

SUMMARY

2009 Beach Vitex Symposium

North Carolina Aquarium at Fort Fisher
900 Loggerhead Rd. Kure Beach, NC

2008 Significant Accomplishments by the Carolinas Beach Vitex Task Force (CBVTF) (attached) – Betsy Brabson, SC Task Force Coordinator

North Carolina Update – Melanie Doyle, NC Task Force Coordinator
Dale Suiter, US Fish & Wildlife Service

The NC Dept. of Agriculture has listed beach vitex as a Class B Noxious Weed. The plant has been found in 7 of 9 coastal counties. There are 409 known sites which is an ever-changing number. 156 beach vitex sites were treated in 2008 with some spring treatments planned for this season. The NC Task Force has surveyed most of the southern coast and will concentrate efforts this season on the northern coast and undeveloped barrier islands. Fourteen beach vitex plants were found on undeveloped Masonboro Island indicating the plant can spread by water. A landscaper training workshop was held at Wrightsville Beach in 2008 with several more workshops are planned for 2009. Partnering has been very effective in the beach vitex effort in NC.

North Carolina is funded by a \$128,000 Keystone Grant from the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Funds which were frozen in the fall are finally coming in and grant agreements have been sent out to the coastal towns. Beach vitex which is heavily concentrated on the southern coast has been found in on the northern coast in Duck, Corolla, Southern Shores and Nags Head. \$71,750 of the \$128,000 grant has been allotted for treatment and removal but no replanting.

Wrightsville Beach is a beach vitex success story. The Task Force and Wrightsville Beach Parks and Recreation Dept. were first met with opposition from property owners who did not want to have their beach vitex removed. Through persistence by the CBVTF and PRT and with help from the media in educating the public about the problems with beach vitex, there was 100% participation. There were 52 sites found which were all treated in 2008.

South Carolina Update – Jack Whetstone, Clemson University Baruch Institute

Clemson's efforts to control beach vitex began in fall 2004. Aquatic herbicides were used due to the sensitive beachfront environment. An oceanfront plot with four herbicides was set up. The herbicide Imazapyr (Habitat) and the hack/squirt method was found to be the most effective at killing beach vitex. In 2008, Clemson was awarded grants totaling \$87,000 from US Fish & Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, 2 501 (c) 3 foundations and the Town of Pawleys Island. South Carolina needs another year of funding. In 2008, 178 sites were treated and replanted with native dune vegetation. Some retreatment of beach vitex was necessary. Beach vitex seeds are a problem. They are thought to be viable 3-5 years. There are 31 sites remaining to be treated but most all

known SC sites have been treated. Survey of the southern coast and undeveloped barrier islands will be the focus for 2009. Partnering has worked very well in SC with Clemson and USC working together. Local high schools and Horry Georgetown Technical College are involved in the beach vitex project.

Whetstone spoke about a NOAA grant opportunity that is part of the government's stimulus package to help create jobs. These 'shovel ready' grants are \$500,000 to be used in 18 months and are for coastal and marine habitat restoration projects. South Carolina needs one more year of funding of about \$100,000 and would not qualify. North Carolina would be a more likely candidate. The application deadline is April 6, 2009.

Virginia Update – Lee Rosenberg, City of Norfolk Dept. of Planning & Community Development

A large site of beach vitex was first found in 2008 near Willoughby Spit at Virginia Beach. Rosenberg identified the plant via the Task Force website www.beachvitex.org and surmised that it had probably been planted. Rosenberg consulted with Clemson on control methods and treated sites using Habitat and the hack/squirt method in October. Some foliar spraying with dye was also used. Beach vitex now tops Japanese sedge in invasiveness along the VA coast. Although there is no sea turtle nesting in VA, Rosenberg contends that if beach vitex is allowed to grow and spread, it could limit beach access by the public.

There have been several local newspaper articles about beach vitex which serve to educate the public. Rosenberg spoke about the plant on a local radio talk show. His next focus will be to try to have beach vitex listed as a State Noxious Weed. He feels confident that VA will want to be pro-active with the state's few sites after seeing what has occurred in North and South Carolina. His department is providing property owners with a list of native dune plants.

Beach Vitex Listing as a North Carolina State Noxious Weed – David Pearce, NC Dept. of Agriculture

This listing prevents beach vitex from being in the trade industry in NC. Letters have been sent to those in the nursery trade. There has been some resistance by the nurseries which is expected when they are asked to stop selling a species. NCDA inspections by plant pest specialists will begin in April. Coastal counties have been quarantined.

Beach Vitex Listing Update in South Carolina – John Brubaker, South Carolina Exotic Pest Plant Council (SC-EPPC)

Dialogue has begun between the CBVTF and the South Carolina Dept. of Agriculture. A letter will be submitted asking the SCDA Commissioner to request the the legislature to list beach vitex as a State Noxious Weed. Clemson Dept. of Plant Industry will be involved in the decision.

Beach Vitex Control with Selected Herbicides – Sarah True, NC State University,
graduate student

Field and greenhouse studies were conducted from 2006 through 2008 to evaluate the efficacy of selected herbicides and mixtures on beach vitex. In one experiment, beach vitex control at 12 months after treatment was greatest with glyphosate and glyphosate plus imazapyr, with 90 and 94% control respectively. Control with triclopyr mixtures was less than 11% at 12 MAT. In a second experiment, at 8 MAT greatest control was observed with glyphosate and imazapyr (83 and 90%, respectively). Control levels with other treatments were significantly lower. The absorption and translocation of glyphosate in beach vitex was evaluated with cut stem and foliar applications. In beach vitex cut stems, time of harvest was not significant indicating that all absorption and translocation occurred within the first six hours after treatment. The greatest amount of herbicide recovered remained in the stump. A moderate amount translocated to the first root section and a minimal amount translocated to root segments greater distances from the stump. In foliar treatments, the greatest recovered herbicide remained in the treated leaf. Recovered ¹⁴C-glyphosate in other plant parts did not differ. Translocation of the applied herbicide was generally low with both application methods.

After a box lunch at the Aquarium, attendees visited nearby Carolina Beach. Here they observed a large oceanfront colony of beach vitex that was spreading onto public Freeman Park and scheduled for treatment this season. The park's front dunes had been recently replanted with sea oats which are doing a good job of building the dunes. Melanie Doyle presented Lee Rosenberg with an official Carolinas BeachVitex Task Force t-shirt and hat making Virginia a part of the Task Force.