

Implementation of the Invasive Exotic Plant Assessment and Strategy Recommendations—Draft NEWTT Directive

Background: Documented introductions of plants into Florida have been occurring for over 200 years, and the numbers of introductions have increased over this period. It is estimated that over 25,000 species of exotic plants have been introduced into Florida. Accidental introductions have been growing as a consequence of increased commerce and tourism. The more often a species is imported and made more available, the greater chance it will become invasive, and the more different species introduced the greater the chance that one will become invasive. 1,180 exotic plant species are documented as naturalized in Florida. The Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council has assessed their impacts and invasiveness in natural areas and has identified 125 of them as serious threats to natural areas. Of those, 65 are considered to be extremely serious and highly disruptive to native plant communities. Many of these invasive exotic plants threaten the success of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Initiative.

The Restoration of the South Florida Ecosystem and greater Everglades has received high-level attention and support from federal, state and local governments. The SFERTF&WG identified the importance of incorporating invasive species issues into restoration planning. In 1997 they established the Noxious Exotic Weed Task Team (NEWTT) and charged them with developing a comprehensive strategy to cover the issues and the problems of invasive exotic pest plants and assess the status of invasive plants in Florida. In July 2000 the Task Force approved its restoration strategy document that identified the control of invasive exotic plants as one of four top priorities. In November 2000 the Task Force accepted the Working Group's Invasive Plant Assessment and Management Strategy as the framework for proceeding with invasive exotic plant management.

The Noxious Exotic Weed Task Team is made up of agency representatives from federal, state, local, and Indian Tribal governments. NEWTT members include managers and scientists from key federal, state and local government agencies and Indian Tribal representatives that deal with exotic pest plant issues.

PURPOSE: THE PURPOSE OF THE NOXIOUS EXOTIC WEED TASK TEAM IS TO COORDINATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORKING GROUP ASSESSMENT AND STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MANAGING INVASIVE EXOTIC PLANTS IN SOUTH FLORIDA THAT WILL INCLUDE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN, A SCIENCE PLAN, COORDINATED MULTI-AGENCY BUDGET, AND CALENDAR FOR ACCOMPLISHMENT OF GOALS, STEPS AND ACTIONS IDENTIFIED IN THE INVASIVE EXOTIC STRATEGIC PLAN.

Members:

Robert F. Doren, Chair (NPS)
William Zattau, Co-Chair (USACOE)

Dan Thayer, Co-Chair (SFWMD)
Ron Smola, WG Representative

Linda Briggs (FFWCC)
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Layne Hamilton (USFWS)	Leroy Clifford (BIA)
Craig James (FDOT)	David Jones (NPS)
Greg Jubinsky (FDEP)	Matt King (Palm Beach DERM)
Robert Kirby (Miami-Dade DERM)	Joy Klein (Miami-Dade DERM)
Ken Langeland (UF-IFAS)	Rob Loflin (City of Sanibel)
Joe Maquire (Miami-Dade Parks)	Tony Pernas (NPS)
Jerry Russo (USDA-APHIS)	Jeff Schardt (FDEP)
Don Schmitz (FDEP)	Kristina Serbesoff (SFWMD)
Jackie Smith (FDEP)	Jim Snyder (USGS-BRD)
Randall Stocker (UF-IFAS)	Rafaela Monchek (OED)

Guidance:

1. Initially NEWTT will focus on the following seven priorities:

- a. Organize NEWTT to prepare for development of an implementation plan and for integration and coordination with Florida-wide planning and establish liaison and coordination with National planning efforts (see concept 4, step a in strategic plan).
- b. Write the strategic implementation plan (see concept 4, step b in strategic plan).
- c. Write the science plan to identify short and long term science needs and funding requirements.
- d. Prioritize species for control and write their control plans (see concept 1, step a in strategic plan).
- e. Develop a meaningful level of standardization needed for a common level of inter-operability among agencies (see concept 1, step a in strategic plan).
- f. Develop an early-warning and rapid-response capability (see concept 2, step d in strategic plan).
- g. Develop a comprehensive science plan for research to support the implementation of Florida-wide Invasive Plant Management Strategy and Implementation Plans
- h. Develop a coordinated multi-agency budget to identify and support the implementation of the Invasive Plant Management Strategic Plan and science plan.

2. The implementation plan will incorporate all the strategic plan recommendations but will prioritize goals, outcomes and actions and identify which agencies and personnel

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will accomplish which actions, when and how much it will cost that will detail the next 3-5 years.

3. The implementation plan will identify existing common activities among agencies and develop a course of action to integrate and coordinated these activities within 1-2 years.

4. The implementation plan will identify activities that are not common among agencies and develop a scheme to integrate those activities to improve inter-agency compatibilities where applicable within 3-5 years.

5. The implementation plan will develop a scheme that identifies the specific areas or activities among agencies where long-term standardization is needed and create a process acceptable to agencies for developing a common level of inter-operability and integration within 5-7 years.

6. The implementation plan will not contravene existing legal authorities or jurisdictions of the participating agencies.

Deliverables:

NEWTT shall produce the following interim and final deliverables for review and approval of the Working Group:

1. First draft of the Implementation Plan (Feb. 2002)
2. First draft of the Implementation Plan coordinated budget request (initial assessment and request March 2001, full request Feb. 2002)
3. First draft of interagency standardization schema (Sept. 2001)
4. First draft of prioritized species list with schedule for individual species control plant development (July 2001)
5. First draft of Early -Warning/Rapid-Response plan (Feb. 2002)
6. First draft of Science Plan (September 2001)
7. First draft of Coordinated Interagency Cross-cut Budget (June 2001)

Administrative Instructions:

1. All NEWTT meetings will be open to the public, and if appropriate time will be included in the agenda for public comment. Meetings will be advertised in accordance with the Pilot Public Affairs Procedure developed by the Working Group.

2. The Co-chair of NEWTT from the SFWMD will be responsible for providing public notice of meetings, facilitating public comment.

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3. The Chair of NEWTT will be responsible for managing the meetings and coordinating NEWTT activities and developing reports, and providing a brief summary as requested for publication on the Task Force Web Site.

4. The OED will provide contract staff support as needed to assist NEWTT in drafting and producing written products and plans.