Louisiana Quillwort

IDENTIFICATION: Louisiana quillwort (*Isoetes louisianensis*) is a small, grasslike, seedless, semi-aquatic plant. Its leaves are up to 16 inches long and arise from a short fleshy stem that is typically shallowly rooted in stable coarse sand or gravel substrate. Weak, droopy leaves have four air chambers when viewed in cross section. The air chambers provide buoyancy in its aquatic habitat. Reproductive structures that bear spores are located at the base of the leaves. It occurs predominately on sand and gravel bars of smaller streams. Found less commonly on low sloping banks. Seems to tolerate inundation for long periods of time during extended wet seasons. Habitat supporting this species is typically associated with a well-developed stream canopy.

Louisiana quillwort was known to occur at only two sites in Louisiana when designated as an endangered species on 10-28-1992. To date, there are eight populations in Louisiana, three populations in Alabama and 30 populations in Mississippi. Critical habitat has not been designated for this species.

The primary threat to this species is habitat loss through land use practices that transform riparian forest communities and alter stream quality and dynamics.

FORESTRY CONSIDERATIONS: Since this plant lives underwater or in close proximity to water, forestry practices affecting water quality are the only concern for this species. Adherence to Alabama's Best Management Practices for Forestry are critical. Location of stream crossings and development of adequate streamside management zones are important. Herbicide use in adjacent habitats should be carefully monitored and follow label directions.

DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTY: The three populations in Alabama have been documented by the Natural Heritage Section of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources in Butler, Conecuh, and Monroe counties.

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