

# Randy G. Westbrook, Ph.D.

Invasive Species Prevention Specialist

[Invasive Plant Control, Inc.](#)

Whiteville, North Carolina - USA

## Biographical Sketch – January 24, 2013

Randy Westbrook, who is a native of Gaffney, South Carolina, received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in biology from the University of South Carolina in 1976 and 1978. He earned a Ph.D. in botany and weed science from North Carolina State University in 1989. From 1979-2012, Dr. Westbrook served as a Federal Invasive Species Prevention Specialist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (APHIS PPQ - 1979-2000), and more recently the Department of the Interior (U.S. Geological Survey - 2000-2012). He is now an Associate with [Invasive Plant Control, Inc.](#) (IPC), a Nashville, TN, based company that is working to manage invasive species worldwide.



Randy Westbrook collecting Giant salvinia from the River Bend Swamp near Burgaw, North Carolina. July, 2006.

From 1979-1986, Dr. Westbrook served as a **Plant Protection and Quarantine (PPQ) Officer** for USDA APHIS in the Port of Charleston, S.C. From 1986-1995, as a **Federal Weed Regulatory Specialist** with the APHIS Whiteville Methods Development Center, he provided science and technical support for single agency-led federal/state weed eradication programs and projects across the U.S. ([EDRR 1.0](#)). From 1996-2012, as a **Federal Invasive Species Prevention Specialist**, Dr. Westbrook collaborated with interagency groups to develop new capacity for early detection and rapid response (EDRR) for new invasive plants in states and provinces across the U.S. and Canada ([EDRR 2.0](#)). In his new capacity as a private consultant, his efforts are now focused on *development of EDRR capacity on all kinds of land units - at all levels of the landscape* – not just at the state and provincial level. The Landscape Approach to EDRR involves development of EDRR capacity for **public land units** (parks, forests, refuges, lakes, highway corridors, etc.), **private land units** (farms and ranches, etc.), **geographic land units** (watersheds, eco-regions and cooperative weed management areas), and **political land units** (municipalities, counties, states, and nations) ([EDRR 3.0](#)).

As an Associate with Invasive Plant Control, Inc., Dr. Westbrook provides Technical Support for development of EDRR Systems, conducts Rapid Assessments of New Exotic Plants, and develops Strategies for Rapid Response to Confirmed Invaders (through landowner / manager weed eradication projects, single agency-led programs, cooperative weed management areas, or interagency task forces). *The overall goal is to promote EDRR as a common sense and cost effective strategy for preventing the establishment and spread of new invasive plants on land that a person, agency, or group owns or manages.* The [Delaware Invasive Species Council](#), which he helped to establish in 1998, and the [Beach Vitex Task Force](#), which he was instrumental in establishing in 2003, are good examples of this new trend in interagency partnering to address new and emerging invasive plants.

In an effort to pass on what he has learned in his career to the next generation, Dr. Westbrook is also collaborating with [Southeastern Community College](#) in Whiteville, North Carolina, to provide invasive species management training for field professionals. The [SCC Invasive Species Management Program](#), which was first launched in the spring of 2008, now includes six online courses covering all aspects of invasive species management, including *prevention, exclusion, detection, containment, eradication, and control*. The program is being offered as a new second year focus of the **SCC Environmental Science Technology program** for resident students, or as a 'stand-alone' certificate program for invasive species field professionals in the U.S., Canada, and elsewhere.

*Partnerships Now.... Weeds Won't Wait!*

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