



# Cogongrass in Georgia Winter 2026 Update

January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2025

Forest Health Staff

## Cogongrass detections surpass the 200 mark again in 2025.

In 2025, cogongrass was detected for the first time in Bleckley County. There were 233 new detections, bringing the number of known cogongrass spots in the state to 2409, scattered across 79 counties. Overall, these values reflect nearly the same number of new detections in 2025 compared to the 225 detections in 2024. Furthermore, there were 166 sites eradicated in 2025 compared to 148 sites in 2024. The 2409 cogongrass spots encompass a total of 591 acres. The status and treatments for each spot varies. The Georgia Forestry Commission recognizes a spot as eradicated after three consecutive years of finding no cogongrass resprouts. Since 2007, **1665 spots** have been eradicated, **138 spots** have been negative for two years and **269 spots** have been negative for one year. The remaining **337 spots** are classified as active. Figure 1, below, displays the annual cogongrass status from 2020 to 2025. Overall, approximately 86% of all known spots are now negative for cogongrass. A breakdown into the various categories based on percentages can be seen in Figure 2 below. Landowners with questions regarding the status of the cogongrass spot(s) on their property should contact their regional Forest Health specialist.

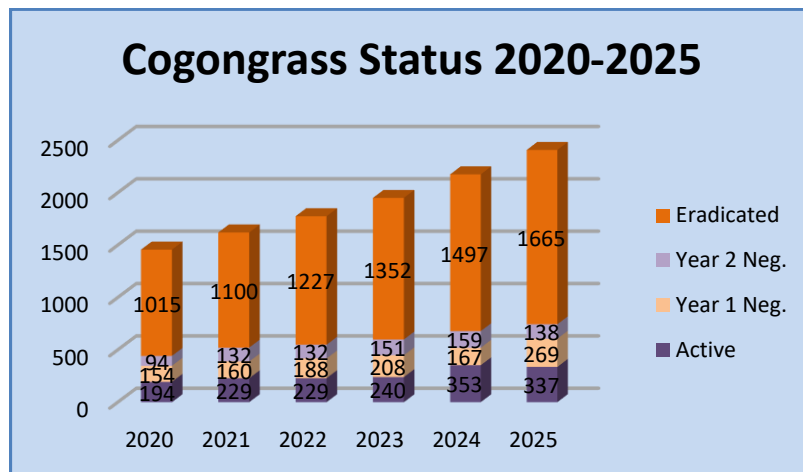


Figure 1: Cogongrass Status Chart.

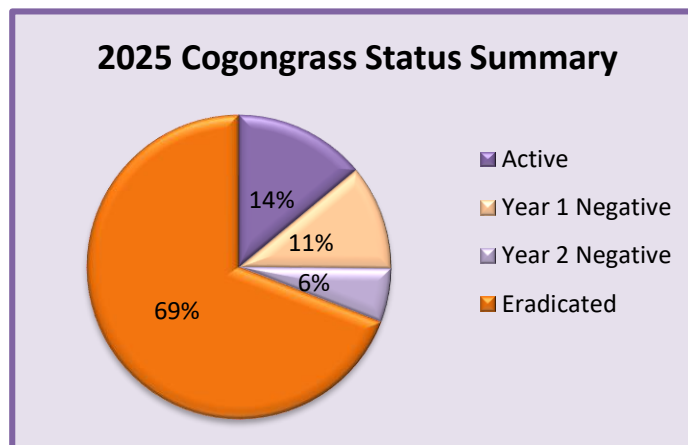
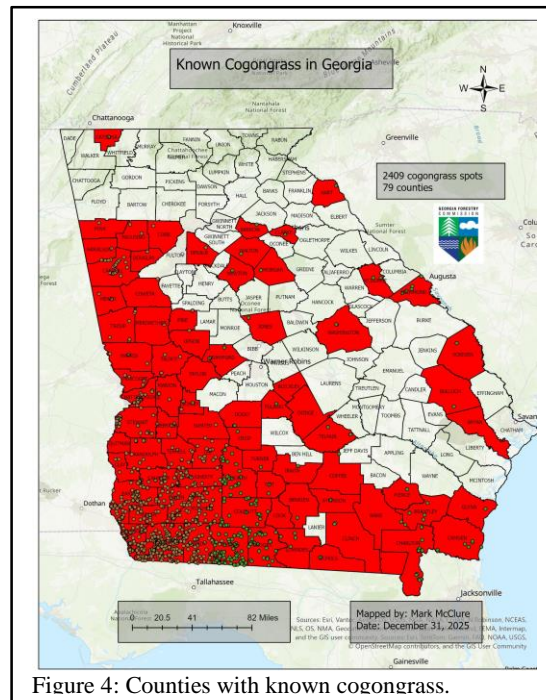
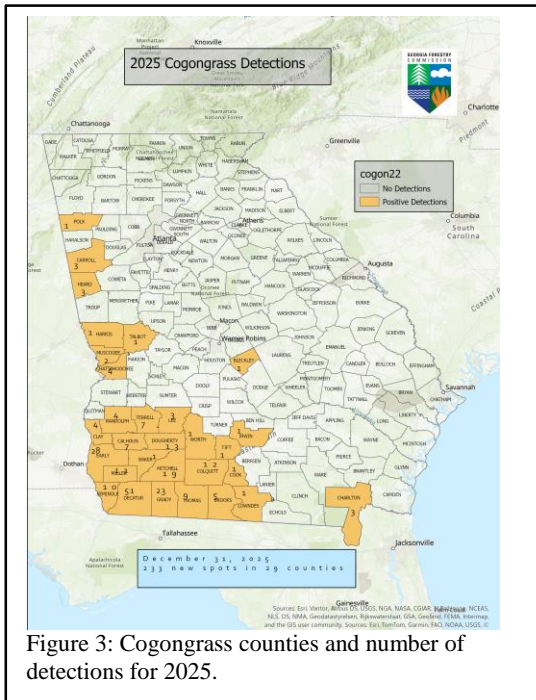


Figure 2: Cogongrass status classified categorically by percentage.

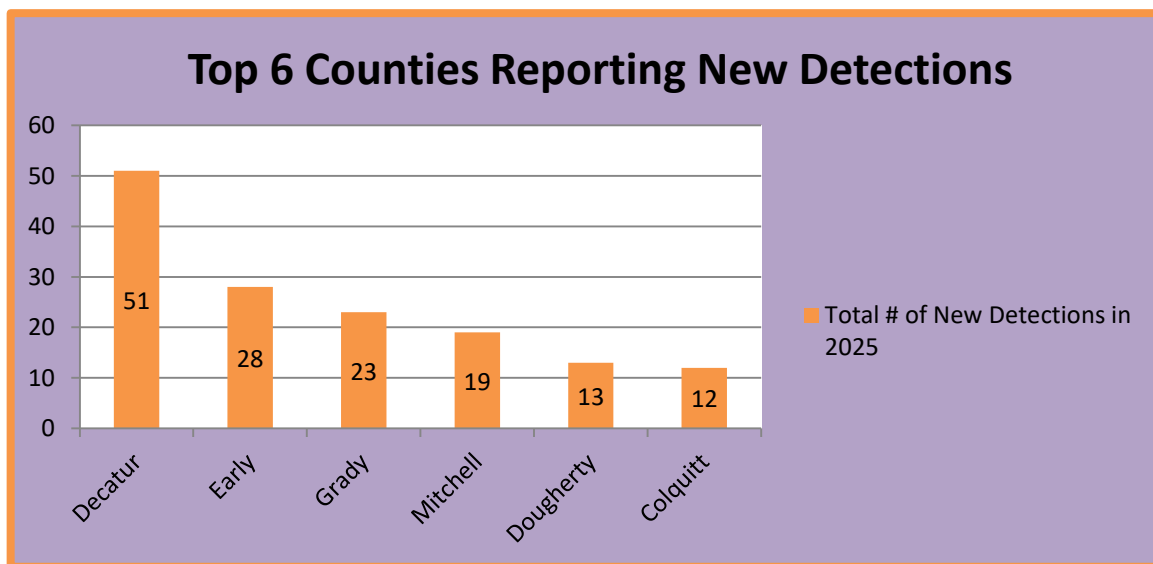
## Known cogongrass locations in Georgia.

The majority of new cogongrass detections continue to be found in southwest Georgia. However, additional spots are located along the western side of the state bordering Alabama, along with spots in southeast Georgia near the Florida border. Figure 3 is a map displaying cogongrass counties and number of detections for 2025, while Figure 4 displays all counties with known cogongrass.



## Which counties had the most detections in 2025?

The top six reporting counties in 2025 were Decatur, Early, Grady, Mitchell, Dougherty, and Colquitt. The graph below, (figure 5) charts the number of new detections in each county.



### Where are cogongrass sites being detected?

The most common cogongrass detections in Georgia are located within thinned pine stands or along road and utility rights-of-way. Approximately 76% of all cogongrass detections have been in woodland areas, primarily thinned pine stands, and 17% along rights-of-way. An additional six percent have been unique detections in places such as pastures, pond dams, urban landscapes, flower beds, welcome centers, wildlife food plots, and in coastal sand dunes. These sites are of special interest to specialists tracking the movement and spread of this exotic, invasive species.

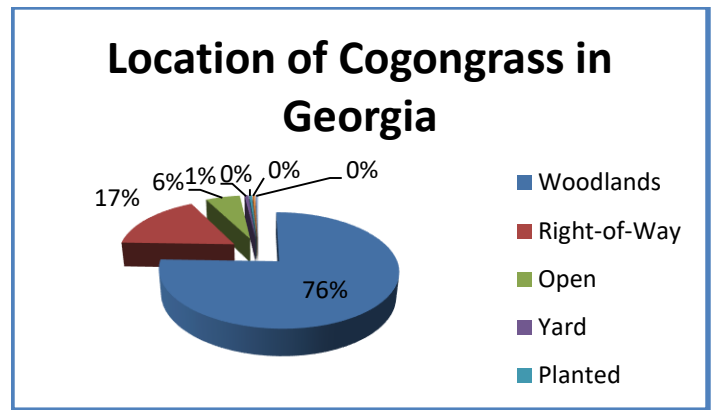


Figure 7: Cogongrass locations by site type.

### Cumulatively, which counties are impacted the most by cogongrass?

The southwest corner of the state continues to be the cogongrass epicenter in Georgia. Decatur, Early, Thomas, Seminole, Grady, Calhoun, Mitchell, Baker, and Miller Counties, located in southwest Georgia, and Carroll County, located in west Georgia, complete the top 10 ranking counties by number of detections. Figure 8, below, displays the total number of cogongrass acres adjacent to the total number of spots.

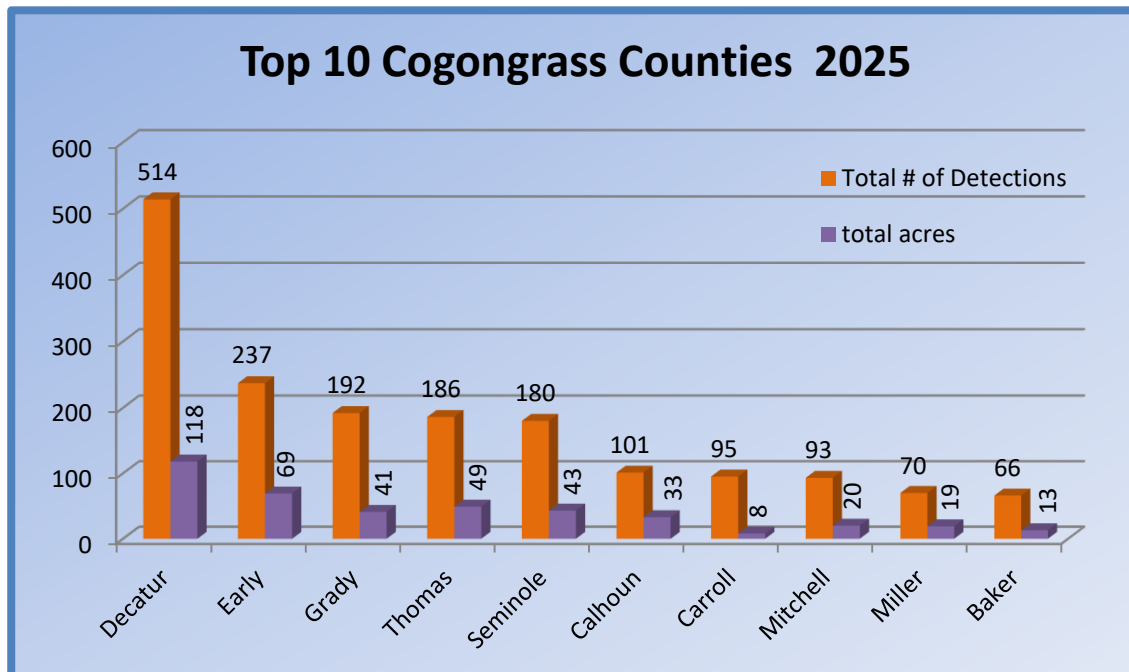


Figure 8: Top ten cogongrass counties.

## What is the cogongrass status in these counties?

Approximately 86% of all known cogongrass spots in Georgia are considered inactive. However, this percentage varies among counties. Figure 9, below, displays the number of active and inactive spots in the top 10 counties.

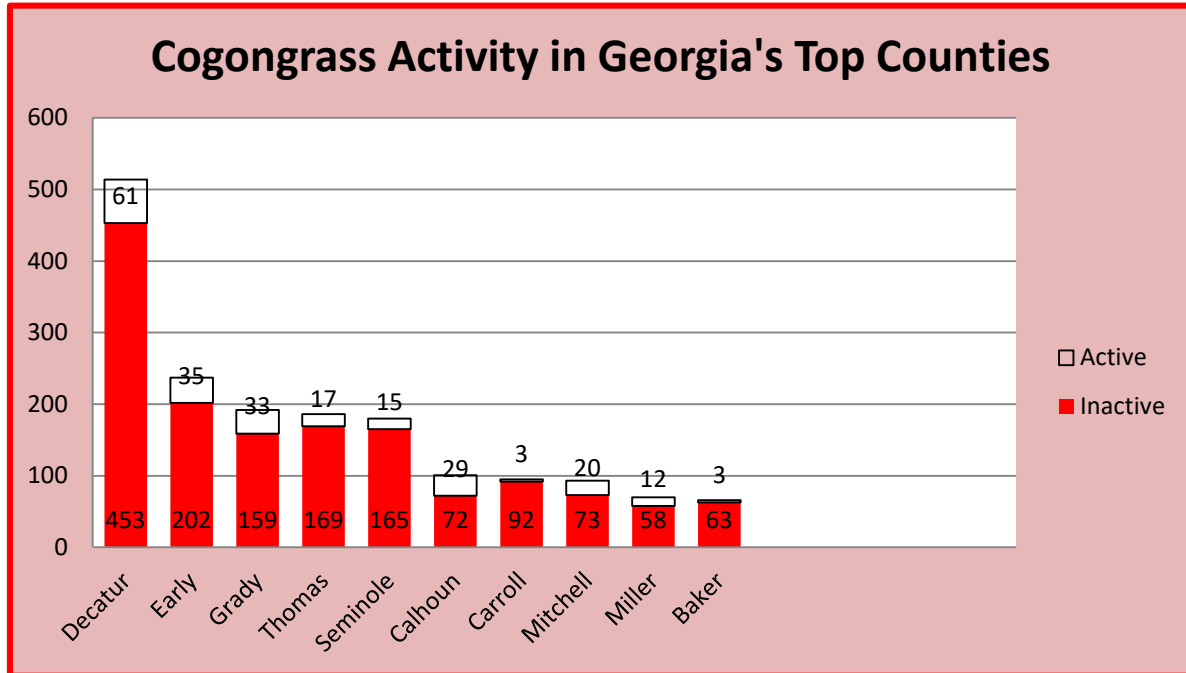


Figure 9: Cogongrass activity in Georgia's top ten counties.

**How many cogongrass spots have been detected annually since the Georgia Forestry Commission began its lead role in 2007?** Historically, cogongrass detections have ranged from a low of 37 in 2007 to a high of 233 in 2025. Over the past 16-year time period, there have been an average of 129 cogongrass detections annually. However, since Hurricane Michael in October of 2018, there have been an average of 164 cogongrass detections annually. Figure 10, below, shows annual detections since 2010.

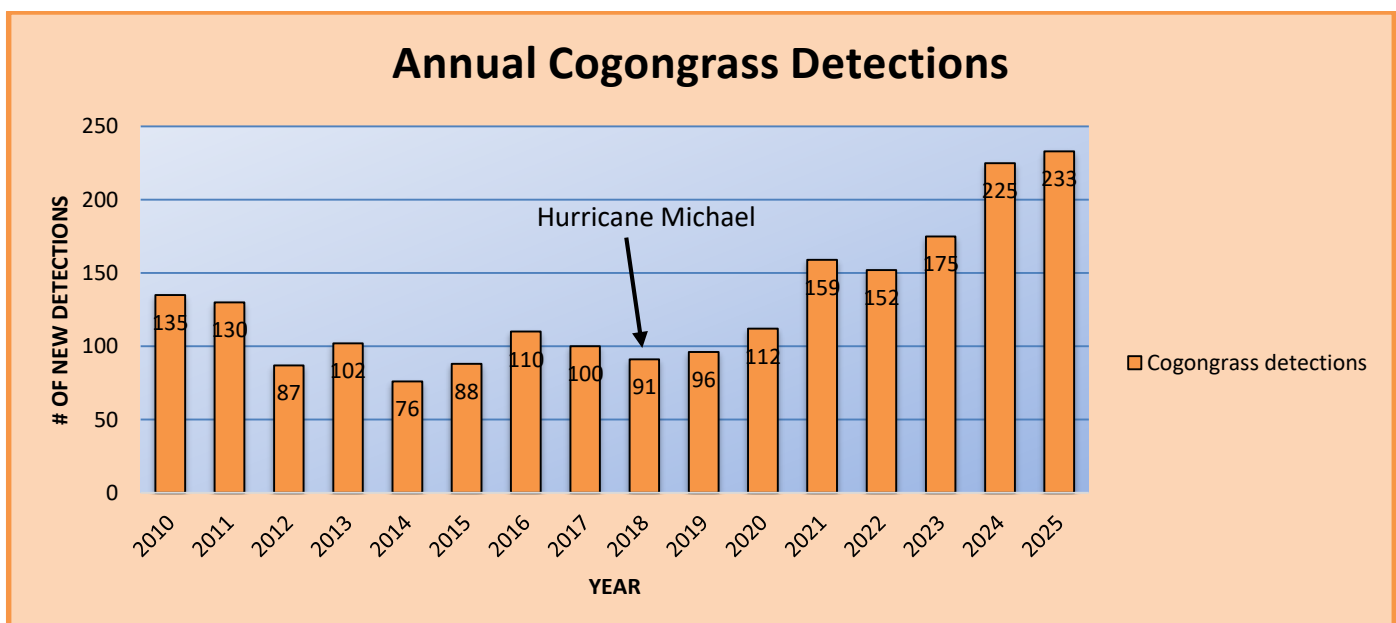


Figure 10: Annual cogongrass detections.

## Georgia cogongrass facts as of 2025:

- This marked the 19<sup>th</sup> year the Georgia Forestry Commission has held the lead role in the cogongrass detection and eradication program.
- USDA-APHIS provided federal funding to the GFC in 2025 to maintain the cogongrass detection and eradication program.
- The Georgia Forestry Commission will continue to treat new cogongrass detections for landowners at no cost.
- All cogongrass spots continue to be monitored and treated annually until eradicated.
- Workshops, presentations, field days, etc. continue to be delivered to further educate Georgians about identifying and controlling invasive species. Thirty-five landowner programs, workshops, and field days were conducted, delivering the cogongrass message to more than 37,841 landowners and natural resource professionals. Many more programs were delivered by our task force partners.
- 86% of the total number of spots are negative (yr. 1, yr. 2, or eradicated).
- 82% of the total cogongrass acreage is negative.
- The average size cogongrass spot is between 0.10 and 0.20 acres. The largest new spot treated in 2025 was 3.1 acres.
- Two hundred thirty-three new detections in 2025 was the largest single year total since the program began. It exceeded the previous record high in 2024 of 225.
- Seventy-nine counties have had positive cogongrass detections. Forty-eight of 79 cogongrass counties are now negative.
- Decatur County became the first county in Georgia to surpass 500 cogongrass detections.
- Bleckley County had its first cogongrass detection.

## Bryan Cottles, Decatur/Seminole Chief Ranger, was the cogongrass detection winner for 2025!

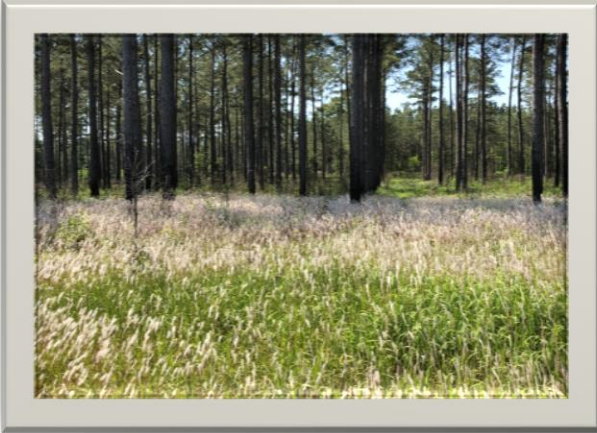
The Georgia Forestry Commission Forest Health staff held a contest to recognize the person detecting the greatest number of cogongrass spots. Numerous GFC personnel, natural resource professionals, and landowners reported new cogongrass findings in 2025. A total of 60 individuals reported new cogongrass detections in 2025. However, Bryan Cottles, Decatur/Seminole Chief Ranger, once again detected the most spots. This marks two consecutive years Bryan has made the most detections. Bryan was awarded a hatchet for his service to the cogongrass program.

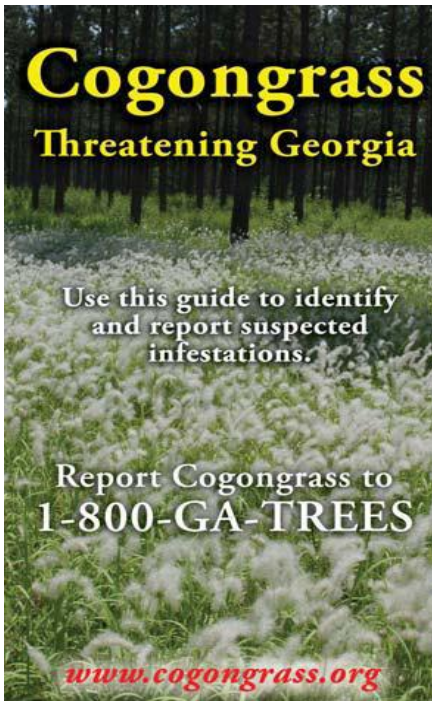
The GFC Forest Health Dept. will once again award a prize to the person who locates the most positive detections in 2026. Therefore, all landowners and resource professionals are encouraged to continue searching for cogongrass during the 2026 calendar year.



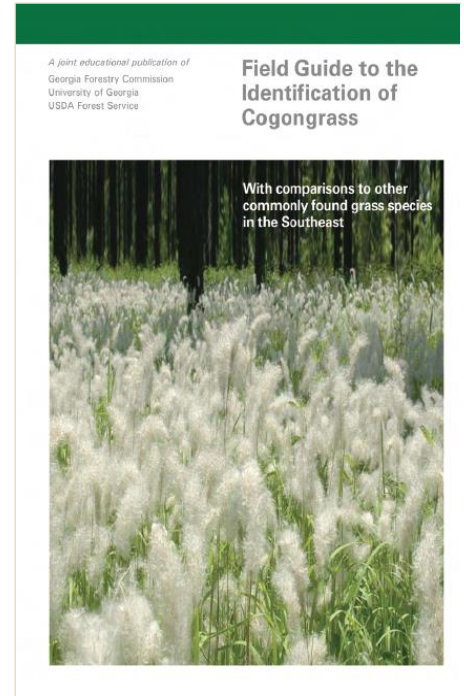
## How to identify cogongrass:

Spring flowering season is the easiest time to detect cogongrass infestations. Cogongrass primarily flowers between April and early June. The white, fluffy seed heads are visible from a distance. However, the distinct golden brown coloration in late fall through winter following frost makes cogongrass visible during the colder months of the year as well. Cogongrass is most difficult to detect during the growing season. The most distinguishable feature of cogongrass is its dense, sharp, pointed rhizome root system, and it is recommended the rhizomes be dug up to make a positive identification.





**Cogongrass identification brochure and pocket ID available from the Georgia Forestry Commission.**  
 Contact your local GFC office or regional Forest Health specialist to obtain copies of these publications.



### How do I report a suspected cogongrass spot?

Call your county Georgia Forestry Commission office or contact your regional Forest Health specialist. A resource professional will visit the site to make a positive identification. The Georgia Forestry Commission will continue to spray all cogongrass detections in 2026 at no cost to the landowner. Landowners are required to sign a spray agreement with the Georgia Forestry Commission to legally allow resource professionals to access the property and spray the identified cogongrass. All positive detections are monitored annually until eradicated.

Landowners are encouraged to share information concerning cogongrass with their family, friends, and adjoining landowners. It is important to realize that invasive plants such as cogongrass disrupt natural ecosystems and displace natural plant communities. Therefore, invasive species have a negative impact on our forest resources.

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