



2008 SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Support and Funding

- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) awarded a fifth Pulling Together Initiative Grant to the Carolinas Beach Vitex Task Force for \$40,000.
- In SC, the Town of Pawleys Island appropriated \$15,000 for beach vitex which was matched with a \$45,000 grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Additional funding: Bunnelle Foundation (\$12,000), US Fish & Wildlife Service (\$15,000)
- The NC Task Force began work on their \$128,500 NFWF Keystone Grant by surveying much of their coastline for beach vitex, working with beach communities to encourage the passage of ordinances and beginning eradication efforts.

Permits and Policy

- Ordinances banning beach vitex were passed in a number of NC beach communities: Kure Beach, Carolina Beach, Emerald Isle, Oak Island, Surf City, Wrightsville Beach, Southern Shore, the communities of Bogue Banks (Atlantic Beach, Pine Knoll Shores, Salter Path, Indian Beach, Emerald Isle).
- The NC Board of Agriculture listed beach vitex as a Class B State Noxious Weed which bans the sale, transport and possession of beach vitex by nurseries, garden shops and private property owners

Research and Monitoring

- Sea turtle volunteers on NC/SC beaches continued to survey and report locations of beach vitex. Reporting forms were submitted to www.beachvitex.org and added to a geographical data base maintained by North Inlet-Winyah Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.
- NC Task Force members surveyed many beaches of the coast including: Kure, Carolina, Topsail, N. Topsail, Surf City, Holden, Ocean Isle, Dare County beaches and Cape Hatteras beaches. Many plants were discovered on undeveloped Masonboro Island which shows the need for surveying undeveloped sandy islands. Parts of the northern Outer Banks were surveyed but a thorough, systematic search will be done in 2009.
- Clemson University's Baruch Institute and SC Task Force members completed surveying for beach vitex all beaches north of Winyah Bay in Georgetown County. Nineteen beach vitex plants were found on remote, undeveloped North Island in Georgetown County exhibiting how easily beach vitex spreads by water.
- Through the Task Force website, the first report of beach vitex in Virginia near Virginia Beach was documented. The site was reported by an official with the City of Norfolk who consulted with Clemson staff for methods of treatment.
- NC/SC Task Force members attended a BASF workshop on Clearcast, an herbicide which could prove effective in beach vitex eradication.

Beach Vitex Removal/Restoration

- Hundreds of seedlings were documented on NC/SC beaches by Task Force volunteers. The Clemson crew was notified to visit sites for treatment and follow up herbicide treatment was completed on those that were beach vitex.
- In NC, under the NFWF Keystone grant, 156 sites of beach vitex were treated. In SC, under grants from

NRCS, Town of Pawleys Island, Donnelley and USFWS, 178 sites on the A & B lists were treated and all sites were replanted with native vegetation.

- In addition to sea oats and bitter panicum, Clemson crews added American beachgrass to replant the dunes after eradication of beach vitex.
- A trial of sweetgrass as part of an NRCS Research Project to determine the most effective variety for the South Carolina coast was planted in limited areas.
- Clemson crews continued to re-survey for re-growth of treated beach vitex. The survey of beaches south of Charleston began.

Outreach and Education

- NC/SC Task Force members continued to make presentations and hold workshops in the Carolinas and around the country: garden clubs, festivals, expos, schools, town councils, Weed Science Society of NC, NC Colonial Waterbirds Working Group, NC and SC Sea Turtle Volunteer Workshops, SEWEE Assn. Teachers Workshop, Early Detection Rapid Response Training Workshop (Manitoba, Canada).
- The 5th Beach Vitex Symposium was held March 19 in North Myrtle Beach, SC. The Clemson crew conducted a workshop in treatment methods for beach vitex. Coastal Ecoscapes demonstrated the proper way to plant native vegetation once the dunes have been cleared.
- Beach vitex continued to have excellent media coverage helping to raise public awareness:

Magazines

BASF's Latitude, NC Sea Grant's Coastwatch, Clemson Impacts

Television

SCETV's Making It Grow, Carolina TV Now, WPDE-Myrtle Beach

Newspapers

(NC) Wilmington Star News, Snows Cut Monthly, Lumina News

(SC) Coastal Observer, Georgetown Times, Sun News

(VA) Virginian-Pilot Newspaper

Video

The beach vitex video produced by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) was shown continuously on the New Hanover County (NC) government cable channel.

Huntington Beach State Park played the USFWS video in its' Education Center estimating it was viewed by more than 23,000 visitors.

Awards

- The National Fish & Wildlife Foundation presented the Carolinas Beach Vitex Task Force with its Community Spirit Award during a reception during National Invasive Weed Awareness Week (NIWAW).
- The USFWS Southeastern Regional Director's Conservation Award was given to the SC Beach Vitex Task Force at the annual May awards ceremony in Atlanta, GA.