

Cogongrass: Menace to Forestry

COGONGRASS (*Imperata cylindrical*) has become a major pest to landowners in Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina and Texas. Introduced through packing material at the port of Mobile back in 1911, this noxious exotic has spread rapidly. Cogongrass spreads by both wind-blown seed and through rhizomes and forms dense colonies, excluding native vegetation. The dense stands grow in both sun and shade and create a real fire hazard in forestry situations. The fire adapted grass burns extremely hot creating problems for even mature timber stands.

Identifying cogongrass is not hard. The plant grows 3-4 feet tall and usually forms circular patches upon establishment. Leaves are about $\frac{3}{4}$ " wide, 12-30 inches long and have a bright yellow-green color. The white mid-rib of the upper leaf is off-center which is different than most other grasses. In early spring, cogongrass produces a white fluffy plume of seeds. Seedheads are 2-8 inches in length and contain as many as 3,000 seeds. There are a couple of ornamental varieties of cogongrass usually sold under the name of "Red Baron Grass" or "Japanese Blood Grass."

As bad as it is to find cogongrass on your property, getting rid of it is another major headache. Young infestations are much easier to control than established ones, but eradicating it still takes a lot of perseverance. Glyphosate and imazapyr have been found to be the most effective control agents, although it usually takes repeated applications, especially on established stands. Go to www.cogongrass.org for herbicide application rates and other control measures. It is extremely important to institute control measures immediately. This pest spreads rapidly and can quickly take over your property.

More than a million acres of land are infested with cogongrass in the Southeast. Controlling this loathsome grass has become one of the top priorities for state forestry and agricultural agencies in the southern states. Free chemicals and cost-share opportunities are available in several states to aid in the control of this plant.

Contact your local agricultural extension agent or state forestry commission for more information.



Cogongrass, photo by G. Keith Douce, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org




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Please send us your feedback and story ideas.

DEBORAH BAKER
GEORGIA-PACIFIC
133 Peachtree Street NE
P.O. Box 105605
Atlanta, Georgia 30348
Phone: 404-652-4032
E-mail: dbbaker@gapac.com





Mississippi state forester
Charlie Morgan and his forestry
team visit a landowner's site.

MISSISSIPPI: abundant resources, wise management



NEWS FROM GEORGIA-PACIFIC FOR FOREST OWNERS AND OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS

FAMILY FORESTS

WINTER 2009

Editor's Note:

The next several issues of *Family Forests* will highlight forestry in various states.

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- Wildlife At Work
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Mississippi's forestry story is impressive. From nearly 20 million acres of forestland to the nation's largest tree farm program, Mississippi's forests are a vital part of the state's economy. Forestry contributes \$17.4 billion to the state, just behind manufacturing in number of jobs and economic impact.

The Mississippi Forestry Commission (MFC) provides financial and technical assistance to private, non-industrial landowners who own nearly 15 million forested acres.

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SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

interview with Mississippi state forester

Mississippi was the first state in the nation to establish a reforestation state income tax credit, offering landowners up to \$75,000 in cost-share tax deduction for replanting. In addition, the Mississippi Institute for Forest Inventory (MIFI), a division of the MFC, was created to provide accurate forest inventory data to the county level. This technology helps the MFC supply specific forest resource information for conventional and emerging markets.

After Hurricane Katrina, MIFI conducted a statewide survey to determine damage to standing inventory. A portion of the survey included 480,000 acres of Mississippi's School Trust Lands (16th Section Lands - reserves land for public schools) that are managed to generate revenue for public education. After the survey, the MFC developed a ten-year strategy that resulted in a revenue increase of \$4 million.

In an effort to help landowners, the MFC offers Forest Stewardship Management Plans through the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service's Forest Stewardship Program. Each management plan is designed to protect forest resources, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. The plans are recognized by the American Tree Farm System. Forest Stewardship programs exist in most states. If you are interested in having a plan developed for your property, please contact your state forester's office. State foresters also work with homeowners to identify fire hazards, and with county fire marshal offices to develop County Wildfire Protection Plans for at-risk communities, primarily those adjacent to urban and coastal areas.

For more information, contact the **Mississippi Forestry Commission** at:

301 North Lamar Street, Suite 300
Jackson, Mississippi 39201

(601) 359-1386 Main Phone
(601) 359-1349 Fax
www.mfc.gov/contact_us.htm



GP's Mississippi Employees, Facilities Promote "Wildlife At Work"

Georgia-Pacific employees in Mississippi are committed to the environment and the abundant wildlife in the state. As a result, GP's Monticello and Leaf River, Miss., facilities participate in the Wildlife Habitat Council's Wildlife at Work program.

The Wildlife Habitat Council is a non-profit group that brings the environmental community and businesses together to benefit wildlife. Since 1988, the council has helped corporations develop Wildlife at Work programs that are driven by the corporation, but are periodically reviewed by the council. Facilities must apply for membership and receive accreditation every two years.

Monticello

With more than 1,500 acres for the employee wildlife program, Monticello's team members constructed an outdoor classroom, a wildlife meadow to attract deer and turkey populations, and nesting sites for bluebirds, wood ducks and bats. Monticello High School students built and helped install the nesting boxes. Monticello also hosts the Boys and Girls Club for wildlife tours, as well as students for Earth Day.

Children's Museum

Late 2010, the Mississippi Children's Museum in Jackson is expected to open. This 40,000 square foot facility will serve the needs of children, students and families in a way that will present five themes that are integral parts of the state, its heritage, health and nutrition, literacy, cultural arts, and science and technology. "The goal of the museum is to empower and inspire the state's children – regardless of their social, educational or economic background – to discover their potential by tapping into their curiosity and creativity," said Susan Garrard, executive director of the museum.

The museum will include an exhibit, designed to highlight the life cycle of forestry, including planting and harvesting, products and careers. It will include a replica of a pine plantation as well as a hardwood forest within the exhibit. GP sponsors the Mississippi Children's Museum through its membership with the Mississippi Forestry Association.

To learn more about the museum and how you can support it, please visit www.mississippichildrensmuseum.com.

Charlie Morgan joined the MFC in 2006. Prior to his leadership at the commission, Charlie worked in wood procurement for International Paper for 32 years, serving in various management roles across the Southeast. Charlie is a graduate of Mississippi State University. He and his wife, Susie, live in Canton, Miss.

Leaf River

One of Leaf River's ongoing wildlife projects is quail restoration, which includes raising chicks in surrogators on company and adjacent landowner property for five to six weeks. "We check them regularly, ensuring they have adequate water and warmth," explained Brad White, Leaf River facility wildlife management team member. "While in the surrogators, the chicks imprint to this area. Once they are released, they stay here." The team raises three to four sets of chicks each year.

The team also conducts deer surveys, works with Boy Scouts to build and place wood duck and bluebird boxes, hosts plant identification workshops and fishing rodeos, and monitors a large gopher tortoise habitat. "Since the gopher tortoise is endangered, we plant different grasses and identify nests to help maintain the habitat," said Brad.

In addition to the Monticello and Leaf River, Miss., facilities, GP's Savannah, Ga., facility also participates in Wildlife at Work. Several other GP facilities are also in the process of applying to the program.

"GP is committed to programs like Wildlife at Work so our communities can enjoy the benefits of diverse wildlife populations," concluded GP wildlife biologist Bobby Maddrey.



Local high school students help wildlife management team members by building and installing duck and bird boxes on company property.

Proposed design of new museum



The Mississippi Children's Museum will open in late 2010, providing visitors with an exciting format for learning about the state's resources.

GEORGIA-PACIFIC EARNS SFI® PRESIDENT'S AWARD



Deborah Baker receives award from Kathy Abusow.

Georgia-Pacific recently earned the Sustainable Forestry Initiative's® (SFI) 2009 President's Award for the company's efforts to increase understanding of SFI's fiber sourcing program and its support of family forest owners across the United States.

"Georgia-Pacific conducts extensive SFI outreach, including communicating with its sales and marketing teams about SFI fiber sourcing. Georgia-Pacific also works with its customers, large and small, to promote the SFI fiber sourcing certification," said Kathy Abusow, president and CEO - SFI, Inc.

GP promotes and supports sustainable forestry through wood procurement operations that provide wood and fiber for the company's manufacturing facilities. This includes:

- Promoting sustainable forestry practices among landowners and suppliers from whom GP purchases wood;
- Protecting water quality by requiring the use of voluntary and mandated state and Federal forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs);
- Encouraging reforestation, both natural and planted;
- Promoting awareness of and providing landowners with practical approaches for addressing wildlife habitat, and threatened and endangered species;
- Requiring that wood suppliers be trained in sustainable forestry practices, and comply with all applicable laws and regulations for environmental protection and employee health and safety.

"The United States depends on family forest owners who are dedicated to responsible forest management," said Deborah Baker, vice president of GP's sustainable forestry, environmental and community outreach. "We may not own forest lands, but we can have a positive influence - reaching out to family forest landowners - and that's important to our company, our customers and our nation's forests."

Family Forests' Readers Survey

Fall 2009

Thank you for your continued relationship with Georgia-Pacific. We would like to hear from you regarding the value of GP's *Family Forests* newsletter to you as a private landowner. Please complete the following survey and drop the prepaid card in the mail to us. If you would like to comment further about *Family Forests* or any other aspect of forest management, please contact Ellen Whitfield at Georgia-Pacific, 133 Peachtree Street, N.E., Atlanta, GA 30303, 404-652-5476 or emwhitfi@gapac.com. Thank you in advance for your participation!

1. Is GP's *Family Forests* newsletter valuable to you as a landowner?
 Yes. Why? _____
 No. Why not? _____
2. Would you like to continue to receive *Family Forests*?
 Yes No
3. Would you prefer to receive *Family Forests* by e-mail?
 Yes. My e-mail address is _____
 No. Please continue to mail it to me.
4. How often do you read the publication?
 Every time I receive it.
 Once or twice a year.
 I don't read it.
5. Do the *Family Forests* articles provide you with good, useful information?
 Yes. If yes, please skip to Question 6.
 No. If no, what types of information would be most useful to you?

6. Which *Family Forests* articles/topics are of most interest to you? (Check all that apply)
 Focus on forestry in each southeastern state.
 Future trends in forestry
 Tax/estate planning
 Application issues such as site preparation, herbicide use, harvesting, etc.
 Other _____
7. Is the *Family Forests* format easy to read?
 Yes No
8. Would you like GP to send *Family Forests* to other family members/friends who are interested in forest management?
 Yes. If yes, please provide name and address here:

9. Please share any other comments you have about GP and the *Family Forests* newsletter.

10. In what state and county is your property located? _____ County, _____ State