific information about a Category I or Category II exotic pest species listed by the FLEPPC. Funding is provided through grants or scholarships to students enrolled at an accredited institution of higher learning, who conduct their research with guidance from a faculty advisor.

Lucero Sevillano of the University of Miami will evaluate the effectiveness of insect herbivores in reducing the population density and rate of spatial spread of *M. quinquenervia* across the landscape in Florida. Two insect herbivores have been introduced and established as biological controls of this Category I species in Florida, the leaf-feeding weevil *Oxyops vitiosa*, released in 1997, and the sap-sucking psyllid *Boreioglycaspis melaleucae*, released in 2002. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the relative success of the biocontrol agents may differ between the organic and sand soil types where *M. quinquenervia* is found in Florida. The study will involve experiments to determine the effects of insect damage on plant growth and the use of demographic data to model population dynamics and determine whether the insects have had an effect on the plant's spatial spread.

The aquatic weed *Hygrophila polysperma* will be the focus of a study conducted by Abhishek Mukherjee at UF/IFAS. *H. polysperma*, which escaped culti-

vation by the aquarium trade, is a FLEPPC Category I species, a federally listed noxious weed and a prohibited plant in Florida. The study will provide comprehensive baseline information about the plant's distribution, genetic diversity and herbivores. In addition to specimens collected from herbaria records in Florida, extensive field level surveys will be conducted in Florida to develop a distribution map for *H. polysperma*.

Amplified fragment Length polymorphism (AFLP) techniques will be used to determine the genetic makeup of the Florida population.

Jessica Wheeler and Trevor Caughlin of New College will investigate the effects of frugivore foraging patterns on the spread of *Ficus microcarpa*, a commonly planted ornamental species that is classified as a FLEPPC Category I invasive. A pilot study related to this project demonstrated a sharp division between the habitats occupied by native and exotic figs and suggested that the observed pattern of exotic fig distribution in Florida is influenced by the feeding patterns of native birds versus introduced bird species such as starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*), European house sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and monk

parakeets (*Myiopsitta monachus*). Statistical analysis of observational data collected by focal scan-sampling techniques will be used to test the hypothesis that exotic figs are eaten primarily by non-native bird species with distributions limited to anthropogenic habitats, while native fig species are eaten mostly by native birds.

Results of these research projects will be presented at the annual FLEPPC Symposium.



*FLEPPC-funded research will examine how the feeding patterns of native and exotic birds, such as the monk parakeet, affect the spread of *Ficus microcarpa*.*

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Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting July 11, 2007 Cedar Key, Florida

These minutes will be submitted to the Board of Directors for approval at the meeting scheduled for Sept 25, 2007.

The meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Alison Fox, Chair. Minutes were taken by Dianne Owen, Secretary.

The following Officers and Directors, constituting a quorum of the Board of Directors, were present: Karen Brown, Dan Clark, Alison Fox, Gary Nichols, Bill Overholt, Dianne Owen, Jennifer Possley, Jonathan Taylor, Sandra Vardaman, Donna Watkins. Also attending were: Scott Ditmarsen, Mike Meisenberg, Tony Pernas, Kurt Vollmer.

ADMINISTRATIVE AGENDA

Approval of Previous Minutes

Minutes of the previous Board of Directors Meeting of April 30, 2007 were distributed to the Board. Upon motion made by Karen Brown and seconded by Jonathan Taylor, the previous minutes were unanimously approved as written.

Correspondence and Announcements – Alison Fox

Alison reported that so far there has been no response to the May 21 letter sent to DACS to support listing *Arundo donax* as a noxious weed. A letter of congratulation was sent to the members of Florida DEP's Upland Invasive Plant Management Program and the Nature Conservancy's Florida Keys Invasive Exotics Task Force, on receiving the prestigious Cooperative Conservation Award from the Department of the Interior.

Alison will be sending out email requests to members for information for the FLEPPC historical archive she is putting together.

The Rocky Mountain EPPC will have its first meeting in February 2008 in Missoula. Jim Burney will be attending this meeting. In August of 2005 the FLEPPC approved \$200 in start-up funding for this new EPPC chapter, payable as reimbursement for expense receipts.

LeRoy Rodgers has emailed a spreadsheet to the BOD and committee and task force chairs that lists the individuals who signed up as committee volunteers at the Symposium. Alison encouraged everyone to take advantage of the opportunity to broaden the FLEPPC's base of active members.

Committee Appointments – Alison Fox

Alison announced that she has appointed two new committee chairs. Board Member Jennifer Possley, of Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, will serve as Chair of

the Education Committee. Betsy Von Holle, of the University of Central Florida, has been appointed as Chair of the Research Committee. Upon motion duly made and seconded, both appointments were approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report – Ellen Donlan / Scott Ditmarsen

Scott reported that Ellen is currently putting together the budget for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. This budget will be approved at the next Board meeting. Committee chairs who have not yet submitted budget requests to Ellen should do so before the next meeting. Budget requests should also include a justification. A summary of current account balances and quarterly expenditures was also distributed.

Alison Fox brought up several issues that will need to be addressed by the Board when the budget is approved, including budget carryovers to the next fiscal year in cases where the budget allocation is not spent, clarification of which expenses are covered by certain budget categories, such as Local Arrangements, and the need to establish guidelines for dealing with expenses that come up in the course of the fiscal year but were not included in the approved budget.

The new FLEPPC tax exempt certificate has been received; individuals making purchases for the FLEPPC should contact Ellen regarding the procedure for tax exempt purchases. Ellen is still looking into alternatives for reducing credit card processing fees.

A reimbursement request was received for the printing of the Brazilian Pepper Management Plan that exceeded the approved Brazilian Pepper Task Force budget by \$624.50. A motion was made by Dan Clark and seconded by Donna Watkins to approve the additional \$624.50 expenditure. Following some discussion of the need to establish a process for dealing with requests for expenditures that are not in the approved budget, the motion was approved unanimously. There was also discussion about ways to distribute management plans in the future that would be more cost effective than printing, such as through the web site or on CD.

The need to include the costs associated with the processing of symposium CEU forms in the annual budget was discussed. Alison will clarify this budget item with Katy Roberts.

Editor's Report - Karen Brown

The 24-page summer issue of *Wildland Weeds* was mailed out during the last week of June. A total of 2,427 copies were mailed, including 362 to FLEPPC members, 266 complimentary issues, 424 to SE-EPPC members and 1,375 multiple copies to various organizations. This was the largest mailing to date.

The magazine's income from supporters was significantly less than in the past. Many regular sponsors have told Karen that their advertising budgets were drastically reduced this year. In view of this loss of financial support, Karen will be attempting to restrict the issues to 28 pages or less, and it may not be possible to make a profit. For the last three years, profits from *Wildland Weeds* have been used to produce the FLEPPC calendar. Karen will also start contacting state contractors for possible ads, as time permits. There was discussion of setting a sponsorship fee to cover the costs of printing and mailing for agencies and organizations that request multiple copies of the magazine.

Secretary's Report - Dianne Owen

The newsletter with the minutes of the April 30, 2007 Board meeting was sent by email on 7/5/07. Hardcopy newsletters were sent to all members with missing email addresses or returned emails, with a request to provide a correct email address.

As of 6/30/07, the current membership of the FLEPPC is 362. This is the highest membership level since Dianne began keeping records in 2004, and is due in part to the "complimentary membership" given to all Symposium attendees who paid the non-member registration fee.

Upon motion made by Donna Watkins and seconded by Jonathan Taylor, the Officers' Reports were accepted unanimously. The written officer's reports are attached to the minutes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Bylaws and Standard Operating Procedures – Alison Fox / Sandra Vardaman

The current FLEPPC SOPs will be posted on the FLEPPC web site; committee and task force pages will be linked to the relevant SOPs. In addition to the general tasks listed in the SOPs, a detailed checklist/calendar of symposium tasks compiled by Donna Watkins will be posted on the web site with password-restricted access. Committee and task force chairs were asked to refer to the checklist while preparing for the symposium and to provide feedback about needed additions or changes.

The need to establish SOPs for preparation of FLEPPC management plans, possibly including review procedures, uniform formatting guidelines and a standard cover page template, was discussed. Karen Brown and Dan Clark will work with the Task Force chairs to address this issue. There was also discussion of whether the bylaws should be posted on the FLEPPC web site.

The most current version of the SOPs is attached to the minutes.

Control and Evaluation – Michael Meisenburg

At the FLEPPC Symposium in May this committee organized the field trip to Cape Canaveral Air Force Station to showcase various methods of controlling Brazilian pepper. Feedback from tour attendees was positive. The committee is exploring the possibility of having a Chinese tallow demonstration site for the 2008 FLEPPC Symposium in Nassau County. Jackie Smith (FDEP), Don Bergeson (SePro), and Steve Powell (independent ecological consultant) have signed up to work on C&E committee activities for the 2008 symposium.

The committee is currently reviewing its new SOPs and will distribute the final draft to the Board at the next meeting. Michael asked for input from the Board as to whether the committee's focus should be research on priority species or symposium field trips. There was general agreement that organizing demonstration field trips should be an important function of this committee. There was also discussion of how this committee can best serve FLEPPC members, such as by posting a request on the FLEPPC list serve for input about which species to target. Regarding the issue of whether selection of target species should be subject to Board approval, there was general agreement that the Board should provide feedback to the committee but that approval of specific species or projects was not necessary.

The written committee report is attached to the minutes.

Education – Jennifer Posseley

Recipients of the Education Awards have been notified and checks have been sent. The list of awards will be posted on the FLEPPC web site.

Finance – Scott Ditmarsen

Scott distributed a draft of the SOPs approved by the committee. Recommendations made by the Board concerning the makeup of the committee will be incorporated into the final SOPs.

The committee has prepared a summary of financial strategy options (e.g. break even or growth) that will be presented to the Board at the next meeting. Recommendations for investment of FLEPPC cash reserves and a budget summary and analysis for the past three years will also be presented. Scott emphasized that the Board will need to be prepared to discuss and identify the overall FLEPPC mission and goals, including grants and scholarships, that will

drive the financial mission/activities to generate revenue and develop budgets. Dan Clark will facilitate an email discussion of these issues prior to the next meeting.

Other specific committee recommendations included the establishment of a timeline for the budget process, an internal financial review, publication of the balance sheet and budget in the fiscal Q4 edition of the newsletter, and careful accounting of symposium revenues and expenses to ensure that the event is profitable.

The written committee report is attached to the minutes.

Legislative - Matt King/Tony Pernas

Tony reported that Matt, who is also the Legislative Committee Chair for the National EPPC, has been working to establish a National Coalition for Invasive Plant Advocacy (NCIPA). Several EPPCs and other groups have signed on as supporters. A motion made by Dianne Owen and seconded by Scott Ditmarsen, that the FLEPPC sign on as a supporter of the NCIPA, was approved unanimously.

Local Arrangements - Mike Bodle

The possible venues have been identified for the 2008 symposium in Jacksonville: the Crowne Plaza, the Hyatt, and the Omni. Proposed dates are April 8-10, April 22-24 and May 20-22. The location and time will be decided by an email discussion and vote before the next meeting.

Outreach - Katy Roberts

The budget for this committee includes the purchase of new display shipping bags. A poster layout of the Plant List is also planned. There was discussion of the best means of recruiting and vetting of volunteers to represent the FLEPPC at outreach events.

Karen Brown will develop appropriate wording for an appeal for volunteers that can be published in the newsletter or on the web site.

Plant List - Keith Bradley

The 2007 Plant List will be published in the next issue of *Wildland Weeds*. Alison Fox, reporting for the committee, said that after a review of the historic data on *Ludwigia peruviana* the committee has designated this plant as an exotic species and, in recognition of its invasiveness in wetland habitats, has added it to the list as a Category I species. *Rotala rotundifolia* has been added to the Category II list and *Pyrostegia venusta* has been added to the to-be-watched list.

The committee is looking at options for a new species evaluation system, which includes a review of systems used by other organizations such as IFAS, other EPPC chapters, USGS, and other groups. The Committee agreed

to continue discussing evaluation and ranking options at future meetings. Procedural changes to the way the List Committee functions were also discussed, particularly regarding timing of suggesting changes to the list, discussion periods, and voting procedures. These procedures will be incorporated in to the committee's SOPs. Identification of funding sources for the research that is needed before the committee designates certain species as exotic was also addressed by the committee.

The next committee meeting will be held in January 2008. The written committee report is attached to the minutes.

Research - Betsy Von Holle

Dianne Owen, reporting for the past year's committee, said that a total of four research proposals were awarded funding in 2007. These research projects will be featured in the next newsletter.

Symposium Program - LeRoy Rodgers

This committee is currently composed of LeRoy Rodgers (Chair), Alyssa Jacobs and Jackie Smith. A budget request for \$1645 was submitted for expenses associated with keynote speaker travel, program development and printing, and symposium supplies. A request for keynote speaker recommendations and symposium theme ideas will be sent to Board members via email in the next few months. The committee will meet with the field trip and the local arrangements committee before the next meeting to discuss improvements to field trip planning. Field trips and any registration fees should be identified by early December in order to include in the program announcements and registration forms.

The written committee report is attached to the minutes.

Field Trips - Donna Watkins

Donna Watkins has agreed to serve as chair of this committee for the coming year. Donna has begun making local contacts in Jacksonville to handle the arrangements for specific field trips, including the National Park Service, the SJRWMD and Nassau County.

Training - Katy Roberts/Donna Watkins

Katy has agreed to handle the CEUs for the symposium sessions, workshops and field trips, with the help of Donna Watkins.

Website - Tony Pernas

The transition of the FLEPPC web site to the University of Georgia system has been completed, including the site occurrence mapping database, which now interfaces seamlessly with the SE-EPPC EDMAP

site.

SE-EPPC Liaison - Karen Brown

At its next meeting the SE-EPPC will decide whether to request that each state EPPC chapter contribute \$200 to cover the cost of bringing speakers to the national meeting, which is scheduled for October 14-17 2008 in Nashville. Together with the \$500 to be contributed by the SE-EPPC, this would provide a total expense account of \$2,100 for speakers. The possibility of holding a benefit concert, as part of the national meeting was also discussed.

For the first four months of 2007, the SE-EPPC web site received half a million visits, compared to one million total visits during 2006. The SE-EPPC is also considering creating a printed membership brochure, similar to the FLEPPC brochure, to distribute at the national meeting.

Upon motion made by Dianne Owen and seconded by Dan Clark, the Committee Reports were accepted unanimously.

TASK FORCES

Australian Pine - Tony Pernas

Some sections of the management plan are still being completed, in particular the section that addresses the "emotional" issues related to control of Australian pine.

Brazilian Pepper - Jim Cuda

The Brazilian Pepper Management Plan has been printed at a total cost of \$874.50.

Dioscorea – Bill Overholt

The Air Potato management plan has been completed and it is anticipated that the final document will be ready for publication by the end of September, 2007. Bill estimates that approximately \$400 is needed to hire a professional to do the final formatting and polishing before the plan can be distributed. The Dioscorea Task Force currently has no budget. A motion (by Donna Watkins/ 2nd Dianne Owen) to approve a maximum of \$400 for the final formatting and preparation of the management plan, contingent on obtaining a second quote, was approved unanimously.

Bill also reported that the USDA/APHIS has approved an application to import two chrysomelid beetles from West Africa into the UF/IFAS quarantine facility in Fort Pierce for host range studies. It is anticipated that these insects will arrive sometime between July and September, 2007. USDA/ARS scientists in Fort Lauder-

dale are already conducting host range tests on another chrysomelid beetle which they imported from Nepal in 2005. Preliminary results are promising.

The written task force report is attached to the minutes.

Lygodium – LeRoy Rodgers/Kris Serbesoff-King

The committee is looking at both *L. japonicum* and *L. microphyllum*. The northern limit of *L. microphyllum* is currently in central Florida, while *L. japonicum* is widespread in the northern portion of the state. Some of the issues the committee is focusing on are integrated pest management, development of a management plan for *L. japonicum* (led by Andi Van Loan), listing of *L. japonicum* as a federal noxious weed in the state of Georgia, and the creation of Regional Cooperative Weed Management Areas.

OLD BUSINESS

FLEPPC Scholarship Fund ad hoc committee – Tony Pernas

The monies raised by the symposium raffle have been allocated to the Scholarship Fund and the Finance Committee will be considering strategies for managing this fund.

NEW BUSINESS

Support for DEP representation on DACS Committee

Alison Fox is drafting a letter in support of repre-

sentation from the FL DEP on the DACS Noxious Weed Committee. This action would require a change in state legislation. The draft letter will be distributed to the Board by email.

Formation of a Private Lands Committee

Alison Fox reported that the formation of a committee to address issues related to exotic control on private lands was suggested to her at the symposium. FLEPPC receives numerous inquiries through the web site seeking funding for exotic management on private lands, including land owned by small non-profit groups. Alison felt that such a committee could fill an important gap. She will ask Alison Higgins to address this issue at the next meeting.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be at 9:00 am on September 25, 2007 in Jacksonville at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion to adjourn made by Bill Overholt and seconded by Sandra Vardaman, the meeting was adjourned by unanimous decision at 4:30 pm.

Attachments referenced in the minutes can be obtained by contacting the board member, committee chair or task force chair who presented that agenda item.



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