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Texas Invasive Plant and Pest Conference Seeks to Combat Growing Threat

AUSTIN, Texas–The 2011 Texas Invasive Plant and Pest Conference, hosted by Texas Invasive Plant and Pest Council (TIPPC), will be held November 8-10 at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center. A broad range of speakers will present information on non-native invasive plants and pests and strategies for combating them.

The conference will be highlighted by a plenary session featuring State Representatives Jimmie Don Aycock and Donna Howard. Representative Aycock authored House Bill 338, requiring public entities to place disclaimers on invasive plant lists distributed to commercial landscapers in Texas, stating that such lists are only a recommendation and have no legal effect in the state. Representative Howard is an outspoken proponent of protecting native environments in Texas and dealing with invasive plant issues in the state.

Other highlights of the conference will include: 1) a presentations by Chuck Bargeron-Technology Director, Center for Invasive Species and Ecosystem Health, entitled “Early Detection and Rapid Response to Invasive Species: Apps and Maps; 2) highlights of the City of Austin’s first of its kind for a city in Texas (and second in the nation)- Invasive Species Management Plan; 3) presentations about invasive species control on Caddo Lake; and 4) a “state of the state” talk on invasive species in Texas by Dr. Earl Chilton of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. Concurrent sessions on invasive species leadership and coordination, early detection and rapid response, control and management, research, information management, and education and rapid awareness will run throughout the day on Tuesday and Wednesday. Additionally, on Thursday morning an Early Detection and Rapid Response workshop will be held, this workshop is geared to train the trainers.

The Texas Invasive Plant and Pest Council was formed in 2008 to provide focus on invasive plant and pest issues in Texas, facilitate exchange of information amongst those concerned about invasive plant and pest issues, and promote awareness and understanding about the need for management and control of invasive plants and pests in the state. Sponsors of the conference include: National Park Service, Texas State University System, Texas Forest Service, Caddo Lake Institute, and the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association.

For more information about the conference or the Texas Invasive Plant and Pest Council, visit www.texasinvasives.org.