



Constructed Wetlands Workshop

In early November, Plant Materials Center Manager, Clarence Maura and Plant Materials Specialist, Samuel Sanders participated in a workshop on Constructed Wetlands and their use in the Water Quality arena. The workshop was held at Fort Valley State College, Fort Valley, GA. The display on the PMC rock/reed filter system, its operations and usage, was setup. Performance and monitoring results were presented to the 150-200 participants and attendees.

The workshop was co-sponsored by: Ft. Valley State College's School of Agriculture, Home Economics and Allied Programs; The USDA NRCS; US Environmental Protection Agency; US Army Corps of Engineers and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Protection Division.

Other states have approved this type filtering system for residential and commercial use as an alternative to the lengthy drainfields associated with the normal septic systems. Florida and a couple other southern states, consider it to be experimental and can be installed only with special permitting. The FL PMC is trying to develop research on these systems so they will be approved for use in FL.

Hurricane Opal Only Said Hello

On October 4, 1995 over 125 miles of primary dune system on the shoreline of the northwest Florida gulf coast were destroyed by hurricane Opal. With Opal packing winds gusting upward of 144 mph and water surges of 15-20 feet it was no wonder the fragile dune system received such damage. The four acre John Beasley Park, where the PMC had previously planted several dune stabilizing plants, was the exception to the area. The primary and secondary dune system remained intact. The plant materials showed signs of wind, sand and salt damage but it is anticipated there will be a 90-95% survival of the

materials. *Spartina patens*, 'Northpa' & 'Southpa' bitter panicum, and beach sunflower were supplied by the PMC, other plants such as sea oats, 'Emerald Sea' juniper, wax myrtle, lantana, and blanket flower were purchased for the project. Many hours had been spent the last three years revegetating damaged dunes and other areas of this site, by Darryl Williams, NRC Crestview Field Office, Okaloosa County volunteers, Brooksville PMC personnel and other NRCS persons.

After seeing the success of this planting many other communities, individuals, and agencies are asking for assistance in stabilizing beach areas.

Native Seed Harvest

It has been a banner year for native seed collection. The Flail-Vac seed harvester has again this year been used to harvest lopsided indiagrass and wiregrass, from state parks and forests such as Fort Cooper State Park in Inverness, Croom Wildlife Preserve in the Withlacoochee State Forest, Avon Park Bombing Range, and a privately owned field south of Floral City.

Hand collections were made of several other grasses and forbs. Thanks to all the field and area office people who helped us with these collections.

Mined Land Revegetation Update

There is a great demand in Florida for native seed to revegetate disturbed areas, and because much of this native material is difficult to establish, planting methods must be researched and determined. As reported in our June, 1995 newsletter, in late spring and early summer three methods (broadcast, drill and plug mix) were used on two sites of the Florida Institute of Phosphate Research project in Central Florida.

The drill treatment for indiagrass had greater success than the wiregrass on the clay overburden site. Partridge pea and 'Alamo'

switchgrass were also included. The switchgrass had exceptional emergence.

Indiangrass was planted by the three methods on a sand tailings site. Emergence was exceptionally good from the plug mix treatment.

Chemical Mixing Center

To comply with the increasing environmental regulations concerning chemicals, the PMC received funding for the construction of a building containing a mixing pad with sump well for spillage, emergency eye wash and shower station, and a lockable chemical storage room. The entire building is secured when not in use. Construction is currently nearing completion.

Buzz Buzz Buzz

This is not the sound of bees flying around but the activity at the greenhouses and shadehouse in recent months. Potting trays and pots are being filled with cuttings of various materials, in preparation of spring planting at the Perry Sprayfield project in Belleview, as well as increase fields of native material for the on going project to revegetate mined land reclamation sites in central Florida.

The Perry Sprayfield is a two acre site which receives aerial irrigation of treated effluent wastewater produced by Marion County. Plant materials to be used on this site will be: a native switchgrass (DeFuniak), Hemarthria, Eastern gamagrass, perennial peanut, 'Mott' dwarf elephant grass, 'Sharp' Spartina patens. Bermuda grass, bahiagrass and 'Alamo' switchgrass will be used as standards of comparison. Steve Boetger, NRC Ocala Field Office, and the Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District and the City of Ocala are cooperating with us on this project.

The native material being increased for the mined land reclamation project is lopsided indiagrass and wiregrass. Much of the native material for the project has no published seed



cleaning or propagating procedures, requiring the development of these techniques by PMC staff. One such species is the gopher apple (Licania michauxii). Our biological technician has been very successful in cleaning and propagating this small shrub which is an important food source for the Florida gopher turtle.

Farewell To Some

As 1995 comes to a close we reflect on the many changes made, or being made, in the USDA-NRCS. Many have been positive, allowing us to better service our customers, and others sadden us since positions have been eliminated. Friends and colleagues we have known and worked with for many years have accepted positions in other locales or departments and will no longer be able to assist us in their usual positions with NRCS. Some have taken buy-outs and their expertise will be lost. The plant materials program has not been exempt from these government wide changes. The position of Regional Plant Materials Specialist has been abolished and we will no longer have H. Wayne Everett, Fort Worth, Texas to correlate things like inter-center projects, distribution of plant materials from other centers for field plantings, as well as the pipeline of information and other associated duties so capably performed. Wayne, and specialist from other regions, will certainly be missed in the program.

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*We wish everyone a
Happy and Healthy
New Year*

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*Clarena Maura Le
Gwen Puckrow
D. P. Sikes
Robert Santini
Sharon Bluff
Mary Anne & Monica*