

Program Name: Outreach Support for Invasive Species Management in Florida
Project Name: Public Outreach Project to Support Prevention Efforts
Project ID: 4205
Lead Agency: University of Florida

Strategic Plan Goal(s) Addressed: Objective 1A-2: Conduct outreach to support prevention efforts, Objective 1B-3: Improve pathway awareness and engage the public in prevention efforts

Measurable Output(s): Website visits, social media followers, outreach products distributed, number of people reached at events and presentations

Project Synopsis: The goal of this project is to inform and engage the south Florida public in efforts to prevent the introduction of invasive exotic species. This project will increase the visibility of the “Don’t Let It Loose” message by disseminating practical information related to responsible pet ownership and native plant landscaping. In addition, the project aims to raise awareness of management and regulatory approaches such as exotic species risk assessment, screening and inspection processes, and public declarations (e.g., Don’t Pack a Pest). A redesigned, public-oriented dontletitloose.org website, strong social media presence, monthly blog, and events calendar will be used to disseminate information and promote existing prevention programs (e.g., Exotic Pet Amnesty, Don’t Let It Loose activity guide). Face-to-face outreach will be conducted through event exhibits and group presentations, facilitated by the development of a “traveling trunk” of hands-on educational materials. Outreach products (brochures, stickers, etc.) will be developed and updated as needed.

The project is being conducted by outreach and human dimensions specialists at University of Florida’s Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center. As chairs of the Outreach Subcommittee of the Everglades Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (ECISMA) from 2011 to 2013, we produced educational materials (e.g., fact sheets, identification guides, newsletters, bookmark, bumper sticker), coordinated outreach at community events, and conducted an assessment of needs and priorities for an ongoing collaborative outreach program.

Current Status: University of Florida has been coordinating invasive species outreach efforts since 2011 but has not yet received any external funding directed toward this purpose (with the exception of two small grants for website redesign – see below).

Project Schedule:

Start Date: 2011
 Finish Date: None

Detailed Project Budget Information

The budget includes salaries of an Environmental Education Coordinator and a Designer/Web Developer. From 2015–2018, the annual budget for the program (“Outreach Support for Invasive Species Management in Florida”) is \$100,000, divided among this and two other projects. Through 2014, University of Florida has self-funded a portion of the outreach program. In 2014 we received a National Park Service subaward (\$5,000) from the University of Georgia to construct the layout and functionality of the new evergladescisma.org website.

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Balance to Complete	Total
Federal	\$5,000						\$5,000
SFWMD**							

Foundation	\$7,500						\$7,500
University of Florida	\$15,000						\$15,000
		\$32,500	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000		\$152,500
Total	\$27,500	\$32,500	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000		\$180,000

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Hyperlink: <http://crocdoc.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Pictures:



DID YOU KNOW?

- » Florida has more nonnative reptile and amphibian species than anywhere else in the world.
- » More than 80% of the nonnative reptiles and amphibians in Florida arrived here through the pet trade.
- » There are more species of nonnative lizards breeding in Florida than native lizards.
- » Invasive plants and animals cost Floridians more than \$500 million each year.
- » Invasive species are the second-leading cause of species endangerment and extinction, after habitat loss.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- » Do your research before buying exotic pets, and remember, Don't Let it Loose!
- » Learn to identify invasive nonnative species and report sightings at www.IveGotL.org or 1-888-IVE-GOTI
- » If you have an exotic pet you can no longer care for, contact the Pet Amnesty hotline at 1-888-IVE-GOTI
- » Inspect boating and fishing equipment and remove any plants and animals before going home.
- » Learn about laws and regulations regarding nonnative species at www.myfwc.com/nonnatives



For more information about invasive species in south Florida and tips on how you can help, visit www.dontletitloose.org

