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Seedbank and seedling ecology of *Scleria lacustris*
in seasonal marshes of Florida
Project # 2070B9G, Task 1

Task Leader: Jacono, Colette colette_jacono@usgs.gov

Statement of Problem:

An expansion of efforts and resources of the Nonindigenous Aquatic Species Plant Database is needed to provide for increased demands incurred by the 1998 introduction of the federal noxious weed, *Salvinia molesta*.

Objectives:

Rapid detection and reporting of *Salvinia molesta* and *Salvinia minima* as related to status, distribution, life history information and progress of the USDA-ARS biological control progress.

Methodology:

Identification, mapping and real-time reporting of research progress achieved by maintenance of a toll free hotline, realtime website and responsive listserver.

Communication Plan:

To be entered

FY: 2004

Statement of Work:

Seasonal marshes of Florida are governed by a cycling hydroperiod, rising in the growing season and falling in the winter. The marshes are defined by varying compositions of perennial herbs that have meager seedbanks and recur annually by vegetative means. *Scleria lacustris* is an enormous, nonindigenous sedge that has been increasing in frequency and abundance since the late 1980s across south-central Florida. Little is known about this unusual species beyond recognition of its importance as a seed dependent

annual invasive in marshes otherwise dominated by perennials, and that it forms congested populations apparently linked to hydrologic dry down. Research goals are to understand the persistence and ecological importance of *S. lacustris* seedbanks, to identify conditions favorable for regeneration and seedling recruitment, to realize factors contributing to colonization and spread within a marsh and to quantify plant community changes. Potential application rests in conservation areas where dry downs help achieve functional habitat for the endangered Florida snail kite.

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