



## It Keeps on Going and Growing

The beach restoration work along the Gulf Shores of the Florida Panhandle continues to draw interest and grow. The success of the plantings done at Beasley Park was reason enough for the adjacent tourist center to request assistance from D.C., Darryl Williams of the Crestview Field Office. Many of the same plant species supplied by the PMC (such as the bitter panicums, beach sunflower, and marshhay cordgrass) used on Beasley Park will be used in vegetating the areas around the center.

The tourist center has constructed a walkway which extends through several native ecosystems around the dunes. Center personnel have requested the Florida PMS and PMC personnel to assist in identifying and increasing the native plants along this walkway. This is a great opportunity to educate the many people who visit the area every year about the critical role of plants in stabilizing the dunes on these shores.

## Puerto Rico – Coffee Plantations

An observational trial has been established in Puerto Rico with the objective of selecting vegetative material suitable for ground covers in coffee plantations. Coffee farms are located in the central humid mountain region of the Island, on steep slopes up to 55 percent.

Traditionally coffee is managed as a clean crop. Four grass species and one legume were planted in a randomized, split-plot design with four replications. Ease of establishment, growth rate, shade tolerance and erosion control potential will be measured during the proposed 5-year initial trials. Coffee yields will be measured the last 2 years.

## FL Plants go Downtown in Houston

The National Association of Conservation Districts Spring '96 "Tuesday Letter" carries an article describing work the Harris SWCD and the NRCS are doing in downtown Houston, Texas.

Buffalo Bayou, as it meanders through the city, is exposed to runoff from freeways and overpasses, eroding the banks and affecting the quality of the bayou water. Native grasses were planted by various groups in an effort to control the erosion and improve aesthetics along the bayou. The Brooksville PMC is pleased to have our marshhay cordgrasses included in this project.

## Improving Water Quality

As Florida's population continues to increase, many municipalities are developing effluent water reuse facilities (called sprayfields) to dispose of excess waste water. Plant materials grown in sprayfields must be able to tolerate excessive irrigation and capture nitrates before they are leached into the ground water. The FLPMC is cooperating with the city of Ocala to study the performance of nine forage species at the Perry sprayfield in nearby Belleview. Replicated plots were established in April by transplanting seedlings. We want to thank Steve Boetger and Stephanie Daugherty from the Ocala Field Office for their help in planting.

The study site receives two inches of effluent water per week. Not only does this make our forages grow, but the weeds as well. We want to thank Ocala Field Office Volunteer Bonita Phillips for being willing to wield a hoe with our crew for a couple of days in our "War Against the Weeds." We certainly

appreciate the help in this unglamorous but very necessary occupation.

Participants at our recent State Conservationist's PMC Advisory Committee Meeting visited the study site. While there, sprayfield director, Ben Hayes and Chief of Operations at the Ocala Water Treatment Facility, Chuck Howard, discussed the operation of the sprayfield. PMC staff discussed the plant materials aspect of our two-acre study site.

### Collection Times Grow Nearer

Mid to late October is the normal time for the Lopsided Indiangrass (*Sorghastrum secundum*) seed to ripen. This important native grass, desirable for erosion control, livestock forage and wildlife use, is one of the "PMC's Most Wanted." We hope the field offices will be able to assist us in expanding our collection to include species from all areas of the state. The new collections will be added to those received during the beginning years of the FIPR project.

Chalky Bluestem (*Andropogon capillipes*) is another of the "PMC's Most Wanted" that we have requested field office assistance in collecting. Seed of this native grass species is ripe in November and December. This plant has been targeted for cultivar release because there are no commercial sources for this upland seed that are desirable for erosion control, range and wildlife cover.

We would like to thank the individuals who have taken time out of their busy schedules to collect seed and vegetative material from a host of species. Your efforts in assisting us with collections covering a wide area of the state allows us to develop a superior plant, which will in turn offer field offices and landowners solutions to conservation problems.

### Visitors to the Center

On May 7-9, the State Conservationist's PMC Advisory Committee Meeting was held at the PMC. Out-of-state participants included National Plant Materials Specialist Richard White, Alabama State Resource Conservationist Clifford Jones, and Caribbean Area Plant Materials Specialist Edwin Mas.

Agricultural students from Florida A&M University in Tallahassee and Pasco High School in Dade City visited the center to receive additional information concerning plant materials. The high school group's primary interest was in forage grasses and propagation methods, whereas the University students were interested in all aspects of the PMC operation.

