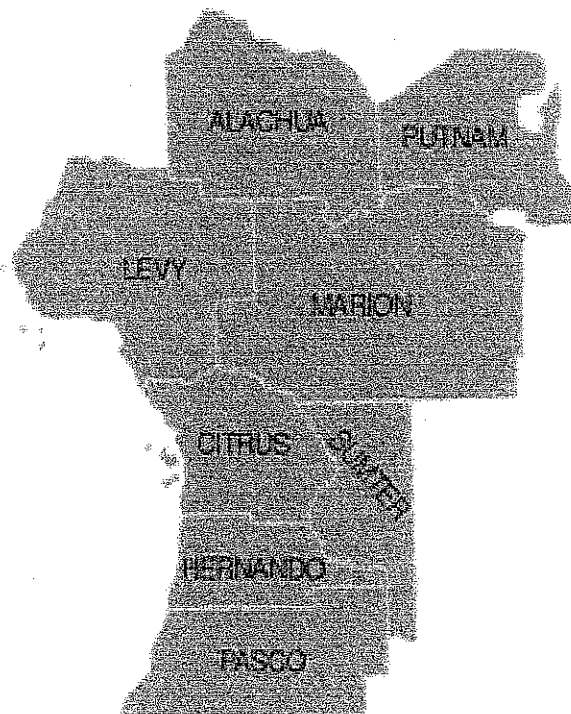


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Withlacoochee Region Invasive Upland Plant Working Group (WRIP)

Program Description & Guidelines for Project Submission

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DEP Project Proposal Process

(<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/invaspec/4thlevpqs/pripro.htm>)

Land managers wishing to secure funding from this program are encouraged to become a member of one of the regional working groups. Each working group has a slightly different set of ranking criteria used to prioritize all submitted proposals.

Land managers can choose from several control operation methods:

- The bureau has established five-year task assignment contracts with private vegetation management companies that collectively canvas the entire state (Invasive Plant Regional Contractors). These invasive plant regional contractors will perform the task of exotic plant removal and then be paid directly by the DEP.
- The land manager can choose to complete the removal operation in-house, by utilizing existing staff and materials and then be reimbursed by DEP upon satisfactory completion of work.
- The land manager can also choose to use a subcontractor that they already have under contract. In this case, documentation that the subcontractor is competitive in price to the DEP contractor would be required. The subcontractor would be paid upon satisfactory completion of work by the land management agency, and then DEP would reimburse the agency.

Once proposals are submitted to the working group they are scored based on a ranking criteria by members of the working group. Additional ranking processes, such as a presentation of the proposed project to the working group may be required. Once the working group has agreed upon a priority list, a liaison from the group presents the chosen projects at an annual meeting of working group liaisons and program staff.

Once a project is chosen for funding, a cooperative agreement between DEP and the managing agency is established to allow funds to be expended and control operations to begin. When work is satisfactorily completed and approved by the site manager and DEP staff, payment is made.

DEP REGIONAL WORKING GROUP STANDARD PROPOSAL FORMAT

(<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/invaspec/4thlevpqs/projprop.htm>)

The proposal is used to prioritize all the projects submitted to a working group. Once a proposal is chosen for funding, sections of the proposal are modified and incorporated in to the control operations contract. The proposal format has been developed to provide pertinent information in a consistent manner to facilitate scoring by the regional working group. In addition, the contract development process is also simplified by the use of a standardized format. **The following information shall be included in the proposal.**

COVER PAGE:

Project Title

Working Group

Contact Information- Agency, contact person/site manager, mailing address, phone, fax, e-mail

Method of control- Contractual/in-house

Project Goals- List all species to be controlled

SCOPE OF WORK:

This section of the proposal will serve two purposes; 1) It will offer information for the scoring of the proposal by the working group and 2) If the site is chosen for funding, it will be used as an attachment to the contract detailing what the contractor (or in-house crew) is expected to accomplish. A guideline example can be found at:

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/invaspec/2ndlevpqs/pdfs/SOWGuidelines3-15-07.pdf>

Project Location

Describe where the project is located.

List agency(s) that has management authority.

Project Description

Habitat description(s).

Site history.

Total acres of PCL.

Total acres infested and density estimates for specific target plant. Delineate into specific treatment areas if applicable.

Map illustrating the following: directions to the project location; area(s) of specific plant control locations; and clearly delineated control sites. (*Black and white maps are preferred as numerous copies of maps are made and color-coding is often lost.*)

Work Specifications

Control technique(s) for target plant

Mechanical: method of control/removal (chainsaws, feller bunchers, mowing, burning, etc.)

Herbicidal: specific herbicide, treatment method (cut-stump, basal, frill and girdle) (rates shall be specified as "per label rates" for contractor operations)

Labor: describe source of labor for in-house projects

Method of disposal: left on site, chipped, hauled away, burned etc.

Other Requirements and Provisions

Include pertinent information that the site manager thinks appropriate for the contractor to be aware of, i.e. locations of endangered/threatened species, site access/security issues, restricted or sensitive areas, seasonal restrictions, specific herbicide mixing areas, herbicide container disposal, equipment use restrictions, permit issues.

Project Time Frame

Specify optimal time frame for initiating control operations. If several treatment events are planned, identify tentative dates of treatment. Include any pertinent deadlines for operations, i.e. sea turtle nesting, or invoicing, i.e. end of fiscal year.

Funding Information

This information needs to be **on a separate page** from above information since cost estimates and budget information will not be included in task assignments utilizing private contractors. You can obtain the budget forms in Excel format from your working group liaison.

PROPOSAL INFORMATION:

This section covers additional criteria used by the working group to evaluate proposals. This information is typically not included in the contract development. Topics that pertain to ranking criteria need to be completed with sufficient information to facilitate scoring of proposal. Please be as clear and concise as possible. Each working group has a unique set of ranking criteria, which can be obtained from your working group liaison. Be sure that the proposal addresses these regional criteria.

Conservation Land Qualification

Describe how the site qualifies as a public conservation land. Is the site listed in FNAI Florida Conservation Lands? If not, reference site management policy that designates site as conservation land.

Ability to Maintain Site After Initial Treatment

Identify funding and labor source for follow up treatments.

Restoration Plan for Native Plants

Identify if site will be re-vegetated by existing on site native species, or if replanting is planned and funded.

Threatened or Endangered Species or Habitats

List any threatened, endangered, or rare species or habitats associated with the site.

Public Education Program

Describe any public educational projects/programs/literature, existing or planned, that increase awareness of invasive exotic plant issues.

Regional Criteria Issues

Include any information that qualifies site for regional working group criteria.

Include any additional information that the regional working group requests.

Regional Criteria can be obtained from the Working Group Liaison for your region.

DEP Minimum Project Ranking Criteria

(<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/invaspec/4thlevpqs/minpro.htm>)

The following ranking criteria are standard for all working groups. Each working group may incorporate additional criteria as they feel is necessary for their region.

- Cooperative cost-share/matching funds are available through the management steward.
- Target exotic species:
 - a) is recognized as having high invasive potential and
 - b) have Current Control Technologies already established for its control.
- Control project may benefit specific threatened or endangered species that inhabit the site.
- Site has relatively high restoration potential:
 - a) significant patches of native vegetation remain in site, or on perimeter for natural recruitment;
 - b) native seed bank is shown to be present on site; and/or
 - c) revegetation planting is practical and funded.

Public education/outreach programs will further the awareness of the impact of invasive exotic plants.

PROJECT RANKING CRITERIA

Withlacoochee Region Invasive Plant Working Group (WRIP)

Revised February 21, 2008

Program Goals:

All projects must meet the Bureau of Invasive Plant Management Upland Invasive Plant Management goals (see the following link:

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/invaspec/2ndlevpgs/Uplandsplntman.htm>).

Minimum Program Eligibility:

1. Cooperative cost-share (i.e. in-kind services) and/or matching funds must be available through the management steward.
2. Project must be on public conservation land.
3. Plant species eligible for control must be a non-aquatic species that is recognized as having high invasive potential with current control technologies already established for its control or is listed on the current Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council's (FLEPPC) Category I or Category II priority list (review current listing at: <http://www.fleppc.org/list/list.htm>).
4. Follow-up maintenance and monitoring for control of site by site manager is available in perpetuity.

Withlacoochee Region Ranking criteria:

1. **Score 0-5:** Are there matching funds available for this project?

Matching funds are monies that can be directly contributed to this project. These are usually provided in the form of purchase of herbicides for use by DEP contractors, payment for additional contract acres by piggybacking on the DEP contract, etc...

2. **Score 0-5:** Are there in-kind services available for this project?

In-kind services include those services directly applied to the project that are beyond the requirements of writing the proposal (i.e., heavy equipment costs, treatment of x acres of infestation by staff, creating access for contractors, etc.). The direct connection to the project should be clearly described.

3. **Score 0-5:** Target exotic species: 1) is recognized as having high invasive potential & 2) has Current Control Technologies already established for its control. Higher ranking is given if the target exotic species is a WRIP Priority 1 species: cogon grass (*Imperata cylindrica*), Japanese climbing fern (*Lygodium japonicum*), air potato (*Dioscorea bulbifera*), Chinese tallow (*Triadica sebifera*), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terbinthifolius*), & coral ardisia (*Ardisia crenata*).

3. **Score 0-5:** Will this project benefit specific threatened or endangered, FNAI-listed, or other sensitive species, or floral or faunal habitat features of the site? Describe clearly.

4. **Score 0-10:** Site has relatively high restoration/recovery potential, either: significant patches of native vegetation remain in site, or on perimeter for natural recruitment; and/or native seed bank is shown to be present on site; and/or re-vegetation planting is practical and funded. Describe clearly.

5. **Score 0-8:** Public education/outreach programs will further the awareness of the impact of invasive exotic plants. Give detail.

6. Score 0-10: Is this a population of an EPPC Category I/Category II species new to the region that could expand and cause greater problems in the future (eg. *Clematis ternifolia*)? **OR** Does this project address recent expansion/new populations of a species that has been established in our region at lower levels. Describe clearly.

7. Score 0-5: Describe other possible benefits from this project: initial site quality, site connectivity, tract size, control strategy/methods on adjacent properties, etc.

8. Score 0-5: Describe the plan for long-term/follow-up treatments on this site. Specify intended source of staff and funds. Briefly describe follow-up schedule and methods. Will DEP BIPM be the long-term funding source for this project? How many times has this project site been treated by BIPM? How has the invasive population changed?

Withalcoochee Region Ranking Procedure:

Proposals will be submitted to the liaison by the due date (usually mid to late April). The submission packet should include seven printed copies of the project proposal with all attachments, and one digital copy on CD (or disk if you don't have a CD burner). The liaison will distribute proposals to the WRIP ranking subcommittee when all proposals are received; approximately 2 weeks prior to the annual ranking meeting (usually the end of April). The ranking subcommittee consists of WRIP members who have volunteered to rank proposals. Anyone may participate in the ranking subcommittee; if you would like to join, notify the liaison before the annual project submission deadline. Ranking subcommittee members who submit a proposal will rank all proposals except their own. Other working group members may also attend the ranking meeting if they wish. Maintenance and initial project proposals will be ranked together in one group.

Ranking subcommittee members each will review and individually rank all project proposals prior to the ranking meeting. Each subcommittee member's ranking list is determined by totaling the score given for each of the ranking criterion to get a project's overall score. The subcommittee member then ranks the projects in order of score. The project with the highest total score becomes that individual's #1 project, etc. If two projects receive the same score, the individual doing the ranking must break the tie by choosing one project over the other.

The purpose of the ranking meeting is to allow the ranking subcommittee to discuss issues or concerns for individual projects and to generate the overall project rank. Overall rank is generated by taking the average rank (not the average score) of each project (average ranks assigned by each subcommittee member). The project with the lowest average rank will be the #1 project for the working group, etc. If there is a tie in the average rank, the subcommittee will break the tie through discussion.

The WRIP liaison completes a spreadsheet for DEP listing the projects in order of rank, this is emailed to DEP. The WRIP liaison then prepares an envelope for each project, indicating the project name and rank on the outside, and containing a printed copy of the project proposal and the CD with digital copy of the project (these are taken to the statewide liaison meeting). The WRIP liaison attends the annual statewide meeting of working group liaisons, at which DEP allocates funds to each working group by accepting projects from each working group, in order of rank.

DEP Project Operational Procedures

(<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/invaspec/4thlevpgs/guidelin.htm>)

CONTRACTUAL SERVICES

Once a proposal is chosen and approved for funding, the designated Site Manager for the project becomes responsible for certain aspects of the contract process. The process has been established to assure quality, cost-effective weed control, and to minimize administrative problems.

Site Visit:

The contractor will contact you, the Site Manager, to conduct a site visit. To ensure that this process proceeds efficiently, results in environmentally sound control activities, and concludes with an accurate quote by the contractor, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. When the Contractor calls, establish a time to meet that is convenient for you.
2. Plan on spending sufficient time with the Contractor Representative so that they are knowledgeable enough about your project to provide a reasonable estimate.
3. So the Contractor can provide the best service to you, they need to see:
 - a. the boundaries of the control site(s)
 - b. typical and atypical terrain conditions and invasive plant densities
 - c. all access points to the control site(s)
 - d. all areas to receive treatment
 - e. all targeted species to be controlled
4. Prior to the scheduled site visit, revisit the control site to verify that treatment boundaries are clearly identifiable. Fences, permanent structures, flagging tape on stakes or trees, in combination with GPS coordinates are some ways to identify to the Contractor where he is expected to work.
5. **Please do not discuss any previous project cost estimates or preliminary funding allocation amounts with the Contractor. We are, after all, trying to obtain quality-cost effective weed control services!**
6. If any changes to the scope of work occur during the on-site inspection by the Contractor, they need to be reflected in the Scope of Work that ultimately gets incorporated into the contract.
7. Control operations on invasive exotic plant species, control methods utilized, or any control operations conducted outside the boundaries of the designated area specified in the approved scope of work are not eligible for reimbursement by the DEP.

Task Assignment:

A Task Assignment (TA) is a type of long term contract that allows multiple projects, or assignments, to be implemented under a single contract. The TA determines specifically what the contractor is expected to accomplish, and what is eligible for reimbursement.

Once our office receives the estimate from the Contractor, a TA is drafted with the approved scope of work as an attachment. This document (2 originals) is circulated for signatures within DEP, to the Contractor, and to you or your agency.

There are specific responsibilities spelled out in the TA for the Contractor and the Site Manager. Be sure to review the actual TA language, as each task is unique.

Control Operations:

You should expect the Contractor to contact you and set up a date and time to begin work. It is important for you to meet with the field crew when they arrive for the first time. It is possible that the crew leader is not the representative who conducted the site visit. Review the site boundaries, target

species, and any other site-specific conditions with the crew leader and crew. Also, it is quite possible that the Contractor is from another region of the state and the crew may not be familiar with your specific target species.

The Contractor's work should be monitored frequently the first few days, and then as you deem appropriate. History has proven that Site Managers who conduct frequent work inspections get better results. When the Contractor concludes all work at your site, please review all treatment areas with the crew leader to ensure that all target vegetation has been treated.

Invoicing:

The Contractor is required to maintain Daily Progress Reports (DPRs). These documents are submitted to our office along with the invoice for payment. You, the Site Manager, are required to sign these forms before the invoice can be processed. Usually, the Contractor will bring the DPRs to you for signature at the end of the work-week.

The Site manager's cooperation is an integral component to the success of this project, as well as the success of this program as a whole. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

OTHER DEP FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Herbicide Bank

The Bureau of Invasive Plant Management (BIPM), Upland Invasive Exotic Plant Management Program began its "Herbicide Bank" program in 2000. Because of the possible high cost to maintain the initial control operations on public conservation lands, DEP recognized these costs may exceed the budget of some managers. BIPM initiated the program to provide herbicides and adjuvants at no cost to these land managers.

The Herbicide Bank has been expanded to include small scale, in-house projects where the land manager is requesting only chemicals and the labor and other costs associated with the application of herbicide are the responsibility of the manager. Such projects need not be submitted to the Invasive Plant Working Groups and instead should be submitted directly as a Herbicide Bank Request.

As a condition of accepting Herbicide Bank materials, the project manager is required to submit Daily Progress Reports upon completion of the control operations. This information is used to quantify future re-treatment needs and associated costs, and to justify continuation of the Herbicide Bank.

Ruark Cleary in Tallahassee is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Herbicide Bank. Please contact Ruark at ruark.cleary@dep.state.fl.us or 850-245-2828 for additional information or questions that may arise.

Lygodium Strike Team

Since 1998, the Bureau of Invasive Plant Management, Upland Invasive Plant Management Program, has controlled more than 14,000 acres of *Lygodium japonicum* and *Lygodium microphyllum* at a cost of approximately \$8.2 million. This acreage *does not include* work done by WMD's and federal and local governments.

In 2004, the Bureau of Invasive Plant Management began providing an additional service to public conservation land managers throughout the state.

If you should have a population of either species of *Lygodium* in your publicly owned managed area that is **less than 10 acres in size**, the Upland Plant Management Section staff will arrange for a qualified contractor to conduct initial herbicidal control of that plant population.

The Lygodium Strike Team is comprised of experienced weed control specialists under contract with the Bureau. They are prepared to provide either foliar applications or "poodle-cuts" (cut vines 4-5 feet up from the ground and apply herbicide to the rooted portion of the plant).

Andrew Leslie is the Bureau coordinator for this strike team. He can be reached at 850-245-2822 or by e-mail at drew.leslie@dep.state.fl.us

City Nature Parks Showing Location of Proposed Invasive Plant Control Grant Project

