



Invasive Plant Species Control and Habitat Restoration

Riparian areas in the Chicopee Woods Nature Preserve are under attack by exotic invasive plants, resulting in loss of habitat for native wildlife and loss of plant diversity in the park. Elachee actively works to control this invasion in order to restore and protect important wildlife habitats, enhance biodiversity and safeguard high priority (rare) plants.

An invasive species is any species that is not native to a given ecosystem and whose presence causes economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. Free from natural predators, parasites or competitors of their native habitats, they often develop very high populations that disrupt an established ecosystem.

From 2007-2011, Elachee spearheaded a collaborative initiative to map and control the spread of exotic invasive plants within the Nature Preserve.

These efforts continue. As funding becomes available, Elachee plans to continue mapping and treating many acres of plants such as *Microstegium* still found within the Nature Preserve.

Invasive Plant Species Control and Habitat Restoration Project Overview

- Mapping 30 acres of infestation, where exotic invasive plants were altering the structure or biodiversity of plant communities or had the capacity to displace rare plants (2007)
- Elachee established the Gainesville/Hall County Cooperative Weed Management Area (CWMA)
- Treatment by volunteers (contributing 500+ hours) and contractors of 30 infested acres (2007-08)
- Additional 15 acres of infestation mapped and treated (2009)
- Introduced 800+ local elementary students to invasive plants and the problems they cause
- Developed "Invasive Species" K-12 curriculum, and trained area teachers and non-formal educators

\$255,800 in Project Funding 2007-2011

- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation 5 Star and Pulling Together Initiative grants (\$40,000)
- Georgia Forestry Commission grant, funded by USDA Forest Service, Urban & Community Forestry (\$3,000)
- Matching funds provided by Park Commission, Elachee, GA EPPC and the City of Gainesville (\$83,800)
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation 5 Star 2009 grant, including matching funds from Elachee and the Park Commission (\$81,500)
- National Fish & Wildlife Foundation 5 Star 2010 grant (\$31,700)
- REI 2011 grant 2011, including \$10,800 matching funds from Elachee and the Park Commission (\$15,800)