

Abstract for Upper Oconee Watershed Summit

Podostemum ceratophyllum – that weird green plant that grows on rocks at the bottom of the river – what is it and what does it do?

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Hornleaf Riverweed, also known as *Podostemum ceratophyllum*, is an aquatic flowering plant that grows abundantly in rocky shoals throughout the Middle and North Oconee rivers. This native plant can cover large portions of the riverbed and plays several important roles in the riverine ecosystem. *Podostemum* has a large and positive influence on macroinvertebrate biomass and density by increasing habitat area and complexity in the benthic environment. However, *Podostemum* may be declining across its range (Georgia to Canada in the eastern US). This presentation will explore the findings of several recent experiments on *Podostemum* that investigated how it interacts with water velocity, land use, and aquatic and terrestrial food chains. Maintaining healthy populations of *Podostemum* may be important to managing the health and integrity of the Middle and North Oconee Rivers.