

ANAYLSIS OF PRAIRIE SPECIES DISTRIBUTION AT FORT POLK, LOUISISANA

***CHARLES ALLEN, CEMML, FORT POLK, LA 71459**

Abstract: Fort Polk is located in west central Louisiana with the main post consisting of about 150,700 acres. The northwestern portion of the Fort contains patches of inland prairie and associated forests developed on silt loam or clay soils. Sandy loam and loamy sand soils dominate across the remaining areas with pine forests and the associated vegetation types developed on these soils. These pine forests, especially the longleaf and savannah types, have a very similar flora to the Cajun Prairie located to the south and southeast of the Fort. A listing of prairie flora from Fort Polk will be presented and the distribution analyzed. Some prairie species, i.e. *Apocynum cannabinum*, *Dalea purpurea*, *Echinacea purpurea*, *Euphorbia marginata*, *Liatris squarrulosa*, *Silphium laciniatum*, and *Tripsacum dactyloides* are restricted to the inland prairies. Some prairie species are found only in the pine forest areas at Fort Polk including *Baptisia bracteata* var. *laevicaulis*, *Callirhoe papaver*, *Helianthus mollis*, *Oxalis violacea*, *Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*, and *Vernonia texana*. A number of prairie species are found in the inland prairies and also in the pine forests. Some of these include *Andropogon gerardii*, *Eryngium yuccifolium*, *Panicum virgatum*, *Schizachyrium scoparium*, *Solidago odora*, and *Sorghastrum nutans*.