

## **Demonstration of Weapon of Mass Destruction Built in Spartanburg**

Spartanburg's own Kudzu Coalition has developed an attachment for removing massive amounts of kudzu vines and crowns using a skid loader. Paul David Blakeley, volunteer and member of the Board of Directors for Kudzu Coalition, will demonstrate this new "weapon" in public for the first time Thursday afternoon, November 1, from 4:30 until 6 PM.

Mr. Blakeley, owner of Carolina Orthopedic Laboratory, will attack the mounds and curtains of kudzu, which cover and kill trees along the walking trail in the Mary H. Wright Parkway. This first public deployment will be on display alongside Barksdale Boulevard between East Hampton Avenue and Marion Avenue. Kudzu has aggressively invaded and captured a significant foothold in the parkway across the street from J. C. Bull apartment #226.

This will be the official unveiling of the pronged attachment which Mr. Blakeley conceived. It was built by Spartanburg's Pressley Machine Works in cooperation with the Kudzu Coalition. Mr. Blakeley first had the idea in August of 2006 to use his skid loader in the battle with kudzu. Standard skid loader prongs worked reasonably well in combating the green enemy -- doing the work of ten or more volunteers working by hand -- but suffered from two drawbacks. Normal fork attachments are narrower than the skid loader wheel base and kudzu vines wrapped around the wheels. This slowed down the conduct of the operation.

Mr. Roddy Jeffers, owner of Pressley Machine Works and his team, built extensions onto a standard carriage for skid loader forks. This widened the forks to seven feet and solved the tactical problem of vines wrapping around the wheels. Jeffers and Pressley also constructed the attachment so as to accommodate multiple forks spaced variably along the front.

The Kudzu Coalition volunteers, leading activists for control without using chemicals, are currently using six, unevenly spaced forks. This arrangement and the wider swath cut by the skid loader more than doubles its previous productivity in removing kudzu mass and crowns. Hence, the local group, which emphasizes having fun in its crusade, refers to its new baby as a weapon of mass destruction.

"While not a panacea", reports Blakeley, "the deployment of this new treatment eliminates a lot of manual labor."

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For pictures of the skid loader with the old attachments, click on [http://kokudzu.com/Beacon\\_Tree.html](http://kokudzu.com/Beacon_Tree.html)