

## Alabama Cogongrass Control Center

### General Information For Landowners

**What is the Alabama Cogongrass Control Center?** The Alabama Cogongrass Control Center (ACCC) is a publicly-funded project through an ARRA stimulus grant whose mandate is to control cogongrass through several strategies across Alabama. This program is administered through Larson & McGowin and the Alabama Forestry Commission ([www.forestry.alabama.gov](http://www.forestry.alabama.gov)).

**What is cogongrass?** Cogongrass [*Imperata cylindrica* (L.) Beauv.] is a warm-season, perennial grass that originates from Asia. It was first introduced into the United States through Mobile in the early 1900's as packing material for oranges. The leaves can reach 5 feet in length but are typically shorter. They are easily recognized by their sharp edges and middle, whitish midrib that is slightly off-center. Their belowground root system is extensive, growing as a solid, dense mat of underground stems called rhizomes. Cogongrass typically grows in a circular pattern from small patches to many acres. Cogongrass can grow in open areas and under the shade of a forest. Though there are some other grasses that have these characteristics, taken as a whole these characteristics can be used to recognize it.

**Why is it a problem?** Cogongrass is one of the 10 worst weeds in the world. It is steadily marching through Alabama and into neighboring states. This highly invasive pest permanently alters plant and animal communities, increases fire frequency and intensity, and requires extensive investment to control. In other areas of the world cogongrass has destroyed entire landscapes, creating a 'sea' of cogongrass with no other plants. Domestic food and fiber supplies are negatively impacted by cogongrass through reduction in wildlife food sources and killing or injuring valuable cash crops such as corn, cotton, and trees. Cogongrass exists on rights-of-way, forests, and agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial areas. Because it is found in so many areas, there is a need for a large-scale, concerted effort to effectively control it.

**How is it treated?** Currently the most effective approach to controlling cogongrass infestations is with repeated chemical application, sometimes over several years. There are numerous herbicides on the market currently labeled for cogongrass. Contact the AFC for the most effective amounts and rates or go to <http://www.forestry.alabama.gov/Cogongrass.aspx?bv=3&s=2> for more information. Mechanical treatments, such as disking, are also used but not applicable over many areas.

**How do I figure out if I have it on my property?** There are several ways to know if cogongrass is either on your property or a potential threat. First, know how to identify it by going to [www.cogongrass.org/cogongrassid.pdf](http://www.cogongrass.org/cogongrassid.pdf) and downloading the field guide. If you prefer you can contact your county forester, extension agent, land manager, or natural resources expert to arrange for them to make the determination.

**Am I eligible for the program?** Treatment programs through the ACCC will begin in 2010. If you are a private, non-industrial Alabama landowner and currently have cogongrass on your

property you may be eligible to apply. Depending on the property location and size, the size of the infestation, proximity to main transportation routes, and other factors you will be prioritized within the program's strategies. Further details will be provided on our website in the coming months.

**How do I enroll?** Currently we are not accepting applications as the program is in its formative stages. We ask that if you are interested to go to [www.alabamacogongrass.com](http://www.alabamacogongrass.com) or contact the ACCC and fill out an information form so that we can get in touch with you when we begin accepting applicants. In 2010, an online application form will be available at [www.alabamacogongrass.com](http://www.alabamacogongrass.com). In addition to general information about your property you will be able to upload any GPS shapes you may have collected.

**I am currently spraying cogongrass. Can I still participate in the program?** We are working with other cogongrass assistance programs to increase the efficacy of the program. However, there will be some restrictions on applicants if they are participating in government cost-share programs. In general you cannot receive government funding for the acreage that is enrolled in our program. Our website will have more details on this in the future.

**I do not have funds to spray cogongrass. Can I participate in these programs?** Applicants of ACCC programs will not have to pay for the services. This is not a cost-share program like other services; *the ACCC will arrange for spraying and monitoring with no out-of-pocket expense to the landowner for the area sprayed by the ACCC.* Because of the funds available, however, we will have restrictions of how much acreage can be sprayed per landowner.

**Where can I get more information?** There are many sources of information about cogongrass on the internet. Public agencies are a good clearinghouse. The sites listed below will get you started.

- [www.alabamacogongrass.com](http://www.alabamacogongrass.com) – all information pertinent to the ACCC program
- [www.forestry.alabama.gov/viewers/afc\\_cogongrass\\_viewer.aspx](http://www.forestry.alabama.gov/viewers/afc_cogongrass_viewer.aspx) - Alabama Forestry Commission's updated map of current cogongrass infestations in the state
- [www.cogongrass.org](http://www.cogongrass.org) – a comprehensive site created and maintained by the Center For Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health at the University of Georgia ([www.bugwood.org](http://www.bugwood.org))
- [www.forestryimages.org](http://www.forestryimages.org) – images that can be used for identification of cogongrass on your property

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