

Cogongrass:  
The Battle on our Doorstep

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[www.alabamacogongrass.com](http://www.alabamacogongrass.com)

# Introduction

- Cogongrass (*Imperata cylindrica*) is rapidly spreading
- Affects the framework of Alabama





# Introduction

- Intense, fast and
- **HOT** fires
- Kills fire-adapted plants



# Introduction

- Spreads above- and belowground
- New stems arise quickly
  - Four-inch fragment + 2 years = ten-inch deep rhizome mat!
- No wildlife value
- High cost to remove



# Introduction

- White tufts of flowers appear in spring
- Begin in circular patches





03/05/2008

Courtesy Charles  
Squires, AFC

# Introduction

- Whitish mid-rib slightly off center on leaf margin
- Leaf is coarse at edges
- ½-1" width







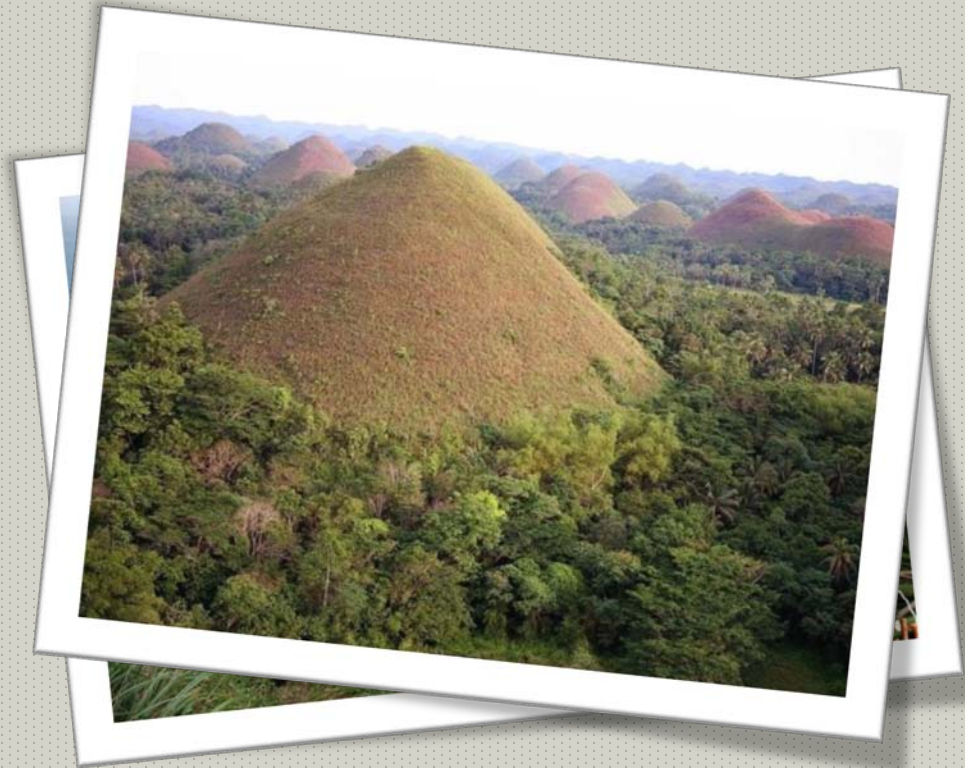
# Introduction

- Rhizomes are whitish, sharp-tipped
- Very dense rhizome mat
- Spread very easily



# Background

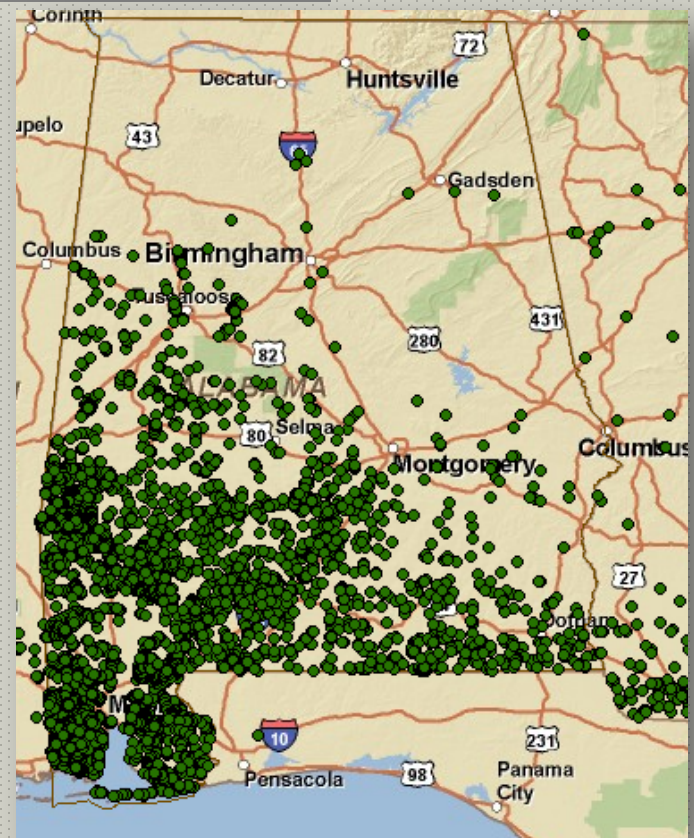
- One of the world's worst weeds
- 1.2 billion acres
- 73 countries
- Introduced through Mobile in 1912
- In 10 US states



# Around Alabama

- In more than half of AL counties
- Majority in SW AL
- Tuscaloosa-Montgomery-Phenix City is the fall line

<http://www.forestry.state.al.us>





# Program Inception

- Pre-2007 – no coordinated effort exists
- 2007 - AFC obtains 3-year grant to begin mapping and education
- 2008 – AFC facilitates establishment of Alabama Cogongrass Task Team



# Project Inception

- AFC awarded 3-yr, \$6.28 million grant through the ARRA May 2009
- Larson & McGowin awarded coordinator contract from AFC Sept. 2009

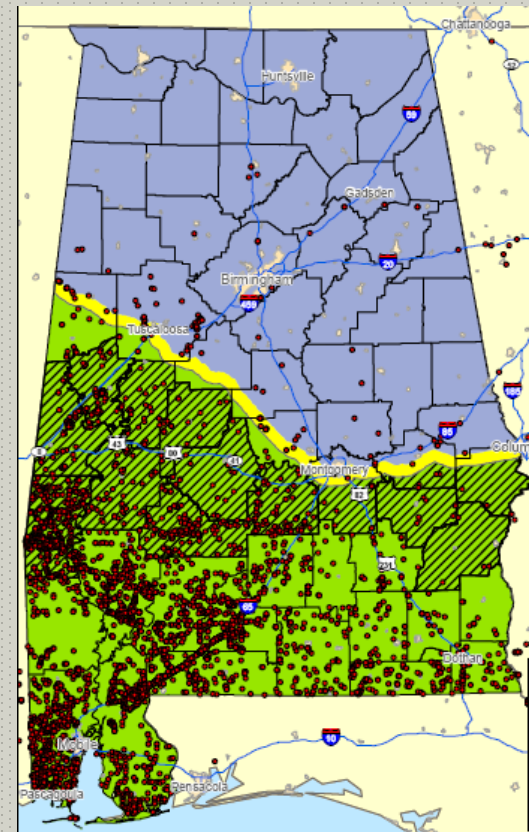
# Program Goals

- Jobs, jobs, jobs
- Focus efforts, maximize impact
- Grow cogongrass database
- Education
- *Build long-term management program*



# Program Overview

- Not a cost-share program
- Max of 10 acres treated below eradication line
- Six Strategies:
  - Detect and Eradicate (20.6%)
  - State Borders (12.4%)
  - Underserved (10.3%)
  - Halt The Spread (6.2%)
  - Habitat Protection (0.2%)
  - Landowner Select (50.3%)



# Program Overview

- 2010 report
  - 7 counties in west-central AL
  - 121 landowners
  - 2,597 spots treated
  - Smallest spot-261 ft<sup>2</sup>
  - Largest spot-3.5 acres
- 2011 objectives
  - Spraying infestations across the state
  - Enrolling landowners



# Program Success To Date

- Created 35 full-time jobs since beginning
  - Consultants, contractors
  - Saved 5 AFC jobs
- Above average jobs created per dollar spent (vs. all stimulus projects)
- Doubled known spots in AL
- Over 800 landowners in database



# Program Overview

- Landowner enrolls
- Sign access agreement
- **Scout** visits property
- **Vendor** treats/retreats
- **Inspector** reviews job
- All records recorded via custom GPS, managed in GIS



# Program Overview

- Use only licensed, insured, local workforce
  - Jobs, jobs, jobs
- Trains workforce with latest technology





# Program Expectations

- Funding is for the entire state
  - Greatly infested areas *will not* be eradicated
- Development of a management system and comprehensive program is what will outlive the grant
  - Use of stand-, tract-, and landscape-level decision tools

# Program Horizons

- Building long-term political will
- Fostering regional relationships for a “states-wide” effort to fight invasives
- Creating educational opportunities
- Incorporating stakeholders who share expertise, efforts, and lessons learned

# What You Can Do

- Get the word out!
- Report all cogongrass
- Things you can do now!
  - Don't drive in, operate in, or treat flowering areas
  - Clean equipment where possible
  - Don't bale hay with cogongrass
  - Don't buy hay with cogongrass
  - Tell landowners and policy makers



# To Report Cogongrass

- Location with GPS, map, or description
- Call the hotline or visit our website
- Leave your contact information



# How To Contact the ACCC

- Hotline: (334) 240-9348
- Website: [www.alabamacogongrass.com](http://www.alabamacogongrass.com)
- Fax: (251) 650-1600
- Email: [info@alabamacogongrass.com](mailto:info@alabamacogongrass.com)



# NRCS Programs

- NRCS EQIP
  - Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- NRCS WHIP
  - Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program
- NRCS CIG
  - Conservation innovation grants
- <http://www.al.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip10/index10.html>

# Acknowledgments

- Alabama Forestry Commission
- American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA)

# Questions?



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