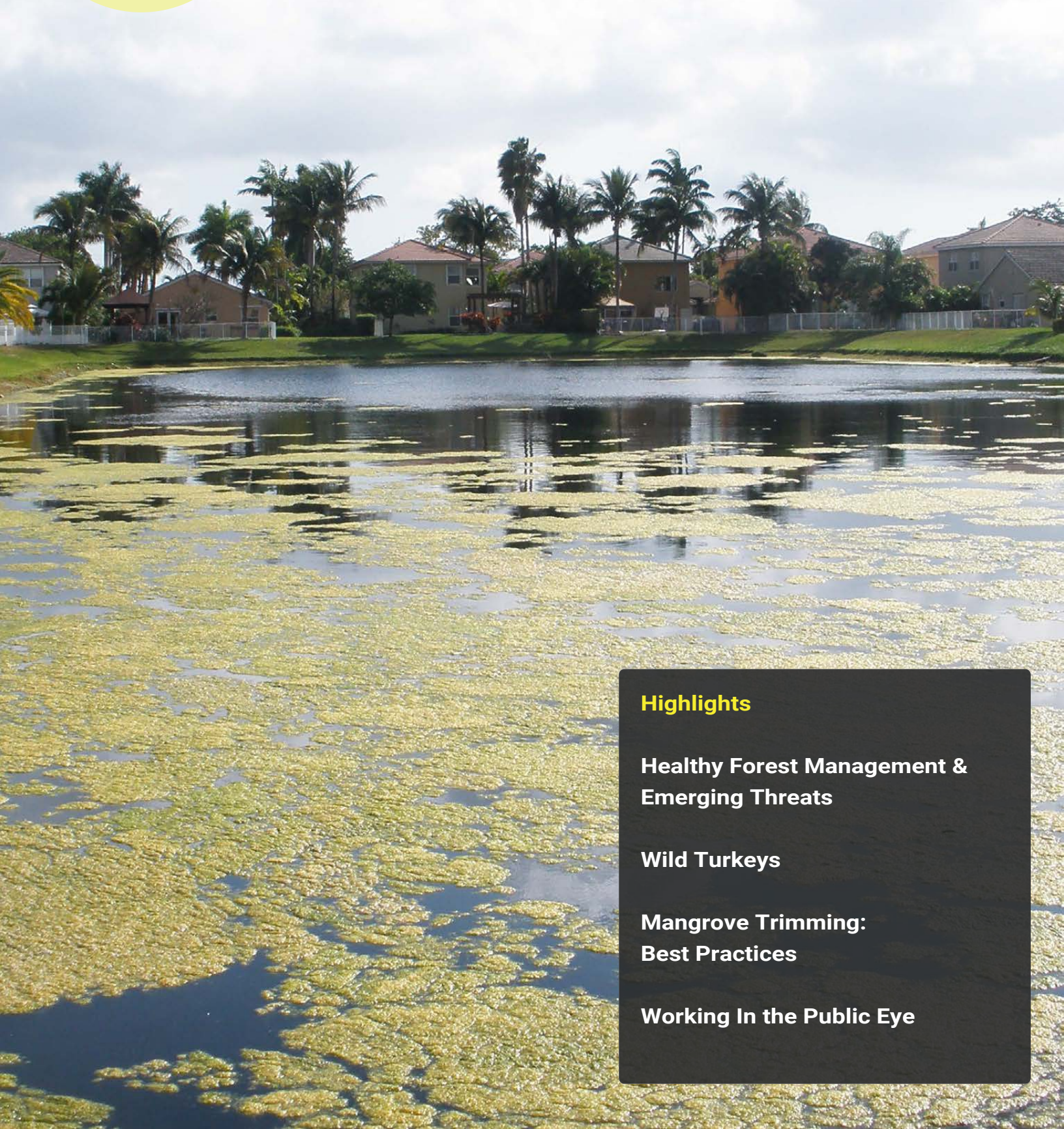




The South Florida Aquatic Plant Management Society

The Hydrophyte

Volume 29 Issue 1



Highlights

Healthy Forest Management & Emerging Threats

Wild Turkeys

**Mangrove Trimming:
Best Practices**

Working In the Public Eye

President's Message

Greetings, hoping everyone had a wonderful holiday season and a Happy New Year. I'd like to give a heartfelt thank you to the SFAPMS Board of Directors again for nominating and retaining me for another term as your President. It's a privilege and an honor to serve our organization for a second term.

This past year has been especially challenging for our State, Gulf/Atlantic basin and industry. The tropical weather systems we've been plagued with in the last decade, makes a person think "What's it all for?" Some days it seems like one step forward, two steps back. On the other hand, the beautiful State we live in and its ecosystem of which we are in trusted to maintain is resilient.

As I travel Southwest/South Florida and talk to people, I keep hearing the same message "Thank you for what you do?" We must be doing something right. People see what we do as an industry and sometimes it takes a little education, but once they understand what it is we do, it all falls into place. When I entered the aquatics industry 34 years ago, I had no idea I'd still be here. However, I knew I loved being an Aquatic Resource Manager. I am on social media with many in our field and when I see a post and photos of projects, one thing stands out. We enjoy what they do. Keep up all the great work that you're doing!!!

I hope that 2025 is a great year for everyone and I look forward to serving our Society as President for another term.

Respectfully, Keith Andreu
SFAPMS President

Cover Photo:
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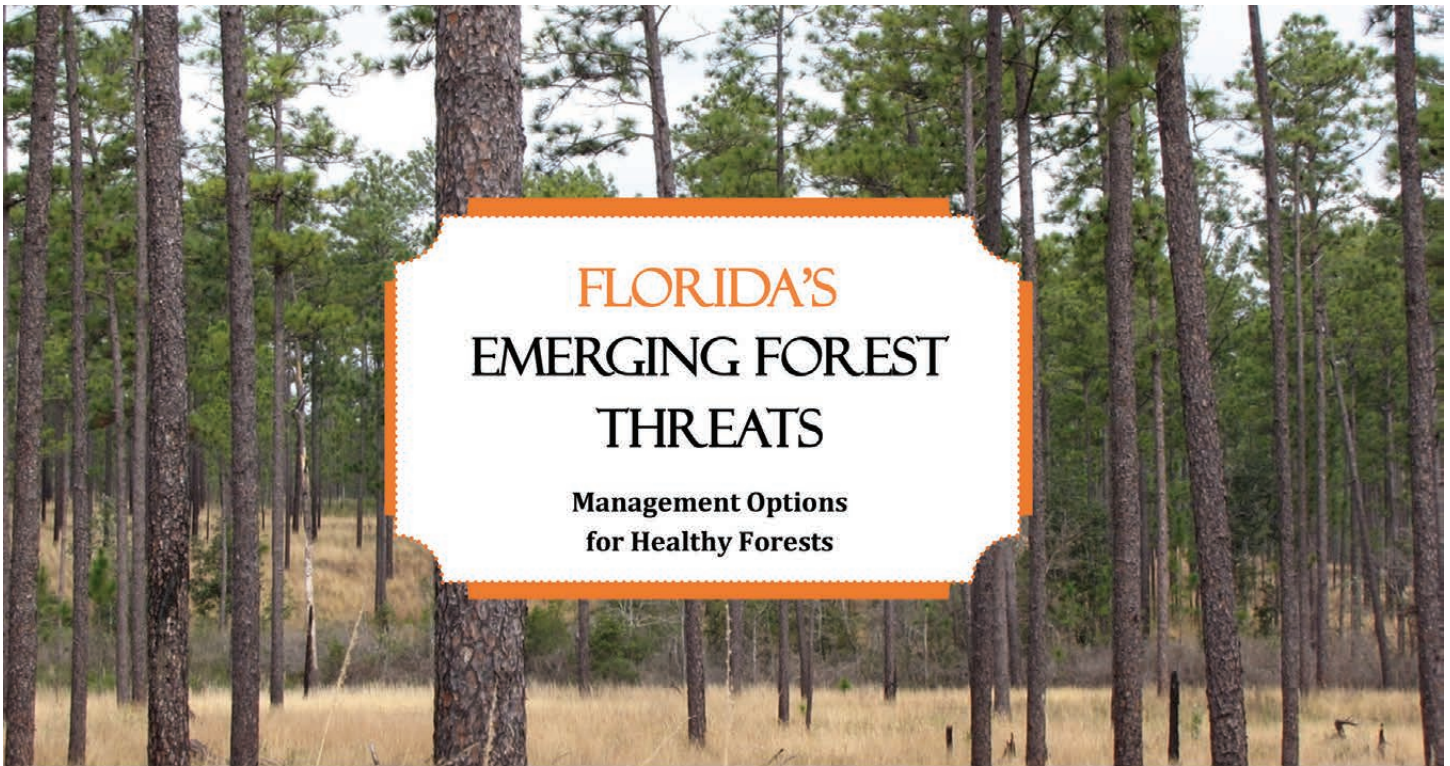
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The Francis E. "Chil" Rossbach Scholarship Fund

Funds from the scholarship are used to help defray costs for students taking classes related to the study of aquatic environmental sciences or related areas. The scholarship is open to anyone, and all are encouraged to apply. Applications will be accepted throughout the year and the scholarship awarded when a suitable candidate is found. Money raised by the Society during the year partially goes to fund this scholarship, the intent of which is to promote the study of aquatics. For an application, please go to www.sfapms.org.



WHY DOES IT MATTER TO ME ?

It is important for private forest landowners to prepare for the likelihood of increasing threats to their forest lands. Private forests make up the largest holdings of forestlands in the southeastern U.S. These properties collectively will be crucial in protecting the overall health of our landscape.

Management that takes the most current science into account will enable landowners to better protect their land and resources and to contribute positively to the conservation and productivity of Florida's forestlands.



Southeast Climate Hub

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The mission of the Southeast Climate Hub is to develop and deliver science-based, region-specific information and technologies, with USDA agencies and partners, to agricultural and natural resource managers that enable climate-informed decision-making, and to provide access to assistance to implement those decisions. This is in alignment with the USDA mission to provide leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and related issues based on sound public policy, the best available science, and efficient management

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dean.jones@upl-ltd.com | 863-514-6934

Jacob Meganck / Territory Manager, U.S. Midwest
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0.33	1.00	1.14
0.50	1.50	1.70
0.67	2.00	2.26
0.83	2.50	2.84
1.00	3.00	3.40

EMERGING THREATS & HEALTHY FOREST MANAGEMENT

Introduction - The state of Florida is blanketed with a patchwork of pine forests, hardwood swamps, and savannahs that cover nearly 17 million acres, which is roughly 50% of the state's land area. Around two thirds of these forest systems are privately owned. Just over half of these forests are predominately composed of slash and longleaf pine. However, hardwoods such as live oak, sweetgum, tupelo and blackgum, water oak, and ash are common in many areas. These forests are crucial to Florida's economy with approximately \$25 billion of annual economic impact. The ecosystem services Florida's forests provide have an estimated value of \$30 billion a year as well. However, many threats exist and cause major damage every year. Some of Florida's major forest threats include invasive species, disease, and hurricane activity. Management options to mitigate or adapt to these damages while increasing forest resiliency are available to landowners and forest managers.



Threats from Flooding - Extreme precipitation events from storms and hurricanes can destroy coastal and inland forests. Flooding is a common disturbance event within the southeast U.S. due to the frequency of extreme (more than 2.5" in a day) rainfall events. Floods impact forest productivity by altering soil conditions and exposing or burying root systems. Reductions in stream water

quality, aquatic habitat, the aesthetic value of recreational areas, and soil productivity can also be observed after flood events. Management practices to mitigate damages include post-disturbance revegetation, maintaining the area's natural hydrology and riparian zone health, planting flood-tolerant tree species, monitoring damaged or susceptible trees for outbreaks or fungal growth, and the installing proper erosion control structures such as culverts and drainage ditches where needed.

Threats from Wildfire - Increased fuel loads and more frequent droughts could increase wildfire frequency and intensity within the southeast, with Florida suffering up to \$400-600 million in timber losses during years with intense wildfire activity. Other impacts include habitat destruction and fragmentation, and biodiversity declines. Prescribed burns to reduce these fuel loads and periodic thinning remain essential techniques. However, timing and control must be appropriate during periods of drought. Salvage logging after extreme weather events or significant timber losses reduces fuel loads and the risk of pest or disease outbreaks. Incorporating fire-resistant species such as longleaf pine and yellow poplar may also mitigate wildfire losses.



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EMERGING THREATS & HEALTHY FOREST MANAGEMENT

Threats from Hurricanes/Tornadoes - A single hurricane - Hurricane Michael - caused \$1.3 billion in forest damage over a wide area. Likewise, tornadoes can also cause billions of dollars in damages. Increases in hurricane intensity and storm frequency are related to warming air and water temperatures. Therefore, annual forest damage is likely to increase in the coming years. Other impacts of severe storms can include habitat and recreation area destruction, reduced biodiversity and water quality, and inland soil salinization from storm surge events. Adaptation to mitigate wind damage from these events includes rotational harvesting to reduce stand age uniformity, incorporating wind-resistant species, modifying thinning frequencies, and clear-cutting smaller exposed stands at maturity while avoiding clear-cut operations within large stands.



Threats from Invasive Species/ Insects/Disease - Invasive species cause roughly \$30 million in forest damage annually. Insects and disease are estimated to cause tens of millions of dollars in losses in Florida and can impact forest productivity and species diversity. Warmer temperatures



associated with climate change can extend the tree growing season, but also extend the outbreak season. Additionally, invasive species may outcompete native or planted species for resources during periods of drought. They also may lead to habitat destruction or fragmentation and loss of aesthetic value in recreational areas. Invasive species are particularly prevalent in the southeast due to the region's mild winters that fail to kill imported insects and plants. Management practices to mitigate these threats include prescribed burning, thinning, proper herbicide or pesticide application, sanitation, and decreasing the movement of untreated wood. Early detection is critical to finding outbreak areas before the problem can multiply and spread.

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EMERGING THREATS & HEALTHY FOREST MANAGEMENT

Threats from Drought - Increasing drought frequency and extreme heat damage forest stands and ecosystems in Florida each year, while also impacting water quantity and quality and biodiversity. Heat and water stress can leave stands more vulnerable to pests and diseases and may result in substantial dieback. Drought conditions also lead to increased wildfire potential, accelerated soil organic matter decomposition, and changes in vegetation. Adaptation options include thinning to reduce stand water stress, maintaining a canopied riparian zone to reduce stream temperatures, incorporating drought-resistant species, and using prescribed burns to reduce fuel loads and wildfire risk. Monitoring for signs of disease or pest activity will provide an early advantage to landowners for fighting outbreaks.



Threats from Sea-Level Rise - Accelerated sea-level rise has been correlated with warming sea surface and air temperatures. Due to this trend, southeastern coastal states like Florida have experienced soil salinity issues moving further inland, resulting in severe forest damage and the overall loss of productive lands. Other impacts include vegetation changes, biodiversity, and habitat loss, water quality declines, and increased invasive species

outbreaks. One adaptation option for event salinization, such as storm surges, would be to plant salt-resistant species. As salinity moves towards being a chronic issue, implementing short-rotation woody crops may retain profits while decreasing risks from storm surge events. Drainage system installation may reduce the probability of developing salinity issues by lowering water table height.

Summary - These threats impact the economic and ecosystem value of Florida's forestlands. Threats of salinization from sea-level rise, insect and invasive species outbreaks, destructive wildfires, and intense hurricane activity are amplified by warming temperatures and changes in rainfall frequency and amounts. The adaptation methods listed here are just a few of the available options that help land managers improve resilience and reduce risk. Consult your local forest extension agent or a county forester for more information about threats and mitigation and adaptation measures appropriate for your forested land.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
MANAGEMENT OPTIONS FOR YOUR
WOODLANDS:

Contact your local County Forester or the
Florida Forest Service Office at
(850) 681-5880

www.FDACS.gov/floridaforestservation



Florida Citrus and Yogurt Cake

Recipe from Fresh From Florida
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Ingredients

2 Florida oranges, 1 zested and 1 sliced thin	6 eggs, room temperature
2 Florida grapefruit, 1 zested and 1 sliced thin	1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract
4 Florida Key limes, 2 zested and 2 sliced thin	3 cups all-purpose flour
2 ½ cups Florida sugar	½ teaspoon baking soda
1 cup plain (whole fat) Greek yogurt	Pinch of sea salt
1 stick unsalted butter, softened	

Preparation

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Zest 1 orange, 1 grapefruit and 2 Key limes into a small bowl and set aside. Slice the other half of the citrus into thin rounds and set aside. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar until light, fluffy, and pale yellow in color. Add vanilla and eggs one at a time, blending thoroughly after each egg. In a separate bowl combine the flour, baking soda, and salt. Add the dry ingredients to the creamed mixture, alternating with the yogurt. Mix until combined, being careful not to over-work the batter. Gently fold in the citrus zest. Pour into a well-oiled bundt pan or two loaf pans. Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool for 30 minutes. Using a plate or cake stand, place the sliced citrus around the outer edges, overlapping as you go. Gently unmold the cake and place on top of the sliced citrus. Serve warm or room temperature.

Wild Turkeys

Meleagris gallopavo

Behavior:

Wild turkeys are powerful fliers, especially for short distances. Speeds of up to 55 mph have been observed. To conserve energy, wild turkeys primarily walk. They spend most of their time on the ground, where they search for acorns, seeds, fruits, insects, leaves, and small vertebrates. They can easily cover several hundred acres in a day.

Wild turkeys are social animals and typically flock together in groups numbering just a few birds to as many as 20 or more. They are extremely wary and will run away or fly to a tree to escape danger. For safety from ground predators, wild turkeys roost at night in trees within thicker forest stands.

Courtship occurs during spring. The male, also known as a gobbler or tom, will strut, fan out its tail and gobble to attract hens.

During these displays, the skin on the male wild turkey's head turns bright blue and white, and the caruncles become swollen and turn bright red.



Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Wild turkey hens in Florida typically begin nesting in late March or early April. The female builds a shallow nest on the ground where she lays an average of 9 to 12 eggs. It takes approximately 12-13 days to lay the full clutch of eggs and another 26-28 days of continuous incubation for them to hatch.

Newly hatched wild turkeys, called poults, are highly mobile and can feed themselves soon after hatching. Poults are flightless until they are about 2 weeks old.

Until they are able to fly into low branches or small trees at about 4 weeks of age, they roost on the ground under the hen's wings and tail.

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Appearance:

Wild Turkeys are large birds with long legs, wide, rounded tails, and a small head on a long, slim neck.

An adult male wild turkey is more heavy-bodied and larger than the female. The skin on its featherless head is pinkish-red with red caruncles (wattles) on its throat and neck. It has a dark beard on its breast and dark brown or bronze iridescent feathers.

The female is slimmer and duller looking, with a blue-gray head and neck that lacks the prominent red caruncles of males. Females usually do not have a beard, but if one is present, it is thinner and smaller than the males.

Florida is home to two subspecies of wild turkey — the eastern wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo silvestris*) and the Osceola or Florida wild turkey (*M.g. osceola*).

The Florida wild turkey is best distinguished from the eastern subspecies, which it closely resembles, by the white barring on its wing feathers. On Florida wild turkeys, the white bars on the primary wing feathers are narrower than the black bars and are irregular or broken, which tends to give the wing an overall darker appearance compared to eastern wild turkeys.

Habitat:

The Florida wild turkey is found only in peninsular Florida. North of the peninsula and across the Florida panhandle, it interbreeds with the eastern subspecies.

The wild turkey is a woodlands bird and prefers open forests and forest edges and openings. They are considered a generalist species meaning they do not require specialized food or a particular vegetation community to survive. Consequently, they occur throughout Florida in any suitable habitat.



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TRIMMING MANGROVES: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES



Mangroves serve as nurseries for game and sport fish, stabilize coastal shorelines and improve water quality. Mangroves have a vital role in healthy ecosystems and the economic wellbeing of coastal communities, and the trimming and alteration of mangroves is regulated by Florida's Mangrove Trimming and Preservation Act.

Do I need a permit to trim mangroves on my property?

Florida laws allow property owners to trim mangroves to improve waterfront view or for access to navigable waterways, provided that trimming is limited to riparian mangrove fringes (RMF). Some, but not all, trimming activities require a permit.

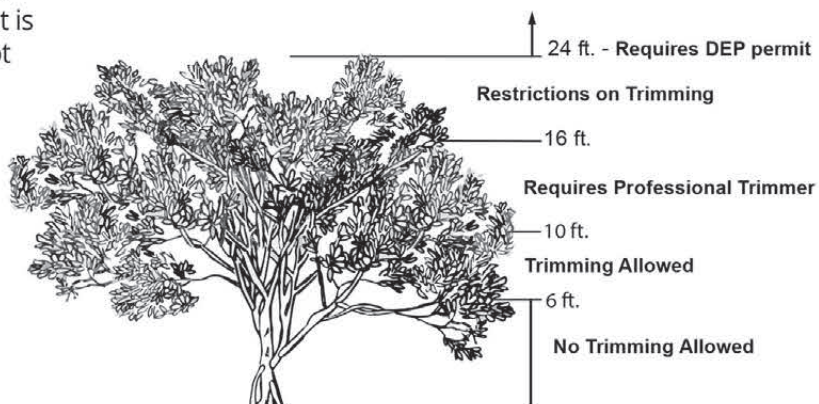
What is a riparian mangrove fringe?

Riparian Mangrove Fringes are areas where mangroves growing along the shoreline do not extend more than 50 feet waterward. A permit is not required if homeowners follow trimming guidelines. The RMF designation does not apply to areas within certain conservation easements, certain mitigation areas, or within certain types of public areas.

Trimming guidelines

- Homeowners may trim mangroves when the mangrove height exceeds six feet but is not taller than 10 feet. Mangroves cannot be trimmed below six feet.
- Mangroves over 10 feet tall require a professional mangrove trimmer.
- If trimming trees over 16 feet tall, trim in stages with no more than 25% removed annually.
- Trimming mangroves over 24 feet tall requires authorization from DEP.
- Homeowners can trim mangroves that were legally trimmed previously. Trimming must maintain the previous height and configuration.
- When the property shoreline is greater than 150 feet in length, 65% of the mangrove trees can be trimmed.

Allowable Trimming



All other mangrove trimming or alteration activities require a permit.



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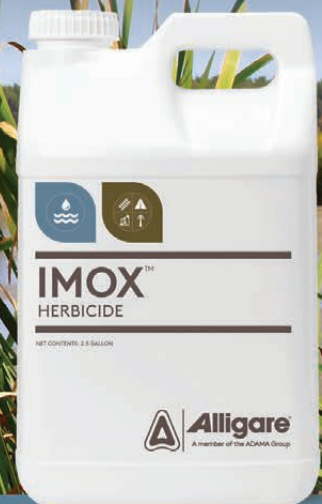
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MANGROVE TRIMMING: BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

Activities to avoid

- Defoliation (removing all or most of the leaves).
- Trimming mangrove roots.
- Trimming mangroves below 6 feet.
- Removing mangroves.

When do I need a professional mangrove trimmer?

You will need a professional mangrove trimmer in three instances:

- If mangroves are taller than 10 feet.
- If trimming under a general permit.
- If trimming to re-establish historical height and configuration within a riparian mangrove fringe.

A list of state authorized professional mangrove trimmers can be found at FloridaDep.gov/ProfessionalMangroveTrimmers.

What are the penalties for illegal mangrove trimming?

For violations, property owners may be required to restore damaged mangroves, purchase mitigation credits, and/or be fined up to \$15,000.

Are my mangroves located within a local delegated jurisdiction?

If you reside in the following regions, check with your local delegated environmental officials before trimming mangroves. Residents located outside of these areas with mangrove trimming questions should contact a [regional DEP district office](#) for assistance.

Pinellas County

Environmental Management
22211 U.S. 19 N., Bldg. 10
Clearwater, FL 33765
727-464-4425

<https://www.pinellascounty.org/environmental/mangroves.htm>

Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission Wetlands Division

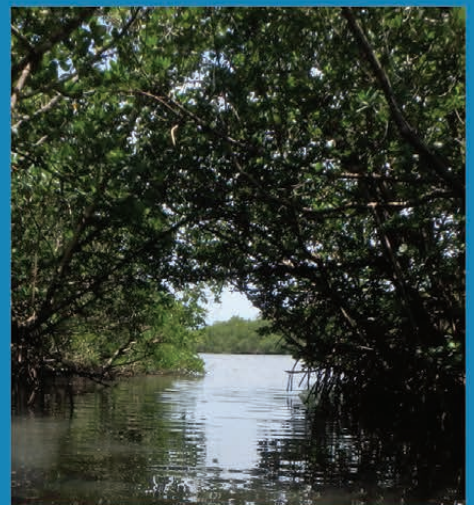
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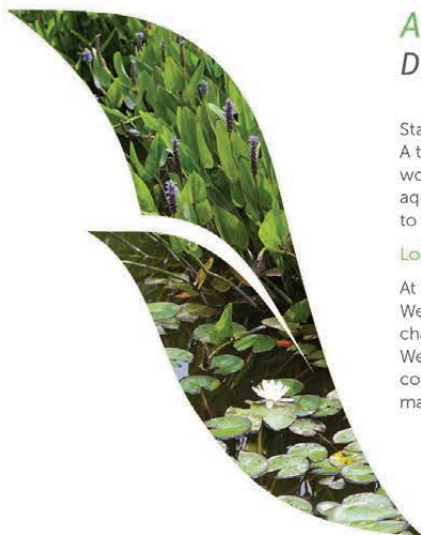
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407.466.8360

Working In the Public Eye

By: Stephen Montgomery
Allstate Resource Management



It's never easy to do a job with someone watching over your shoulder. Someone interrupting your train of thought, asking questions, and criticizing what you're doing. For an aquatic applicator, this is more a question of: How do I handle this when it happens? Rather than: What do I do if it happens? Part of this is because the waterways that are our workplace are such an integral part of everyday life in Florida. The focus on aquatic recreation, abundance of waterfront homes and the importance placed on our stormwater management needs, puts an applicator in the public eye on a daily basis.

One would think our industry would benefit from the increase in public concern for the environment. We are, after all, maintaining our aquatic resources to promote their function, sustainability, and aesthetics. Unfortunately, the "green movement" combined with a lack of public knowledge about aquatic weed management can mistakenly create an adversarial attitude toward applicators and the work we do. The issue is compounded by a steady flow of misrepresented information through the media and internet. Generalizations about the evils of chemicals in the environment has translated to mistrust of anyone using them, regardless of the situation.

It's not likely that a spontaneous, widespread change in people's understanding will happen any time soon. We need to be prepared to deal with individuals that may voice disapproval with our work, and take an active role in educating them. Over the years I've learned some basic guidelines and tactics to follow when speaking to the public while on the job.

Be polite - It should be common sense, but that's easier said than done half way through a long day in the middle of August. Before you get too involved in any conversation, take a second to compose yourself. Being argumentative will not help a situation and does not present you as an experienced professional. You should be confident in your answers but not condescending to the person your speaking with.

Understand their point of view - Sometimes people are just curious what you're doing. Most people don't have the familiarity with your job that others in our field do. You see PPE as an uncomfortable but necessary part of your job. They see it and concerns about their safety arise. The average person's knowledge about aquatic herbicides is probably confined to something they read on facebook last week. Remember you are working near where they and their families live and play. People tend to fear what they don't understand. Take that into consideration when approached by concerned residents.



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Working In the Public Eye

Choose your words - Correct terminology can help to clear up public misconceptions about our job. Words like “chemical” and “killed” are ambiguous and create a sense of fear. Explaining that we only use herbicides approved for use in the water, and that the weeds have been specifically treated helps to convey a better image. It’s important to show the public that aquatic vegetation management is very careful and deliberate, and not reckless use of random chemicals. Our choice of words when talking to people we come into contact with is a big part of that process.

Establish a connection - Most residents and homeowners don’t realize how important aquatic vegetation management is here in Florida. Establishing a connection between what we do and the benefits to their lives demonstrates that applicators are working on their behalf. Explaining how successful vegetation management programs maintain flood control systems and recreational waters, while improving aesthetics of communities shows them they have a vested interest in what we do.

Make the weeds the bad guy - The years and years of hard work and environmental success go unnoticed, but the rare mistake gets instant attention. Applicators often get swept up in the public’s fervor to “save the environment” and assign blame to careless offenders. In the rush to put a face to environmental damage, it’s often overlooked that: **The weeds are the bad guys here.** The amount of habitat and income lost due to exotic plant species rarely makes the headline news. Their invasive nature is not apparent to residents because our efforts keep the invasion at bay (usually without their knowledge). Educating residents on the plants we target and the damage they’re capable of can improve public support for our work.

Know when to leave - Despite your best efforts, some people are just not interested in having their minds changed. Some folks are going to cling to their pre-conceived notions tighter than a drowning person clings to a life preserver. Being polite and professional doesn’t mean you have to stand there being berated by a belligerent individual. If their mind is made up, then you trying to convince them otherwise will probably only aggravate them more. That’s why it’s important to realize when a situation won’t be resolved in the moment and politely make your exit. Let them know that their concerns are understood and give them the contact information for a supervisor or customer service department. Business cards and printed informational materials can often help make a transition to leaving. When you return to your office be sure to follow up with the appropriate people so that they know to expect a call and what the situation is so they aren’t blindsided.

Sometimes, as aquatic resource managers in Florida, we have to be our own public relations department. Avoiding confrontation at any cost only perpetuates the misconception that we’re doing something wrong. A little explanation can go long way toward fostering a broader understanding of our job and its necessity. It’s important that we don’t take criticism of what we do personally, particularly since it is often misinformed. We make an effort to get licensed and stay trained. We work hard to ensure that the job gets done right and Florida’s waterways are protected. Don’t be afraid to let people know it.



Grilled Florida Spiny Lobster Rolls

Recipe from Fresh From Florida
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

Ingredients

1 pound Florida spiny lobster meat, grilled and chopped

Florida Romaine or Butter lettuce, shredded (or your favorite lettuce)

½ cup Florida celery, chopped

Rolls, split in half

2 green onions, chopped

½ cup mayonnaise

1 tablespoon prepared Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce

Sea salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste

Preparation

Heat grill to medium-high. Cut the lobster tail in half, leaving the lobster meat in the shell. Season with salt and pepper and grill for 2 to 3 minutes per side or until meat is no longer translucent. Remove from shell to cool and cut into bite-size pieces. Combine the mayonnaise, mustard, lemon juice, Worcestershire, celery, salt and pepper, mix thoroughly. Gently fold in lobster meat. Fill rolls with lobster mixture and garnish with green onions. Serve chilled.



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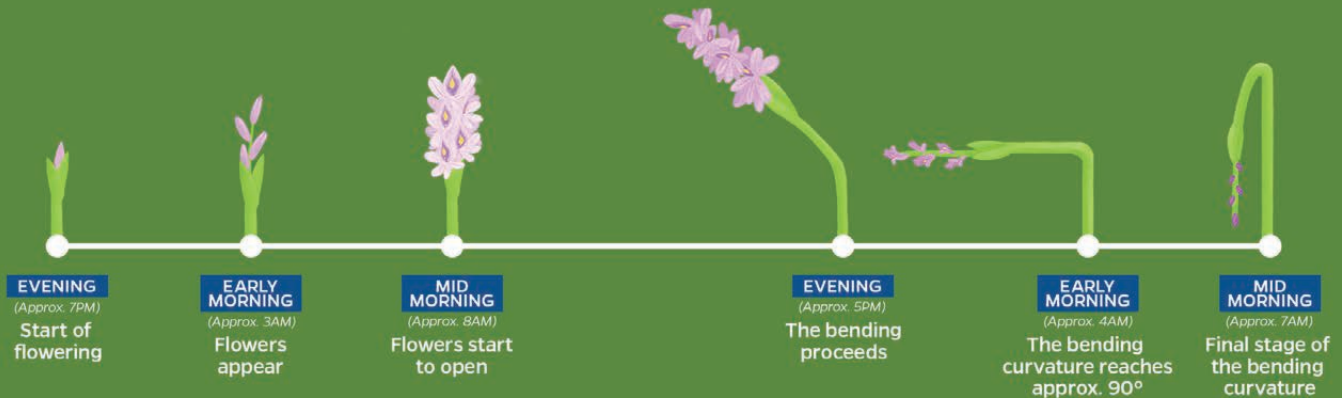



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Adapted from Penfound, Wm. T. & Earle, T.T. (1948). The Biology of the Water Hyacinth. *Ecological Monographs*, 18(4), 447-472. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1948585>

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