

ALIPC Bits and Pieces

November 2007

This newsletter is intended for current members of the Alabama Invasive Plant Council. If you are not a member please consider joining us in our efforts to identify and address the issue of invasive plant species in the State of Alabama. You can find an application at www.se-eppc.org by clicking on the State Chapter link for Alabama.

On behalf of the ALIPC let me wish each and every one of you a happy holiday season. At this time of year there isn't as much going on with invasive species. Everyone has a moment to catch their breath before beginning next year's campaigns.

As you take on your individual battles with the pest that bothers you most next year, please remember to share your success with us. We would like everyone to know of your hard work. Who knows, your techniques may be just the answer someone else is looking for in dealing with their own invasive pest.

Take a breather, gather some holiday cheer, and go get 'em next year!!!!

The SE-EPPC website guru Chuck Bargeran has been working hard to update the SE-EPPC website. He hopes to have the new look up and running by the Holidays. From previews I've seen, everyone will love the new look and ease of navigation.

Take some time over the holidays and check back with the website to see the new look, www.se-eppc.org. When you do, be sure to let Chuck know how much you appreciate his hard work!

To those of you unable to attend the terrific Cogongrass conference that Dr. Jim Miller and Dr. Nancy Lowenstein put together, you have a chance to review a lot of the information, proceedings, and PowerPoints from the conference at: www.cogongrass.org

Have you visited the SE-Eppc Listserv? If not go to www.se-eppc.org you will find a wealth of information. Here are some examples:

Dear SE-EPPC members,

The submission period for the Princeton Invasive Mapping Project in the Southeast US is coming to a close. We would like to gather as many additional entries as possible in the next few weeks.

We would really appreciate if you - or anyone you know - could take some time to enter estimated species abundance for kudzu, cogongrass, and privet in your area. We are producing the first regional species maps for the entire Southeast US based on plant abundance (see example on our home page). Upon completion, I will notify this list about downloading the maps/data from our website. Please visit <http://invasive.princeton.edu> by December 31st. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Apologies to anyone who already received this notification directly. Thank you for your time.

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Whether or not you agree with the organization's stance below, the Farm Bill is to be voted upon this Tuesday, 12/11

IMMEDIATE RELEASE	CONTACT: Brad Redlin
Date December 7, 2007	651.649.1446

Urgent Farm Bill action needed: Last chance to act before major vote

League members must call their senators and ask them to support our priorities for safeguarding and enhancing natural resources and supporting rural America.

The Senate is scheduled to vote on Farm Bill amendments starting **Tuesday, December 11**. This action in the U.S. Senate marks the Farm Bill debate's final stages and the last chance to institute IWLA priorities before the bill moves into a conference committee with the Farm Bill passed by the U.S. House.

Visit: http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm to find your senators' phone numbers.

Call your senators and ask them to support the following amendments:

1) THE DORGAN-GRASSLEY PAYMENT LIMITATION AMENDMENT

Like the House bill, the Senate committee bill maintains the current waste and abuse approach to production payment limitations that leads to infinite payments, farm consolidation, and the slow demise of our natural resources and rural America. This wasteful spending leaves many key conservation programs and initiatives chronically underfunded by the Farm Bill.

The amendment introduced by Senators Byron Dorgan (D-N.D.) and Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) would provide real reform and shift the savings to beneficial uses. The Dorgan-Grassley amendment would put a hard cap of \$250,000 on commodity payments, close loopholes, and shift the savings to conservation and other important aspects like anti-hunger programs.

It's easy to call: Call your Senator's office and ask for the legislative assistant that works on agriculture. If the aide is unavailable, leave a short message of support for the Dorgan-Grassley amendment, along with your name and phone number, on the aide's voice mail or with the receptionist.

The message is simple: "I am a constituent and am calling to ask that Senator _____ vote YES on the Dorgan-Grassley payment limits amendment (#3695) on the floor of the U.S. Senate during the Farm Bill deliberations. The amendment corrects skewed policy and will protect natural resources, farm families, and rural communities. How will the Senator vote on this defining amendment for the 2007 Farm Bill?"

Background: Unlimited production subsidies encourage overproduction and often lower prices and further result in soil erosion, water degradation, farm consolidation, and the growth of corporate livestock facilities. The payments have the effect of expanding production and destroying habitat while at the same time increasing land prices and reducing farming opportunities for new farmers. The very effective first step Congress must take in the 2007 Farm Bill is to cap subsidies to mega farms through the Dorgan-Grassley Farm Program Payment Limitation Reform Amendment. The amendment:

a) Limits annual per farm commodity subsidy payments to \$250,000. In terms of the specific payment programs, the amendment would establish effective caps of \$40,000 on direct (fixed) payments, \$60,000 on counter cyclical (and crop revenue) payments, and \$150,000 on loan deficiency payments and marketing loan gains, including gains on generic certificates and forfeited commodities. The combined limit would be \$250,000.

b) Closes loopholes. Farm families would retain full assurance of federal support, but no longer would the very largest farmers be able to exploit loopholes to pocket tax dollars without limit.

c) Re-invests in high priority programs. Savings from the amendment would be re-invested in programs to support conservation and anti-hunger efforts—program areas that in many instances received no funding or insufficient funding in the Senate Farm Bill.

2) THE WYDEN-HARKIN BIOMASS CROP TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (BCTAP) AMENDMENT TO THE FARM BILL ENERGY TITLE

The League participated in developing a Biomass Crop Transition Assistance Program (BCTAP) in the Energy Title of the Senate Farm Bill. The goal of the original measure was to give farmers financial assistance to incorporate conservation measures into growing perennial bioenergy crops and to participate in projects that could generate information that other farmers could use to grow bioenergy crops sustainably.

There is great potential in transitioning biofuel and other energy production to perennial plants: improving water quality, enhancing soil health, increasing wildlife habitat, sequestering carbon—all while producing more energy than is possible from annual row crops.

Unfortunately, during consideration of the Farm Bill by the Senate Agriculture Committee, the BCTAP language was changed to not only allow, but fully subsidize, the destruction of native prairie, old growth forests, or wetlands, to allow planting of energy crops.

The amendment introduced by Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) would ensure that subsidies for farmers to grow next generation biofuels really work to promote perennial crops, and do not encourage destruction of native habitats and wildlife or allow for planting of invasive species.

It's easy to call: Call your Senator's office and ask for the legislative assistant that works on agriculture. If the aide is unavailable, leave a short message of support for the Wyden-Harkin Farm Bill Energy Title amendment, along with your name and phone number, on the aide's voice mail or with the receptionist.

The message is simple: "I am a constituent and am calling to ask that Senator _____ vote YES on the Wyden-Harkin Farm Bill Energy Title amendment on the floor of the U.S. Senate during the Farm Bill deliberations. The amendment corrects skewed policy and will protect and enhance natural resources and wildlife while furthering bioenergy production. How will the Senator vote on this defining amendment for the 2007 Farm Bill?"

Background: The Biomass Energy Crop Transition Assistance provision in Section 9001 of the Senate Farm Bill Energy Title was originally designed to provide incentives to farmers to grow bioenergy crops in a sustainable manner. However, the Senate Agriculture Committee removed adequate conservation goals from the original measure. The Wyden-Harkin Amendment would restore the conservation measures removed in the Senate bill, and target the program to land where the establishment of perennial bioenergy crops would result in improved conservation performance.

Current Bill Drawbacks	Wyden-Harkin Amendment Improvements
Inadequate conservation requirements for farmers receiving funding from the program.	Participating farmers meet reasonable conservation goals in return for financial assistance and incentives to establish and maintain perennial bioenergy crops under a 5-year contract with USDA.

No targeting of program funds to land where bioenergy crops could improve conservation performance.

Program funds targeted to land such as eroding cropland where establishment of perennial bioenergy crops could improve conservation performance.

No restrictions on land eligible for payments to establish and grow bioenergy crop. Program incentives could be used to destroy native grasslands, mature forests, wetland and other sensitive resources.

Limits eligible land to that which has already been used for production, such as previously cultivated land, managed pasture, or clearcut forest land, ensuring that public subsidies do not promote the loss of native habitats.

No restrictions to ensure that harvesting of a bioenergy crop does not harm wildlife. Crops could be harvested during nesting and brood rearing season, resulting in significant bird kills.

Restricts harvesting of bioenergy crops until after bird nesting and brood rearing seasons, which generally end well before the first frost, the point in time when most bioenergy companies want to harvest biomass.

Finally, tell your senators to OPPOSE any amendment that would:

- Take funding away from vital conservation programs like the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP).
- Further weaken USDA conservation compliance provisions including Sodsaver.
- Allow even larger portions of impermeable surfaces (i.e. pavement and concrete) on land in Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) easements.
- Expand use of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) for subsidizing livestock confinements.

We need your fast action in support of these two amendments. Contact Brad Redlin at (651) 649-1446 ext. 13, or [e-mail bredlin@iwla.org](mailto:bredlin@iwla.org), for more assistance. Visit www.iwla.org/index.php?id=21 for additional background on the Farm Bill.

[Click this link to take action on League issues.](#)

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions about this action alert or other IWLA programs, please contact:

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Please help us out!!!

If you have a noteworthy invasive plant project, interesting article, or a presentation or seminar coming up, that you would like to recognize, please let me know. We would like to share and recognize all of the wonderful efforts that are going on around our state. Send your information to me at andy@landtrust-hsv.org.