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# Atlantic White Cedar Wetlands

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edited by  
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# Summary

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*Dennis F. Whigham*

This symposium has brought together people that represent a wide variety of disciplines and interests. We have learned that Atlantic white cedar wetlands are widespread and that a lot of basic data have been compiled on the flora and fauna. In contrast, not much at all is known about how they function and even less about their importance in the landscape. Except for the work being done by the Rutgers group, there is virtually nothing known about their management except for purposes of lumber production. In some parts of its range, Atlantic white cedar appears to be safe while in other areas, the resource is being depleted because of commercial exploitation. In still other areas, Atlantic white cedar is in danger of being lost by natural successional processes. There is obviously much to be learned about the species and the wetlands that it occurs in. Some questions are certainly applied, but a lot of basic biology and ecology is still needed.

The first step in the process of focusing on Atlantic white cedar wetlands is to compile all of the available information. This symposium is the first important step in that process. In addition to the proceedings of this symposium, Aimlee Laderman is editing a volume for Van Nostrand Reinhold designed to include all information on *C. thyoides* available prior to the symposium. That work includes extensive bibliographies, species and distribution lists. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has also asked Dr. Laderman to prepare a community profile of Atlantic white cedar wetlands.

If additional research is to be conducted, what are the best ways to integrate the available expertise? Most of the research presented at this symposium has resulted from individual projects. Frank Day's work in the Dismal Swamp and Joan Ehrenfeld and John Schneider's research in the New Jersey Pine Barrens are the only two efforts that are oriented toward ecosystem processes. Much more research needs to be done in this area. I would recommend that it might be possible to develop an interdisciplinary research program that, in many ways, would be similar

to the program discussed by Dr. Gorham for midwestern United States bogs. What is needed is to find someone who has the interest and time to develop appropriate research proposals.

A more immediate problem is how to continue an active dialogue between the people who have attended this symposium. The personal contacts that have been made will certainly prove to be useful. I would also recommend that Aimlee Laderman develop a newsletter that could be used as a communication forum. An appropriate mechanism would be to establish a subsection within the Wetlands Society or Aquatic Ecology section of the Ecological Society of America.

We have all learned that Atlantic white cedar wetlands are biologically and ecologically interesting. In some areas they are in danger of being eliminated completely, and in other areas only remnant stands remain. Hopefully the information presented at this symposium will be the first step in what will become a much larger and integrated research activity designed to understand and conserve Atlantic white cedar wetlands.