

Invasive Plants in Pine Plantations

why you should care and what you can do

Jeff Eickwort, Biologist & Supervisor
Forest Health Section
Florida Forest Service



“Weeds” vs. “Invasive Plants”

- Weed: any plant growing where you don't want it to.
- Invasive plant: an aggressive weed that was introduced from another part of the world, and causes major problems here.



Why You Should Care

Invasive plants:

- Often can't be controlled through “normal” management (prescribed burns, etc.)
- Reduce stand productivity & survival
- Reduce marketability of forest products (e.g. Japanese climbing fern & pine straw)
- Reduce wildlife habitat & forage value



How do these plants get to our properties ?

- Dispersal by wildlife, water, wind, etc.
- Dispersal by humans
 - Contaminated equipment
 - Contaminated people
 - Contaminated soil
 - Site disturbance



**YOU CAN
CONTROL
THIS
THROUGH
YOUR
CHOICES**

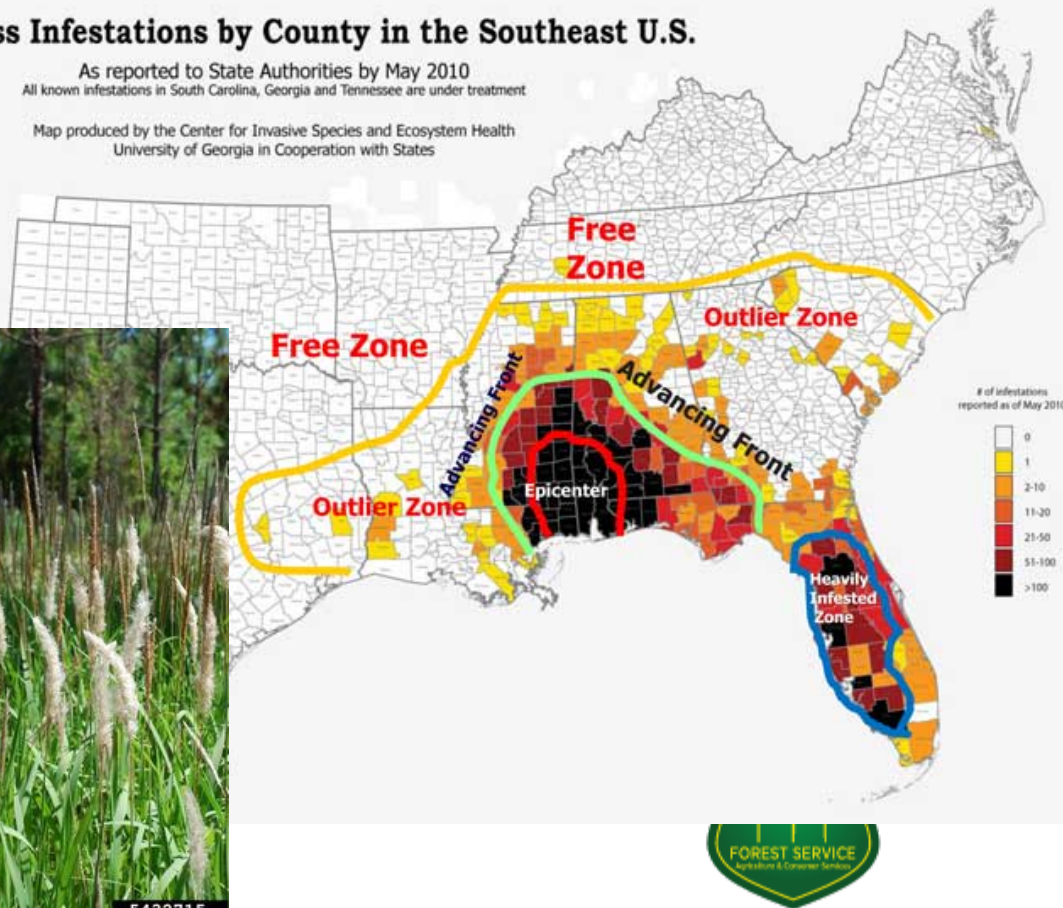


Invasive Plant Example: Cogongrass

- “Public Enemy No. 1” for the Florida Forest Service and many others

Cogongrass Infestations by County in the Southeast U.S.

As reported to State Authorities by May 2010
All known infestations in South Carolina, Georgia and Tennessee are under treatment
Map produced by the Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health
University of Georgia in Cooperation with States



5432715

UGA2120074

Dense competition for resources, reduced habitat value...



UGA00163

...and fire-adapted!





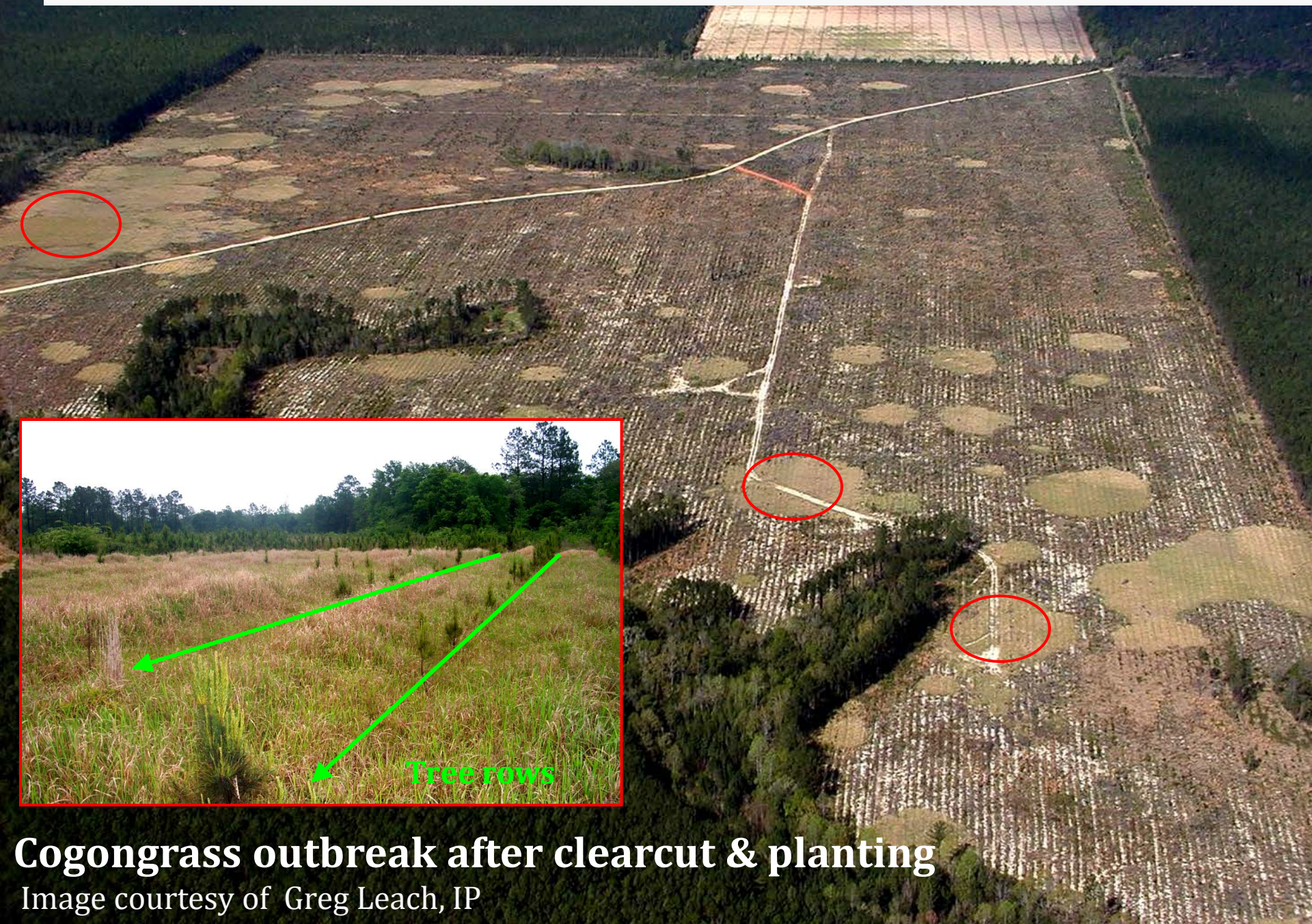
Withlacoochee State Forest,



- 300-acre abandoned phosphate mine site in Polk County
- Nearly 100% cogongrass
- Now property (burden) of the County!



Spread by Harvests & Seedling Establishment Practices



Cogongrass outbreak after clearcut & planting

Image courtesy of Greg Leach, IP

What You Can Do: Prevention

- Survey your property for existing invasive plant infestations
- Avoid working in or through infested areas until they are treated
- Make sure equipment (harvesters, planters, fireline plows, etc.) is **cleaned** before entering your property!

Soil on Equipment – Can Carry Seeds, Rhizomes!



Cogongrass Seeds on Tractor

What You Can Do: Control

Effective control requires **persistence**, and often uses a combination of methods:

- **Chemical** (herbicide)
- **Mechanical** (cutting, mowing, plowing, etc.)
- **Cultural** (fire, etc.)
- **Biological**



Cut Stump Herbicide Treatment



Goats for Kudzu removal

Where to Get Help

Information (ID, control methods, etc.)

- UF/IFAS County Extension Offices
- FFS County Foresters
- UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic & Invasive Plant website:
plants.ifas.ufl.edu

Cost-Share Assistance

- FL Forest Service: Cogongrass Treatment Cost-Share Program
- Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS):
 - Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP)
 - Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP)
- Other local/regional programs:
 - check the **Florida Invasive Species Partnership** database at floridainvasives.org