

Aquatic Vegetation Management In Texas: A Guidance Document



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INLAND FISHERIES**

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Aquatic Vegetation Management In Texas

I. Background

This is the guidance document described in § 57.932 of the TPWD rules. The rules are in Appendix B of this document. State law directs TPWD to develop a statewide management plan to guide decision making regarding nuisance aquatic vegetation in public water. This document describes the best available strategies and alternative treatment methods for preventing and controlling nuisance aquatic vegetation problems, consistent with the principles of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). TPWD rules define IPM as:

The coordinated use of pest and environmental information and pest control methods to prevent unacceptable levels of pest damage by the most economical means and in a manner that will cause the least possible hazard to persons, property, and the environment. Integrated pest management includes consideration of ecological, biological, chemical, and mechanical strategies for control of nuisance aquatic vegetation.

This document is also intended to assist individuals and organizations in meeting the procedural requirements of state law and rules. The document contains explanatory information, step-by-step procedures, and sample forms.

Aquatic vegetation is an extremely important component of most freshwater systems, providing habitat, refuge, and food for a wide variety of organisms including fish, invertebrates, and waterfowl. It is well documented that aquatic vascular plants serve as habitat for numerous invertebrate species (Muttkowski 1918; Soszka 1975; Biltgen 1981). Habitat complexity increases with plant biomass and is well correlated with increased abundance and diversity of aquatic invertebrates (Heck and Wetstone 1977; Stoner 1980; Wiley et al. 1984; Bell and Westoby 1986). As a result, plant communities often support a large percentage of the total invertebrate biomass in a system. For example, Watkins et al. (1983) found the number of benthic organisms associated with vegetation in one Florida lake was triple that in unvegetated areas, and Wiley et al. (1984) found that macrophytes increased invertebrate abundance by as much as 90% in Illinois ponds. Similarly, Iversen et al. (1985) reported 95% of invertebrates in the River Susa, Denmark, were found in vegetation. Obviously, increased production of invertebrates can have strong implications for fishery productivity since most freshwater fish species consume invertebrates during some portion of their life cycles.

There are also instances when excessive aquatic vegetation growth may detrimentally affect fishery and wildlife resources, or limit access for fishing, hunting, and other recreational activities. Maceina and Reeves (1996) found the lowest average weight of fish caught during largemouth bass fishing tournaments occurred during peak macrophyte coverage. Similarly, Hoyer and Canfield (1996) found a direct relation between macrophytes and young of the year largemouth bass abundance, however, there was an inverse relation between plant abundance and bass growth. A number of researchers have found that dense plant communities may inhibit the feeding efficiency of invertivorous fishes (Crowder and Cooper 1982; Minello and Zimmerman 1983; Heck and Wilson 1987; Russo 1987). In some cases plant species, as well as abundance, can have a strong influence on fish populations. For instance, Dibble and Harrel (1997) found significant differences between largemouth bass feeding in common pondweed *Potamogeton nodosus*, versus those feeding in Eurasian watermilfoil *Myriophyllum spicatum*, despite similar plant densities. Those feeding in pondweed fed heavily on macroinvertebrates, whereas those feeding in watermilfoil fed much more heavily on fish.

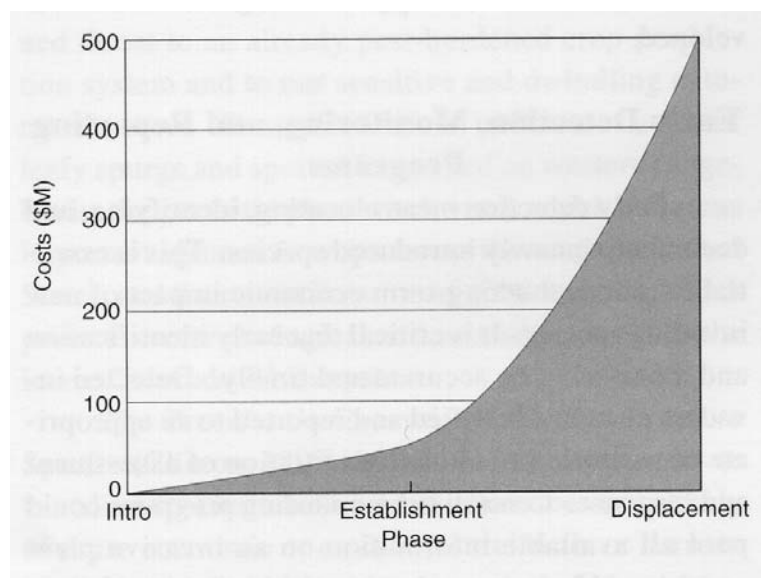
Overabundant aquatic vegetation is typically the result of introduction of exotic species which out-compete native plants, and grow unchecked by natural herbivores or parasites. For example, two of Texas' most problematic aquatic plant species, hydrilla *Hydrilla verticillata* and waterhyacinth *Eichhornia crassipes*, are not native to North America.

Other reasons for aquatic vegetation reaching nuisance proportions may include disturbed habitat and nutrient loading. Construction of reservoirs in Texas dramatically changed the aquatic and terrestrial landscape of the state. These reservoirs have provided flood control, water for agriculture and municipalities, power plant cooling, areas for recreational use, and fish and wildlife habitat that did not exist in Texas. However, like most disturbed habitats, many reservoir ecosystems have not developed stable aquatic plant communities. The fluctuating water levels of many reservoirs make the establishment and spread of native vegetation difficult. Exotic plant species succeed in Texas' reservoirs because these species are adapted to rapidly fill ecological niches created by disturbed or unstable habitats, and because native herbivores may not readily feed on exotic plants. When exotic species are introduced into these systems, growth and spread of these aquatic plants can be quite dramatic. Nutrient-rich water speeds growth and spread of vegetation, including nuisance vegetation. Elevated nutrient input may come from a variety of sources including farm runoff, runoff from fertilized lawns, sewage treatment facilities, septic tanks, etc. Exotic plant species have been introduced and spread through Texas by a variety of mechanisms. Well meaning aquarists and water gardeners are often unaware the plants they are buying are illegal in Texas (and sometimes the United States), and one flood is all it takes to carry unwanted plants from the backyard to the river. Once plants have been introduced they are often spread by waterfowl and wildlife. Boaters may also unknowingly carry plants from one waterbody to another via trailers, live wells, and motor lower units.

II. Prevention

The backbone of every effective program to control nuisance aquatic weeds is prevention. If possible, nuisance exotic aquatic weeds should be prevented from colonizing new waters, and if colonization does occur they should be prevented from spreading. Prevention is the least costly method of controlling aquatic weeds. Figure 1. illustrates the exponential rise in management costs (\$ millions) as exotic plants are introduced, become established, and finally may displace native species. In general, prevention strategies fall into five categories, which are discussed below.

Figure 1. Management cost in million dollars and invasion phase relationship show that prevention in the least costly phase, with exponentially rising costs once the invading weed has become established and more costly if it is displacing native species and/or disrupting native habitats (From Mullin et al. 2000).



Root Causes

The root causes of nuisance aquatic vegetation - habitat disturbance, nutrient loading, lack of efficient herbivores, transportation and introduction of exotic plant species into previously uncolonized areas (via boats, trailers, wildlife, intentional releases, etc.) - must be addressed if aquatic plant management in Texas is to succeed on a sustainable basis. Although aquatic herbicides, biological controls and mechanical controls can be effective in controlling or managing aquatic vegetation, these are all short-term solutions. Strategies for **preventing** nuisance aquatic vegetation will produce better and longer-lasting results than those directed at managing problematic vegetation. In that regard, managers should seek solutions to the root causes of nuisance aquatic vegetation.

One of the chief causes of nuisance vegetation growth is nutrient enrichment. Nutrient loading (eutrophication) is the process of adding surplus nutrients required for plant photosynthesis and growth (primarily nitrogen and phosphorus) to an ecosystem. The nutrients can either come from point sources (e.g., sewage treatment plants or agri-industrial effluent) or non-point sources (e.g., septic tank field lines or fertilizer runoff from lawns, fields, golf courses, etc.). Although some increase in nutrient inflow can be beneficial by increasing plankton production and native plant growth, an overabundance of nutrients may cause water quality problems and increase the likelihood that hydrilla and other nuisance plants will grow beyond control.

Steps to follow for reduction of nutrient loading include:

- a. Contact TCEQ to insure that all point sources for nutrient inflow within the watershed are within permitted limits.
- b. Educate property owners in the reservoir's watershed urging that septic systems be checked for proper operation, that turf and field fertilizer be limited to the amount necessary, and that vegetated buffer zones be established between activities that cause nutrient loading (livestock production operations, golf courses, etc.) and the reservoir or its tributaries.

Monitoring and Rapid Response

If the spread of nuisance aquatic vegetation is to be controlled, the help of all Texans who enjoy fishing, boating and contact recreation on our rivers, streams and reservoirs must be enlisted. Citizens' organizations and advisory groups may be used to aid in early detection of nuisance species infestations, as well as to provide input relative to the most appropriate management techniques for specific waterbodies. When new infestations are discovered and management is deemed appropriate, water managers must be able to respond immediately. TPWD's experience predicts that the short-term costs associated with immediate response are often less than the costs related to "no management" or delayed management. Therefore, programs that enlist the aid of anglers, boaters, and other recreational enthusiasts should be encouraged, since they are often aware of new infestations before biologists. Exotic aquatic plants are here for the foreseeable future and everyone must get involved.

Research

TPWD is committed to ongoing research regarding ecology and management of aquatic vegetation. Over the next few years, TPWD will team with its partners to:

- Evaluate mechanical means of aquatic vegetation management.
- Evaluate the efficacy of reduced concentrations of aquatic herbicides in aquatic vegetation management.

- Continue research regarding native aquatic vegetation planting and restoration. The advantages of native plant species are understood, but much remains to be learned about the most appropriate species for a body of water, how to produce plants in quantities necessary for replanting, and the best way of maintaining re-vegetated habitats.
- Research the safety, efficacy and ecological benefits of biological controls. Biological control has significant potential, particularly when appropriately applied as part of an IPM approach to plant management. While grass carp biology and efficacy have been extensively researched, the use of this biological tool in an IPM plan that stresses establishing or re-establishing native vegetation remains to be carefully researched. Therefore, research into use of other types of biological controls, particularly insects and fungi, will continue.
- Better understand the best management practices necessary for preventing introduction and spread of nuisance aquatic vegetation.

Education

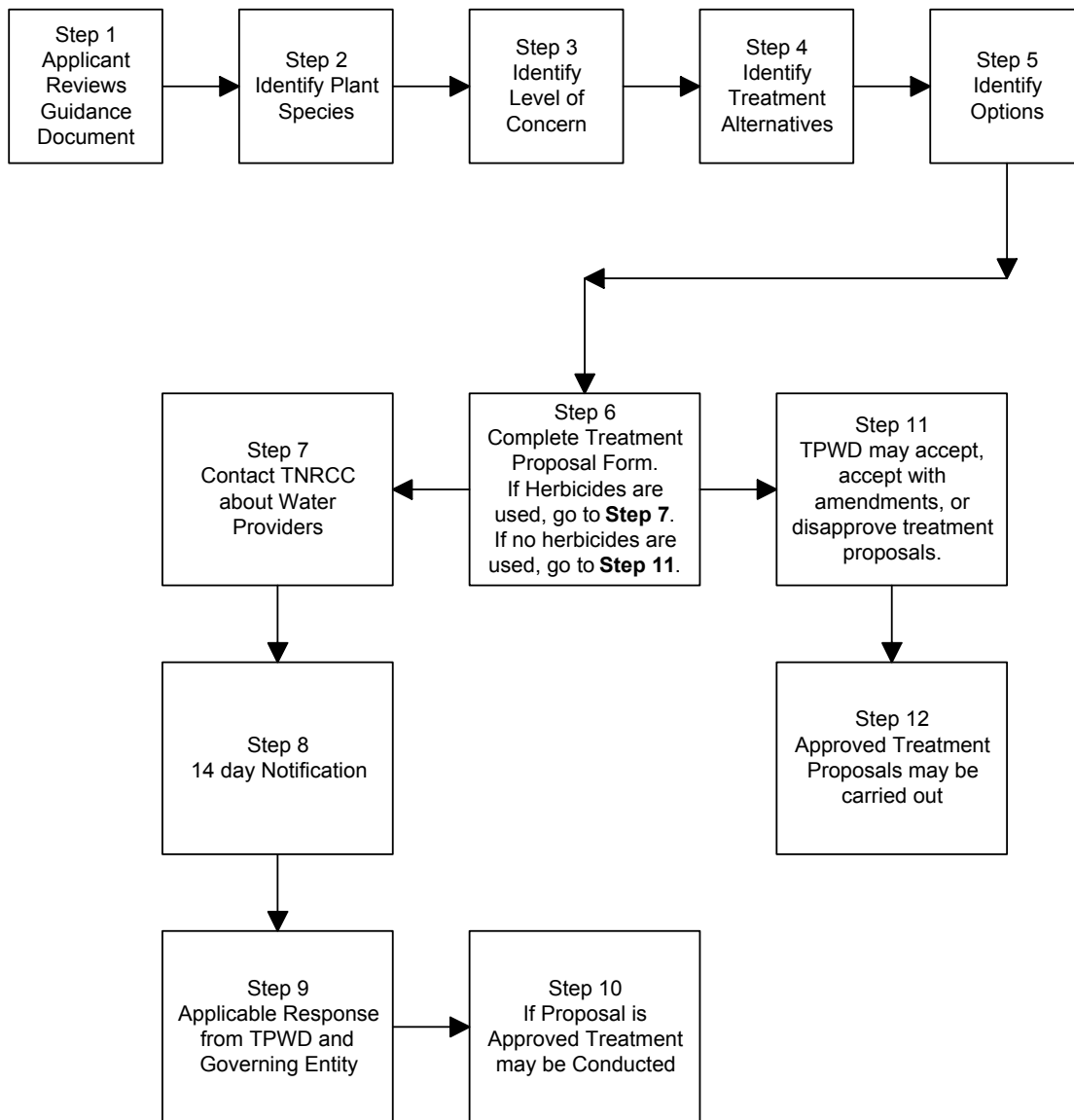
In Texas, where exotic plant distribution is becoming widespread, it is difficult to completely eliminate inadvertent spread of exotic plant species among public waters. However, an aggressive educational program could slow or prevent the distribution of these plants into new areas of the state. The solution may lie in developing and implementing programs to educate water managers, water resource users, and merchants (such as fishing clubs, boaters, aquaculturists, water gardeners, and aquarium hobbyists) about the problems that can arise from the transportation and consequent introduction of exotic aquatic plants. Programs will focus on best management practices necessary to prevent the spread of exotic aquatic plants. Citizens' organizations and advisory groups can play an important role in disseminating valuable information to the public.

Law Enforcement

Current statutes and regulations provide penalties for possession, transport and placement of prohibited plant species in public water. Active law enforcement in other states has proved to be a very powerful means of preventing spread of nuisance species and of educating the public about the hazards of transporting and transplanting exotic plants. TPWD will team with its partners to strengthen and coordinate law enforcement activities.

III. How to Develop an Aquatic Vegetation Treatment Proposal

Figure 2. Texas Vegetation Management Plan Process

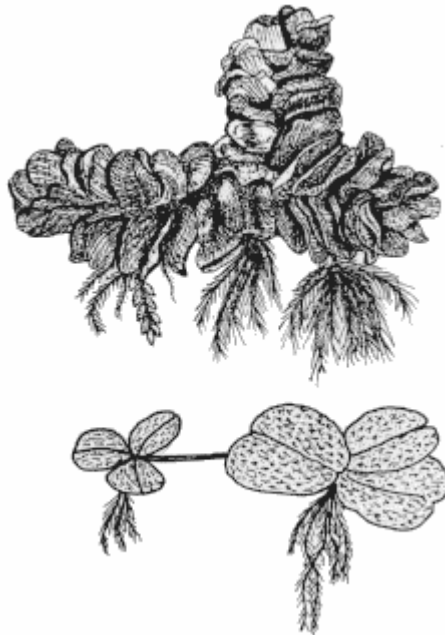


Note: Pages 38-39 describe the steps above in detail.

A. Identifying Vegetation Species

Correctly identifying aquatic vegetation species is critical for understanding what management options are available, and which are most efficacious. Often, vegetation species that are similar in appearance have entirely different management options. Published keys (e.g., Fassett 1957) are useful for identification. Unfortunately, many keys use only line drawings to aid in identification. The University of Florida Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants maintains an internet site (<http://aquatic1.ifas.ufl.edu>) that provides color pictures and descriptions of many aquatic vegetation species. If you are not sure what type of vegetation you have please request assistance from a TPWD biologist (Appendix D). Information is provided below for selected nuisance plant species in Texas.

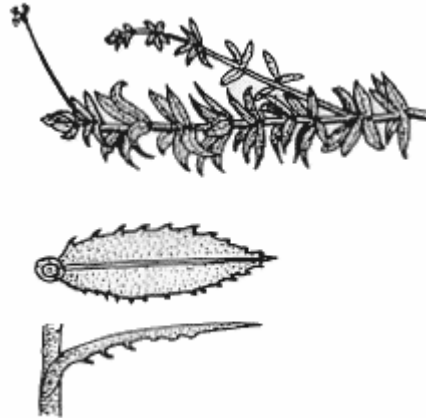
1. **Salvinia**



Two species of aquatic fern, genus *Salvinia*, have been identified in Texas. Both are small floating plants with oval shaped leaves (fronds) that have tiny hairs on the upper surface. Common salvinia *S. minima* was first identified in Jefferson County (Port Arthur area) in 1992 while the more ecologically threatening Giant salvinia *S. molesta* was first identified in the Houston area in Spring 1998. *S. minima* is the smaller of the two species and is readily distinguished from *S. molesta* by the morphology of its leaf hairs. In *S. minima* the hairs are split four ways near the tip. In *S. molesta* the hairs are also split, but they come together at the tip forming an egg-beater type structure. Typically, mature leaves of *S. molesta* are quarter to half-dollar sized, about twice the size of *S. minima*. All salvinia species are on the state's "Harmful or Potentially Harmful Exotic Fish, Shellfish, and Aquatic Plants" list, which means they are prohibited in the State of Texas. Giant salvinia, also known as Kariba Weed, has spread from its native habitat in southern Brazil to many other countries around the world including Australia, New Guinea, New Zealand, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and now to the United States (Mitchell 1976). It ranks second behind waterhyacinth on the nuisance aquatic weed list where it was placed in 1984 (Barrett 1989). Giant salvinia damages aquatic ecosystems by outgrowing and replacing native plants that provide food and habitat for native animals and waterfowl. Additionally, salvinia blocks out sunlight and decreases oxygen concentration to the detriment of fish and other aquatic species. When plant masses die, decomposition lowers dissolved oxygen still further. Blockage of waterways to traffic is common. Giant salvinia infestations often expand

very rapidly. Doubling times as low as two days have been observed in the laboratory, and under field conditions doubling times of approximately a week are not unusual.

2. Hydrilla



One of Texas' most problematic aquatic plant species, hydrilla, is not native to North America. Hydrilla, which has small (0.5-1.0 inches) leaves arranged in whorls around the stem, was introduced into Florida in the early 1950's through the aquarium trade, and initially marketed as Indian star-vine (Schmitz 1990). Since then the plant has spread throughout Florida, also becoming established widely throughout eastern seaboard states as well as California and Washington (Netherland 1997). As a result of its rapid growth and competitive ability, hydrilla populations often exceed beneficial levels. Bowes et al. (1979) reported dense surface mats of hydrilla may cause wide fluctuations in dissolved oxygen levels, pH, and temperature. Overabundant hydrilla may also reduce plant and animal diversity (Barnett and Schneider 1974), as well as stunt sport-fish populations (Colle and Shireman 1980). Flow rates in canals and rivers may be restricted (TPWD staff observations), and access may become limited, precluding water recreation, as well as the economic benefits of recreational activities (Colle et al. 1987).

Two characteristics that are most problematic include its rapid growth rate under a wide range of environmental conditions, and its ability to reproduce in a variety of ways. Hydrilla can grow up to one inch per day until it nears the surface of the water. Once near the surface it forms a thick mat of branches and leaves that intercept sunlight, often preventing native plants from growing underneath. Hydrilla commonly occurs in reservoirs ranging from oligotrophic (low in nutrients) to eutrophic (high in nutrients) conditions. Although hydrilla prefers a pH of 6-8 (Langeland 1990), it can grow under a wide range of pH conditions. Hydrilla can also tolerate relatively high salinity but perhaps its greatest advantage is the ability to grow and photosynthesize in less than 1% of full sunlight (Haller 1978). The ability to grow and photosynthesize at light levels below those required for native submersed plants allows hydrilla to colonize deeper water, frequently growing in water 3 yds deep with instances of establishment in very clear water up to 15 yds deep. It is this ability to grow in deeper depths that allows hydrilla to cover such a large portion of relatively shallow Texas reservoirs.

Hydrilla can reproduce in a variety of ways including fragmentation, tubers, turions, and seeds (Langeland 1990). The ability of hydrilla to reproduce from fragments causes its rapid spread within reservoirs and from one reservoir to another. Nearly 50% of fragments with a single leaf whorl can sprout a new plant (and subsequently a new

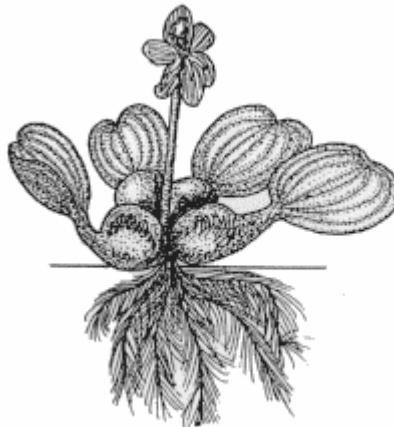
population). For fragments with three or more leaf whorls, the success rate is over 50%. With success rates so high, it is easy to see why hydrilla is spread easily by boats, boat trailers, wildlife, and from aquariums.

Tubers are actually subterranean (underground) turions. Tubers can remain dry for several days and still remain viable. They can be buried in undisturbed wet sediment for over four years and survive. They can also survive herbicide treatment and ingestion and regurgitation by waterfowl. It is largely the tubers that allow hydrilla to remain established even during an aggressive treatment program. A single tuber can potentially produce approximately 6,000 new tubers per yd².

Turions that form in leaf axils are another potential means of hydrilla expansion. A single turion can potentially produce over 2,800 additional turions per yd².

Although hydrilla can reproduce sexually, seed viability is low and the overall importance of seed production is unknown. So far in Texas only dioecious populations of female plants have been found, so seed production in Texas is unknown.

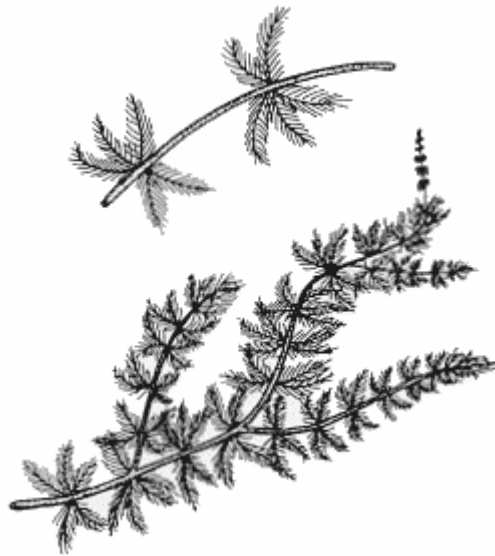
3. Waterhyacinth



Waterhyacinth, is a large floating plant, native to South America, which has been called the world's worst aquatic weed (Cook 1990). It is believed to have been introduced into the United States at the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition of 1884-1885 in New Orleans, Louisiana, and may have been cultivated in the U.S. as early as the 1860's (Tabita and Woods 1962). By the late 1890's, waterhyacinth had become such a problem for navigation that Congress was prompted to pass The Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 which authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) to begin major aquatic plant control programs (North American Lake Management Society and Aquatic Plant Management Society 1997). Waterhyacinth reproduces by budding daughter plants, or by producing seeds when its distinctive purple flower is in bloom. Populations may double in size every 6-18 days (Mitchell 1976). Perhaps due to its rapid growth rate, efforts by the ACOE were unable to control waterhyacinth, and populations expanded to over 125,000 acres in Florida by the late 1950's (United States Congress 1965). Light and oxygen diffusion (Gopal 1987), as well as water movement (Bogart 1949) can be severely reduced by the presence of over abundant waterhyacinth. Waterhyacinth can smother beds of submersed vegetation and eliminate plants that are important to waterfowl (Tabita and Woods 1962; Chesnut and Barman 1974). Similarly, low oxygen concentrations underneath waterhyacinth mats can cause fish kills (Timmer and Weldon 1967). Waterhyacinth has completely eliminated resident fish

populations in some small Louisiana lakes (Gowanloch 1945). The combination of large leaves and hanging roots can produce evapotranspiration rates in excess of twice normal evaporation. Waterhyacinth induced water loss can be significant in West Texas water supply systems where drought conditions often occur. Waterhyacinth infestations are often associated with reduced boating, fishing, hunting, and swimming access.

4. Eurasian watermilfoil

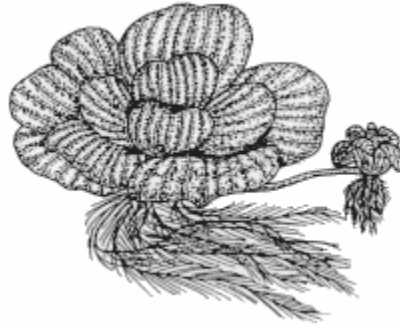


Eurasian watermilfoil *Myriophyllum spicatum* is an aquatic plant native to Europe and Asia which was first introduced into North America in the late 19th century (Reed 1977). In recent years it has gained a reputation as a nuisance plant species (Nichols and Shaw 1986). Although it is quite similar to the North American native watermilfoil *M. exalbescens*, the species can usually be distinguished on the basis of leaf morphology. In general, *M. spicatum* produces 5-24 pairs of leaflets per leaf, whereas *M. exalbescens* produces 4-14 (Aiken and McNeill 1980). About 70% accuracy can be obtained by characterizing everything with 14 or more pairs of leaflets as *M. spicatum* (Nichols 1975).

Eurasian watermilfoil flowers in mid-June through late summer. In addition to flowering, the plant may reproduce asexually by producing vegetative buds, and by fragmentation (Nichols 1975). *M. spicatum* may survive winter seasons as a whole plant, as a root mass, or by producing turions or winter buds. (Stuckey et al. 1978; Titus and Adams 1979).

Eurasian watermilfoil is a very good competitor capable of displacing native submerged plant species, reducing both habitat diversity and plant species diversity. When overabundant this species can create many of the same problems as hydrilla, including reduced boat access, reduced access to other recreational opportunities such as swimming and skiing, and low dissolved oxygen levels.

5. Waterlettuce



Waterlettuce *Pistia stratiotes* is one of the most cosmopolitan aquatic plants in the world. It is a floating plant (although it is capable of rooting in wet soil for prolonged periods of time), and is easily recognizable by its lettuce-like leaves, which are broadly rounded at the upper end and covered by tiny hairs. This plant is found on every continent except Europe and Antarctica (Gillett et al. 1968, Stoddard 1989). Origins of the plant are unclear, but based on the abundance of associated insects it is believed waterlettuce may have come from South America (Cordo et al. 1981).

As a large floating plant, waterlettuce may cause many of the same problems associated with waterhyacinth, including reduced boating, fishing, hunting, and swimming access.

6. Alligatorweed



Alligatorweed *Alternanthera philoxeroides* has been described as an amphibious plant because it grows in a wide range of habitat types including both terrestrial and aquatic (Vogt et al. 1979). It may be found as either a floating plant or a rooted plant. The aquatic form usually has hollow stems, whereas, the terrestrial form does not. The plant originated in the Parana River region of South America (Maddox 1968, Vogt et al. 1979), but has since spread to other areas of South America, as well as North America, Asia, and Australia (Julien et al. 1995). Flowering stems are upright.

Leaves are usually elliptic and may be up to 4 inches long. Flowers bloom from April through October if conditions are favorable.

Similar to waterhyacinth and waterlettuce, excessive alligatorweed growth can clog waterways, and limit boating, fishing, hunting, and swimming access. Low oxygen problems may also result where waterbodies are completely covered.

B. Identifying Your Level of Concern

Each body of water in Texas is unique. The native flora and fauna, primary and secondary uses, water quality parameters and recreational use of reservoirs (in particular) underscore the need for aquatic plant management that is tailored to each water body. As shown on the treatment proposal form (Appendix C), the person submitting the treatment proposal should try to classify each aquatic vegetation problem on each body of water into one of three “management response categories”. Which response category should be chosen depends on several factors, including (but not limited to) primary use of the water body, recreational uses, drinking water uses, agricultural uses, species of plant, surface coverage, ecological significance, history of infestation, and possibility of expansion. A multi-tier system provides a sound method of classifying reservoirs with nuisance aquatic vegetation to allow a consistent and reasonable approach to meeting the challenges brought about by invasive aquatic plants. This system is set up with general guidelines; placement of a particular reservoir situation into a specific tier will be based on all the attributes and uses of the reservoir, not strictly on the amount of nuisance vegetation present.

It is possible that a water body will face nuisance aquatic vegetation problems from more than one species of plant. For example, a reservoir could have both giant salvinia and hydrilla. In that case, each nuisance plant species should be classified into a response category. The giant salvinia infestation will probably be Tier I, while the hydrilla might be Tier I, II or III. Each nuisance plant species on each water body should be addressed on a different treatment proposal form. If the choice of category is not easily ascertained, consultation with TPWD is readily available and encouraged (Appendix D).

Immediate Response - Tier I

Tier I response is a management option for bodies of water experiencing limited, controllable stands of nuisance aquatic vegetation, or areas of special ecological concern. Tier I situations will be addressed by executing as quickly as possible an appropriate management strategy designed to eliminate the nuisance vegetation and reduce or preclude chances of spread or reoccurrence.

Presence of nuisance aquatic plant species, primary water use requirements and the water body's physical and biological attributes (e.g., submerged contour, hydrology, and nutrient loading) should determine Tier I response. For example, if the uses of the reservoir are not affected and there is little potential for expansion over 30% surface coverage the decision may be to implement a different tier response. Conversely, in bodies of water with characteristics conducive to establishing stands of nuisance plant species (for example, stable water levels, shoreline development and an absence of native vegetation), an immediate Tier I response could be the most effective and least harmful long-term solution. The goals of any Tier I response will include the continuation or improvement of fishery and/or other recreational benefits.

Maintenance - Tier II

Tier II response situations are those that have substantial occurrences of nuisance aquatic vegetation such that complete control is virtually impossible or at the very least impractical. Tier II situations are to be monitored closely and managed, in conjunction with the governing entity, to provide fishing and boating access or to meet ecological needs. Mechanical, biological and chemical plant control methods may be used, consistent with IPM, to help limit adverse impacts of vegetation on fishing and boating access.

Watch Status - Tier III

Tier III response situations are those where control of nuisance aquatic plants could be achieved given adequate resources; however, the plants are stable or declining, and there is little chance of the

infestation being spread to a nearby water body. These reservoirs should be monitored for expansion of the exotic plant populations with a plan in place to control plants if such control becomes necessary.

C. Identifying Possible Prevention and Treatment Techniques

The tools commonly available to control nuisance vegetation can be grouped into three major categories: **Biological controls** use living organisms capable of controlling particular plant species; **Mechanical/physical controls** incorporate a wide variety of techniques, usually shredding or cutting and removing nuisance vegetation directly or exposing plants to unfavorable environmental conditions; and **Chemical controls** eliminate vegetation by utilizing herbicides toxic to specific plants, or in some cases making use of plant hormones. Using an IPM approach, any one of a variety of techniques, or combinations thereof, may be used to effectively manage nuisance aquatic vegetation in the most economic and environmentally sound way possible.

1. Mechanical/Physical Control

- i. **Mechanical harvesters** (Includes traditional barge type harvesters with both vertical and horizontal cutting blades and a conveyor belt that gathers cut material for later offloading or for shredding.)

Target Species: All aquatic vegetation found in water greater than 2.0 feet in depth.

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water, and no effect on drinking water.
- Plant biomass/nutrients can be removed from the system.
- No new organisms are introduced.
- High level of treatment precision; targeted plants can be removed within a well-defined area.

Cons:

- Very slow removal (typically 1-2 acres/day under ideal conditions).
- Fragmentation may accelerate spread of aquatic plant species.
- Small fish and other wildlife mortality may occur during the process of vegetation removal, but may not affect overall fish community health.
- Short-term control method, repeated cutting during the growing season typically required.
- Only cuts to a maximum depth of 5-5.5 feet.
- Requires 2.0-3.0 feet of water (depending on harvester size) with no submerged obstacles (stumps, rocks, etc.).

Applicability: May be used in areas greater than 2.0 feet deep, where there are few submerged obstacles, and where fragmentation and re-growth will not significantly increase a plant's ability to spread.

- ii. **Mechanical shredders** (Includes floating barge type machines that shred vegetation near the water surface rather than cutting and harvesting it.)

Target Species: All aquatic vegetation found in the upper 1-2 feet of water greater than 2.0 feet in depth that do not reproduce by fragmentation.

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- No new organisms are introduced.
- 80% or more of the plants that are shredded usually die.
- Up to 32 times faster than traditional harvesters.
- Potentially much lower cost per acre than traditional harvesters.

Cons:

- Fragmentation may accelerate spread of aquatic plant species.
- Requires a minimum of 2.0-3 feet of water with no submerged obstacles (stumps, rocks, etc.).
- May require multiple use during each growing season.
- May temporarily depress dissolved oxygen levels.
- May be dangerous to fish and other wildlife associated with plants.

Applicability: Areas greater than 2.0 feet deep with few submerged obstacles, and where fragmentation will not significantly increase a plants ability to spread.

- iii. **Water level manipulations** - The purpose of drawdowns is to strand plants on the shoreline for a sufficient period to cause mortality by dessication or freezing. Water level is usually manipulated by the reservoir's governing entity. Specific strategies vary depending on the reservoir situation, but generally holding the water level at several feet above normal pool in the spring can reduce light transmission to established vegetation thereby reducing its growth. Dropping the water level several feet through the fall and winter dries vegetation killing some of the plants outright. Drawdowns are quite effective on most submerged plants such as Eurasian watermilfoil. However, although hydrilla on dry ground is more likely to be damaged by cold weather than hydrilla insulated by water, in general, water level manipulations seem to be somewhat less effective on hydrilla than on many other plants. Because of hydrilla's adaptability, water level manipulation could give hydrilla a survival advantage over desirable native plants. Raising the water level in the spring may cut light penetration enough to limit native plant growth while hydrilla continues to grow unabated, especially in relatively clear water. Lowering water level in the fall may kill both hydrilla and native plants, but the hydrilla, because of its ability to produce numerous tubers, may return more quickly than many native plants when the water level rises. Further, some drying seems to act as a trigger to cause increased hydrilla tuber sprouting. For these reasons, specific circumstances have to be examined carefully before water level manipulation is used as a hydrilla control strategy. For example, if hydrilla already maintains a monospecific plant community, water level manipulations may be a viable means of controlling its growth, especially if two drawdowns are used as suggested in some literature; one to germinate tubers, and a second to kill germinated tubers.

Target Species: All floating or submergent nearshore aquatic vegetation

Pros:

- Can provide substantial control if water levels can be adjusted.
- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- Can provide selective control if level manipulations are properly timed with the life history of target species.
- No new organisms are introduced.

Cons:

- May have significant detrimental impacts to ecosystem, particularly fisheries, if drawdowns are not appropriately timed.
- Drawdowns may be restricted by water rights and/or reservoir obligations.
- May impact various uses of the water body (e.g. boat access, sale of water, power plant cooling, etc.).
- Individual floating plants (species such as salvinia or waterhyacinth) may remain viable.

Applicability: Use of drawdowns is limited to water bodies with water control structures.

- iv. **Booms** - The use of floating booms can be useful in a floating plant control program. They can be deployed to prevent floating plants from clogging water intakes, marinas, swimming areas, or other susceptible sites. Booms can also be used to collect or contain plants in an otherwise open setting. Booms placed around a boat launch may prevent plants from interfering with ingress or egress of boats, and prevent plants that have been accidentally introduced at a boat launch from escaping into the open water body. Floating booms can also be used to collect floating plants being moved by currents within a water body, or prevent plants from entering the main course of the reservoir from feeder embayments. Plants collected in such manner can be more efficiently removed with other control methods.

Target Species: All floating plant species

Pros:

- After deployment, operation of booms is fairly passive.
- No new organisms are introduced.
- Can achieve high level of site-specific control.
- Simple technology.
- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- Few off-target impacts.
- No water use restrictions.
- Can help prevent spread of floating nuisance plant species.

Cons:

- Does not provide “active” control of existing infestations.
- Effectiveness limited spatially, except when considered as a preventative measure.
- May restrict navigation, or become a navigation hazard.
- Requires a high level of maintenance; booms must be cleaned regularly.
- Built up material may be carried over or under a boom by current.
- Easily vandalized.
- Short-term solution.

Applicability: Mainly for protection of fixed structures and facilities. Also for containing infestations for control by other methods and for helping prevent new introductions.

- v. **Bottom Barriers** - Physical barriers have been used with various degrees of success to prevent weed growth in specific applications. Usually these consist of various types of dark polyethylene plastic which are spread across the bottom of the area to be kept weed-free and then staked in place. Barriers are fairly expensive and labor-intensive to install. These systems are generally used only around boat docks, swimming areas, etc. due to their expense. Barriers are susceptible to damage by propellers, storm damage, and dredging. Problems have also been encountered in the past with gases (i.e. oxygen and CO₂) building up under the film and buoying the barrier up from the bottom; however more modern gas permeable fabrics are designed to avoid this.

Target Species: All submerged plant species.

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- No new organisms are introduced.
- Growth of submerged plant species is inhibited.
- No fragmentation problems.

- No water use restrictions.

Cons:

- Not plant specific, all submerged plants are affected.
- Expensive and labor intensive.
- Not effective on floating species.
- Difficulties keeping the barrier submerged.
- Sediment may accumulate on top of the barrier.
- Plants may grow in sediment on top of the barrier.
- Limited to small areas.

Applicability: Primarily useful in small pond, and still water situations.

- vi. Shading** - A number of dyes are on the market that are used to shade plants growing up from the bottom of a water body. Shading is an artificial means of controlling unwanted submersed aquatic vegetation. Chemicals are employed to inhibit light penetration and thus shade out the problem plant species. Shading is best employed in small lakes or ponds. Commercially available chemical dyes are sometimes used to color the water (usually a deep blue) to inhibit light penetration and thus shade out existing or potential weeds. These products are generally used in maintaining immaculate landscape ponds.

Target Species: All submerged plant species.

Pros:

- No use restrictions in drinking water sources.
- Growth of submerged plant species as well as phytoplankton is inhibited.
- No new organisms are introduced.
- No fragmentation problems.
- No water use restrictions.

Cons:

- Not plant specific, all submerged plants are affected.
- Not effective on floating species.
- Inhibition of phytoplankton may affect fish production.
- Not effective in flowing water situations.
- Artificial looking water color.

Applicability: Primarily useful in small pond, and still water situations.

- vii. Weed Rollers** – Microchip controlled cylinders roll in an arc (up to 270°) continually, disturbing vegetation and inhibiting growth

Target Species: Submerged plant species

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- No new organisms introduced.
- Can be used on any submerged plant species.
- Site specific.
- No water use restrictions.
- May be effective in 2 days to 2 weeks.

Cons:

- Limited to a radius of 7-21 feet.

- May disturb benthic (bottom dwelling) organisms.
- May cause fragmentation.

Applicability: Useful on small areas with no stumps or other underwater obstructions.

viii. **Removal by Hand**

Target Species: All plant species.

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- No new organisms are introduced.
- Can be used on any plant species.
- Can be highly species and site specific.
- No water use restrictions.

Cons:

- Very labor intensive.
- May significantly alter substrate and disturb resident organisms.
- Very time consuming.
- Only effective on small infestations.
- Re-growth may occur in as little as 30 days unless roots and tubers are removed.
- Fragmentation can be a significant problem with submerged species.

Applicability: Primarily useful with new or small infestations.

2. **Biological Control**

The following list includes non-experimental control methods considered acceptable under the statewide plan. For procedures relative to the use of triploid grass carp in public water see Appendix F.

i. **Triploid grass carp *Ctenopharyngodon idella***

Grass carp, or white amur, are plant-eating fish native to Asia. They are capable of surviving at temperatures ranging from below freezing to over 100°F. Grass carp grow rapidly. In their native habitat they may typically grow 80-100 pounds. Fingerlings, juveniles and adults feed almost exclusively on plant material. Depending on temperature, water quality, and plant quality they may eat up to three times their body weight per day. Typically, submerged plants such as hydrilla are preferred food items, whereas floating plants (with the exception of duckweed) are among the last species consumed. Triploid grass carp are sterile. In Texas, only triploid grass carp may be stocked, and only by TPWD permit. In general, recommended stocking rates are 5-10 fish per acre of waterbody.

Target Species: Hydrilla and other species

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- Usually long-term control
- Plant biomass can be removed from the system.
- Triploid grass carp will not reproduce.

Cons:

- If not confined, grass carp will typically leave target treatment area. In some cases they have been found over 200 miles from target treatment areas.
- Grass carp may consume non-target plant species when available.
- Grass carp may consume vegetation in non-target areas.
- It is difficult to achieve partial control.
- Grass carp are not readily susceptible to conventional capture techniques and are not easily removed from waterbodies if overstocked.
- Grass carp have been captured in brackish water up to 17 ppt (~50% sea water) and can even survive for short periods of time in hypersaline water. Escapees may be capable of feeding in some estuary situations.

Applicability: Waterbodies where confinement is possible and potential elimination of all aquatic vegetation is preferable to the nuisance plant infestation.

ii. **Alligatorweed flea beetles *Agasicles hygrophila***

Alligatorweed flea beetles are native to Argentina. Adults are 0.2-0.3 inches long. Their head and thorax are black, while their wing covers have yellow and black stripes. Larvae burrow into the hollow stem of the aquatic form of alligator weed. Larvae often feed on the plant stem, but both larvae and adults feed primarily on the leaves. Since they were first used in the U.S. in the early 60's alligatorweed flea beetles have proven to be very effective at controlling alligatorweed. Rarely are other control measures now necessary. However, they are only effective on the aquatic form of the plant.

Target Species: Alligatorweed *Alternanthera philoxeroides*

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- Insects may reduce plant biomass significantly.
- Alligatorweed flea beetles are plant specific (feeding only on alligatorweed).

Cons:

- Significant amounts of alligatorweed may remain in the system because the beetles are more effective on the aquatic rather than the terrestrial growth form of the plant.
- Insect populations should be monitored to ensure continued stability.
- Severe winter conditions may negatively impact insect populations.

Applicability: Any waterway with alligatorweed. Herbicide use may inhibit effectiveness of insects.

iii. **Waterhyacinth weevils *Neochetina* spp. (*N. eichhorniae* and *N. bruchii*)**

Waterhyacinth weevils are native to Central and South America. The chevroned waterhyacinth weevil *N. bruchii* and the mottled waterhyacinth weevil *N. eichhorniae* were introduced into the U.S. in the 1970's to help control waterhyacinth. The two species are very similar in appearance, both are usually gray to dark brownish red. However, grooves on the wing covers are coarse on the mottled weevil and fine on the chevroned weevil. Larvae may grow up to about 0.3 inches. Adults and larvae of both species feed exclusively on waterhyacinth. Circular to rectangular scars are often evident on the leaves as a result of waterhyacinth weevil feeding activity. However, rather than quickly killing waterhyacinth plants, weevil herbivory often results in stunted plant growth, less flowering (and hence less seeds production), and reduced competitive ability against native plants.

Target Species: Waterhyacinth

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- Insects may reduce plant biomass significantly.
- Insects may reduce the number of flowers present and the number of seeds produced.
- No problems with low oxygen levels.
- Weevils are species specific (feeding only on waterhyacinth).

Cons:

- Weevils will not eliminate waterhyacinth.
- Weevils will probably not reduce the area covered to below nuisance levels.
- In some cases efficiency may be reduced if chemical treatments are conducted.
- Severe winter conditions may negatively impact insect populations.
- Limited commercial availability.

Applicability: Any waterway with waterhyacinth.

iv. Waterlettuce weevils *Neohydronomus affinis*

Waterlettuce weevils are native to Central and South America. They were first introduced into the U.S. in the 1980's to help control waterlettuce in Florida. Adult weevils are very small ranging in size from 0.06 to 0.09 inches. They vary in color from nearly white to blue-gray to brown. Larvae cause extensive damage to waterlettuce by tunneling through leaves, whereas adults cut circular holes on both the underside and the top (primarily) of leaves. Waterlettuce weevils have proven to be very effective at waterlettuce control. Where they have become established nearly complete control is usually achieved in 18-24 months.

Target Species: Waterlettuce

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- Insects reduce plant biomass significantly.
- No problems with low oxygen levels.
- Weevils are species specific (feeding only on waterlettuce).

Cons:

- Efficiency may be reduced if chemical treatments are conducted.
- Severe winter conditions may negatively impact insect populations. Herbicide use may inhibit effectiveness of insects.
- Limited commercial availability.

Applicability: Any waterway with waterlettuce.

3. Chemical Control

Many herbicides are quick acting and show results within a matter of days. Others are systemic and kill plants over longer periods of time. The following table lists commonly used herbicides available today. Use of federally approved chemicals for the purposes of nuisance aquatic plant removal is acceptable under the plan within the limitations of the rules (the rules are in Appendix B).

Because human health and safety are always a concern when aquatic herbicides are applied to vegetation in water supplies (particularly drinking water) and areas of contact recreation,

TPWD staff conducted a review of the scientific literature relative to three of the most commonly used aquatic herbicides in Texas (Luedke and Cantu 2000). Before labeling herbicides for use in aquatic systems, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) evaluates appropriate data and determines that at the approved rate, these chemicals should not adversely affect human or ecosystem health.

In many instances surfactants may have to be used with herbicides to help increase their effectiveness. Depending on the morphology of the plant species in question both a wetting agent and a penetrant may be used. Surfactants can increase costs by as much as 10-15 percent.

TPWD rules (57.932(b)(2)(D)) prohibit aquatic herbicide use unless the individual proposing to apply the herbicide use includes, with the notice of proposed herbicide use, "information demonstrating that the proposed application will not result in exceeding: (i) the maximum contaminant level of the herbicide in finished drinking water as set by the TCEQ and the EPA; or ii) if the aquatic herbicide does not have an MCL established by the TCEQ and the EPA, the maximum label rate".

Regarding all of the herbicides discussed below, MCL's either have not been set, or have been waived by TCEQ as long as instructions on each specimen label are followed correctly. In order to demonstrate compliance with the specimen label, the notice should provide water depth, area treated, and amount of herbicide proposed for use. This information will be sufficient to make the demonstration required in this provision of the rules.

- i. **2,4-D** - In Texas 2,4-D compounds have a restricted use and are regulated by TDA. Applicators must be certified by TDA and must follow strict use restrictions based on the county of a proposed application. In areas where 2,4-D use is limited, and at times of the year where its use is restricted, diquat, endothall, trichlopyr, and glyphosate products can be used.

Active ingredient: 2,4-D (2,4-dichlorophenoxy acetic acid, dimethylamine salt)
(Due to lower volatility n-alkylamine salts are recommended over ester formulations).

Target Species: Waterhyacinth (2,4-D can also be used on Eurasian watermilfoil, but it is rarely done in Texas), pickerelweed, waterlily, waterwillow, bladderwort, coontail, water stargrass.

Pros:

- Requires short contact time with target plant.
- Very quick acting, results evident in a few days.
- When sprayed on floating plants very little enters water column.
- No new organisms are introduced.
- Low cost relative to other herbicides.

Cons:

- Low oxygen can be a problem if large areas are controlled at once.
- Treated water cannot be used for livestock or as municipal water source for 21 days after application or until tests indicate concentration levels are below 0.1 ppm.
- Surviving plants may re-establish population levels within 1-2 months; therefore, maintenance spraying may be required later in the growing season.
- Not species specific.
- Volatility may be a problem, particularly in hot weather or where an atmospheric inversion may develop.
- Problems with the interpretation of terms such as "treated water" and "treated area" on the specimen labels of several herbicides, including 2,4-D compounds,

must be worked out with TDA, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. A final interpretation of these terms may affect post treatment water uses.

- Can only be purchased and applied by an applicator licensed by TDA.

Applicability: Can be used on waterhyacinth growing in both lotic (river-like) and lentic (lake-like) habitats.

ii. Chelated Copper

Active ingredient: Copper chelates

Target Species: Hydrilla, chara, nitella, filamentous algae

Pros:

- Requires a short contact time on the order of hours with target plant species.
- Quick acting, results evident in a few days.
- No water use restrictions after application.
- No new organisms are introduced.

Cons:

- Low dissolved oxygen can be a problem if large areas are controlled at once.
- Surviving plants may re-establish population levels within 1-2 months.
- May have to be used more than once per growing season.
- Does not affect hydrilla tubers buried in the soil, which may remain dormant for 4-5 years or more before germinating.
- In flowing water special slow release herbicide delivery equipment is required.

Applicability: May be used in still water. May also be used on plants in flowing water, however, a special delivery system may be required in high flow situations.

iii. Diquat

Active ingredient: Diquat (6,7-dihydrodipyrido (1,2- α :2',1'-c) pyrazinediium bromide)

Target Species: Waterhyacinth, hydrilla, salvinia spp., waterlettuce, water pennywort, bushy pondweed, coontail, elodea, parrot feather, pondweeds, Eurasian watermilfoil, duckweed, cattail, Brazilian elodea.

Pros:

- Requires short contact time with target plant (minutes).
- Quick acting, results evident in a few days (in some cases the same day).
- When sprayed on floating plants, very little enters the water column (although it can be injected into the water for use on submerged vegetation).
- No new organisms are introduced.
- No swimming or fishing restrictions when using diquat at labeled rates.
- Controls floating, marginal, and submerged weeds.

Cons:

- Low dissolved oxygen can be a problem if large areas are controlled at once.
- Treated water cannot be used for livestock, or as public water source for 0-5 days after application depending on application rate and how the water will be used.
- Surviving plants may re-establish population levels within weeks.
- May have to be used more than once per growing season to control surviving plants (depending on plant species).
- Does not affect hydrilla tubers buried in the soil that may remain dormant for 4-5 years or more before germinating.

Applicability: May be used on floating, marginal, or submerged plants in either still or flowing water.

iv. Endothall

Active ingredient: Dipotassium salt of endothall (7-oxabicyclo [2,2,1]heptane-2,3-dicarboxylic acid)

Target Species: Hydrilla, Eurasian watermilfoil, Brazilian elodea, bushy pondweed, coontail, parrot feather, pondweeds, Eurasian watermilfoil, water stargrass, chara, nitella, filamentous algae.

Pros:

- Requires very short contact time (~2 hrs) with target plant to be effective.
- Quick acting. Results may be seen in 7-10 days.
- Remains in the water column only a matter of minutes.
- No new organisms are introduced.

Cons:

- Low dissolved oxygen can be a problem if large areas are controlled at once.
- Treated water cannot be used for livestock or as a public water source for 7 days after application.
- Surviving plants may re-establish population levels within 30 days.
- May have to be used more than once per growing season.
- Does not affect hydrilla tubers buried in the soil that may remain dormant for 4-5 years or more before germinating.
- In flowing water, special slow release herbicide delivery equipment would be required.
- Problems with the interpretation of terms such as “treated water” and “treated area” on the specimen labels of several herbicides, including endothall compounds, must be worked out with TDA, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. A final interpretation of these terms may affect post treatment water uses.

Applicability: Can be used in moderate flow situations where immediate use of the water for drinking or livestock is unnecessary. As with fluridone, experimental drip delivery systems which expose target plants to low concentrations over extended periods of time have shown promise.

v. Fluridone

Active ingredient: Fluridone (1-methyl-3-phenyl-5-[3-(trifluoromethyl)phenyl]-4(1H)-pyridinone)

Target Species: Hydrilla, Salvinia spp., Eurasian watermilfoil, variable-leaf milfoil, alligatorweed, American lotus, smartweed, waterlily, water primrose, Yellow cow-lily, bladderwort, Brazilian Elodea, bushy pondweed, coontail, elodea, fanwort, parrot's feather, pondweeds, duckweed, watermeal, cattail, torpedograss.

Pros:

- Fluridone is a systemic herbicide and hydrilla populations are slow to recover after treatment. All parts of the plant are affected, with the exception of dormant tubers which have become separated from parent plants. In some reservoirs 2-4 years of control are achieved.
- Low dissolved oxygen typically not a problem because plants die slowly.
- May kill newly germinated hydrilla tubers.

- No new organisms are introduced.

Cons:

- Requires very long contact time. In some cases the treatment may be spread out over several weeks to provide the necessary contact time (under normal treatment conditions in still water).
- Takes up to 100 days for full results.
- Cannot be used within ¼ mile of a potable water intake at concentrations greater than 20 ppb.
- Treated water should not be used for irrigation for 7-30 days depending on the crop.
- Does not affect dormant hydrilla tubers buried in the soil and separated from parent plants. Tubers may remain dormant for 4-5 years or more before germinating.

Applicability: Fluridone is most applicable in water with little flow, and where the treatment area is greater than 10 acres in size. There is little applicability in flowing water such as main channels using conventional delivery systems. However, experimental drip delivery, which exposes target plants to low herbicide concentrations over an extended period of time, has shown promise. The use of pelleted formulations allows treatment in areas with some flow. Pellets are also often used on submerged plants. Liquid fluridone is usually used on floating vegetation such as salvinia.

vi. **Glyphosate**

Active ingredient: Glyphosate (N-(phosphonomethyl) glycine)

Target Species: Waterhyacinth, Salvinia, Alligatorweed, American lotus, smartweed, waterlily, water primrose, yellow cow-lily, waterlettuce, black willow, bulrush, cattail, giant reed, torpedograss.

Pros:

- Requires short contact time with target plant (4-6 hours).
- Very quick acting, results evident in 1-2 weeks.
- No need to post signs prior to application.
- When sprayed on floating plants very little enters water column.
- No new organisms are introduced.

Cons:

- Low dissolved oxygen can be a problem if large areas are controlled at once.
- Clean water needed for mixing if large mats are treated.
- Plant populations may recover and grow back quickly; therefore periodic re-treatment is often necessary.
- May have to be used more than once per growing season.
- Floating and marginal plants only.

Applicability: Can be used even in flowing water.

vii. **Imazapyr**

Active ingredient: Isopropylamine salt of Imazapyr (2-[4,5-dihydro-4-methyl-4-(1-methylethyl)-5-oxo-1H-imidazol-2-imiazol-2-yl]-3-pyridinecarboxylic acid)

Target Species: Waterhyacinth, salvinia, alligatorweed, smartweed, waterlily, parrot feather, pickerelweed, water pennywort, water primrose, waterwillow, yellow cow-lily, duckweed, black willow, bulrush, cattail, giant reed, torpedograss.

Pros:

- When sprayed on floating plants very little enters water column.
- No new organisms are introduced.

Cons:

- May not be used within one mile upstream of an active potable water intake in flowing water, or within one mile of an active potable water intake in a standing body of water (lake or pond).

Applicability: Can be used in flowing or quiescent water.

viii. Triclopyr

Active ingredient: Triclopyr: 3,5,6-trichloro-2-pyridinyloxyacetic acid, triethylamine salt.

Target Species: Waterhyacinth, Alligatorweed, American lotus, smartweed, waterlily, parrot's feather, pickerelweed, water pennywort, water primrose, waterwillow, yellow cow-lily, Eurasian watermilfoil, variable-leaf milfoil, frog's-bit, Chinese Tallow, black willow, bulrush.

Pros:

- When sprayed on floating plants very little enters water column.
- No new organisms are introduced.

Cons:

- May not be used within one mile upstream of an active potable water intake in flowing water, or within one mile of an active potable water intake in a standing body of water (lake or pond).

Applicability: Can be used in flowing or quiescent water.

4. Experimental Options and Procedures

Experimental procedures are not recommended for general use at this time. Consistent control of target species has not been fully demonstrated and further research and documentation is currently underway. Additionally, insects listed below are not generally available for sale. They are, however, used in conjunction with research activities and use may be approved.

a. Experimental Biological Controls

i. Hydrilla flies *Hydrellia pakistanae*

Target Species: Hydrilla

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- Preliminary evidence suggests insects may reduce plant biomass significantly in some instances.
- Flies are plant specific (feeding only on hydrilla).
- No problems with low oxygen levels.

Cons:

- Effectiveness is variable and difficult to document.
- Severe winter conditions may negatively impact insect populations.
- Significant amounts of hydrilla remain in the system.
- Hydrilla must be at the surface for insects to lay their eggs.
- Insect populations must be monitored to ensure continued stability.
- Herbicide use may inhibit effectiveness of insects.
- Limited commercial availability.

Applicability: Any waterway where hydrilla has grown to the surface.

ii. *Salvinia* weevils *Cyrtobagous salviniae*

Target Species: *Salvinia*, Giant *salvinia*

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- Has been highly effective in other countries. They are the most frequently used biological control for *salvinia* in the world.
- Could be fairly fast acting for insect controls.
- In the tropics results are obtained in months rather than years.
- Well documented host specificity
- Highly cost effective if experience in the U.S. proves to be similar to that in other areas of the world.

Cons:

- Effectiveness may vary depending on a number of abiotic, as well as biotic, factors including temperature, nutritional status of the plants, predators, etc.
- Conditions for effectiveness are not totally understood.
- Does not totally eradicate *salvinia*.
- Severe winter conditions may negatively impact insect populations.
- Efficacy of the weevil is not proven in Texas or in other parts of the U.S.
- Limited commercial availability.

Applicability: Biological control techniques can be used in areas where long-term suppression can be tolerated and where plant populations are large and require reduction before other management techniques can be employed economically and effectively.

b. Experimental Ecological Intervention

i. Native Vegetation Establishment

Reservoirs are disturbed ecosystems that often do not contain a propagule bank for native plants and therefore often remain un-vegetated until weedy species such as hydrilla are accidentally introduced. Most reservoirs capable of supporting hydrilla can also support some species of native aquatic vegetation. Filling the empty niches in un-vegetated areas of reservoirs with native vegetation may act as a deterrent to hydrilla establishment or further spread. For information regarding current research efforts and possibility of partnerships in further research dealing with the establishment of native aquatic vegetation, contact TPWD representatives listed in Appendix D.

Pros:

- No chemicals introduced into the water and no restrictions on the use of water for drinking.
- Some native species, if established, may slow (but not eliminate) the spread of introduced exotics.
- Native vegetation adds needed habitat diversity for invertebrate and fish production.

Cons:

- Native plant establishment is long-term, and quick results are usually not seen.
- Native plants are sometimes susceptible to damage due to water level fluctuations and herbivory.
- Does not totally eradicate already established introduced exotic plants.
- Experimental results have been inconsistent and the controlling mechanisms are not well understood.

Applicability: Nearly all Central and East Texas reservoirs. West Texas reservoirs may experience drastic water level fluctuations, which reduce the effectiveness of many native littoral zone plant species that require a more stable environment.

D. Choosing the Appropriate Management Options

Following is a list of selected vegetation species that are included on Texas' "Harmful or Potentially Harmful Exotic Fish, Shellfish, and Aquatic Plants" list. It is illegal to "release into public waters, import, sell, purchase, transport, propagate, or possess any species, hybrid of a species, subspecies, eggs, seeds, or any part of any species" included on the list. Recommended general management options are provided for each plant species. General management options are the currently accepted procedures for controlling aquatic vegetation. If you cannot locate a species of interest, or have questions, contact a TPWD biologist (Appendix D).

1. Giant Salvinia

Giant salvinia has previously been intercepted and eradicated at nurseries and botanical gardens in Florida, Virginia, Texas and Missouri and at a private pond in South Carolina (NPAG 1998). Its introduction to Toledo Bend Reservoir, a 186,000 acre body of water that forms a large portion of the boundary between Texas and Louisiana, poses a serious threat to interstate spread. The plant was found by the Sabine River Authority (SRA) of Louisiana on September 24, 1998, and identified by TPWD personnel, in the central portion of the reservoir, where it has become widespread (Hyde and Temple 1998). Since then it has been found in a number of waterbodies, both public and private.

Because of its extreme growth rate and highly invasive tendencies, any infestation of giant salvinia warrants a **Tier I Management Response**. Infestations of giant salvinia should be reported immediately to the TPWD Inland Fisheries Division. TPWD personnel familiar with both common and giant salvinia should verify all identifications. The following management options will be applicable to both species; however, infestations of giant salvinia will have preference if resources are limited.

Recommendations:

Mechanical-Physical Control - Various physical methods may be used to control or restrict spread of salvinia. These include mechanical and manual removal, devices for blocking entrance to or exit from an area, and inducing changes in the environment.

Booms and other barriers - Booms and other barriers may be useful in confining infestations or restricting entry into sensitive areas. However, in areas with significant current or wind action their utility is limited without frequent clearing and maintenance since plants will accumulate against barriers until pressure forces them over or under the barrier.

Water Level Manipulation - Water level is usually controlled by the reservoir's controlling authority. Dropping the water level several feet has proven effective at helping control salvinia. Since salvinia is a small floating plant it is often blown into shallow water nearshore areas, and is therefore susceptible to being stranded on dry ground under falling water conditions. In 1999, a rise and subsequent drop in water level on Toledo Bend Reservoir significantly reduced the salvinia population on the lake. However, in order to be effective, water levels must remain low long enough to allow for the desiccation or freezing of stranded plants.

Biological Control - No biological control agents are currently available for general use on salvinia in Texas. Research is being conducted on the salvinia weevil *Cyrtobagous* sp. Although experimental in Texas, the weevil has proven to be very effective in other parts of the world.

Chemical Control – Although *Cyrtobagous* sp. shows great promise, herbicide treatment is currently the most efficient method of salvinia control in Tier I situations. However, small floating plants such as salvinia can be difficult to eradicate with herbicides. Due to the extremely large number of individual plants present, applying herbicide to each plant is difficult. In addition, the dense hair or pubescence on the leaf surface, characteristic of all salvinia species, can negatively impact the effectiveness of certain types of herbicide applications. These thick hairs can impede herbicide penetration when using any type of foliar spray application. This is especially true when attempting to control giant salvinia.

Because application techniques and herbicides of choice are subject to change, contact TPWD Inland Fisheries Division before attempting a herbicide application for the control of either species of salvinia. With the recent introduction and expansion of giant salvinia into the U.S., renewed effort and research into the available herbicides, surfactants, and their combinations are ongoing.

Currently, there are three primary options for herbicide use. The effectiveness of all three is inhibited when salvinia has formed a thick mat before application.

Reward, Weedtrine D – Diquat is the active ingredient in Reward, which is a fast acting contact herbicide. Reward is most effective for spot treatments and when there is moving water. Surfactants are spray additives used to enhance adherence to and penetration through the dense covering of hairs on the plant leaf surface. These additives are especially critical to achieving desirable efficacy levels when using diquat for salvinia control. A combination of two surfactants, one silicone-based and the other petroleum based, is used to properly penetrate the dense covering of hairs on the leaf surface.

Sonar AS, Sonar PR, Sonar, Q, Sonar SRP, Avast – Fluridone is the active ingredient in Sonar, which is a slow acting systemic herbicide best used in still water. Sonar is probably most effective in small pond applications where the entire waterbody is treated. Sonar requires a long contact time and desired results may take up to 90 days.

Aquamaster, Aqua Star, Rodeo, Aquaneat, AquaPro, Eagre, Eraser, and Touchdown Pro, – Glyphosate, a systemic herbicide, is the active ingredient in these products. These products are used as topical sprays on salvinia, and as with Reward they require a combination of two surfactants, one silicone-based and the other petroleum based, to properly penetrate the dense covering of hairs on the leaf surface.

Recommended Salvinia Treatment Options

Treatment Methods	Tier I
Booms	Yes ¹
Herbicide	Diquat, Fluridone, Glyphosate
Water level manipulation	Yes

¹Booms may be used to help prevent the spread of salvinia while other methods are used for actual eradication.

2. Hydrilla

Like other rooted submersed aquatic plants, hydrilla can provide benefits in an aquatic ecosystem. However, hydrilla is considered a nuisance aquatic plant because of its 1) rapid growth, 2) ability to colonize deeper water, 3) ability to spread easily, 4) ability to form dense surface mats that block sunlight, inhibit surface oxygen exchange, and increase biological oxygen demand in the mat area, 5) ability to inhibit navigation and other water uses, 6) resistance to control methods, and 7) its ability to outcompete native plants and form a monoculture (single species community) and thereby decrease plant community diversity.

Recommendations:

Mechanical-Physical Control – Because of the likelihood of hydrilla spread due to fragmentation by conventional harvesters, the only appropriate mechanical control in a Tier I situation is complete removal with shovels or other implements designed to carefully avoid fragmentation and remove the entire plant including the root system below ground. If this type of mechanical removal is attempted, it should be accomplished as soon after discovery of the infestation as possible to lessen the chance of fragmentation or tuber or turion production. Infested area(s) should be frequently monitored and plant re-growth removed or treated appropriately. Since the spread of hydrilla is not usually a concern in Tier II situations, both mechanical harvesters and shredders may be used effectively. Small cutters such as those mounted on a jon boat may be useful around individual docks but most areas will require large boats equipped to cut and move through dense hydrilla mats. Cutting should begin in early spring. Since hydrilla can grow an inch a day, areas cut to a depth of five feet will need to be re-cut at least every 60 days during the growing season. Other physical control techniques are listed below. Because of the potential for hydrilla spread from fragmentation, the only appropriate use of mechanical control in a Tier III situation would be to open areas within a large mat to allow angler/boater access, greater oxygen exchange, and increased edge effect. Great care should be taken to insure fragments stay bound within the mat and do not float free in open water.

Water level manipulation - In general, the effectiveness of drawdowns to control hydrilla is unclear. Survival of plant material found at the bottom of drying hydrilla mats, as well as germination of tubers, may facilitate rapid population recovery.

Biological Control - Because of the lack of proven effectiveness of hydrilla flies and the lack of feeding selectivity by grass carp, biological control is problematic in Tier I situations for hydrilla. However, triploid grass carp can be used in situations where complete vegetation removal is not considered a problem. Steps to follow for using grass carp as a biological control in public water are found in Appendix F.

Chemical Control - Chemical control is likely the most effective means of hydrilla control in a Tier I situation where complete removal of all vegetation species is not desired. For continuous areas of less than 10 acres, or in moderately flowing water, endothall products such as Aquathol K (liquid) or Aquathol Super K (granular), and Reward are appropriate. For continuous infestations of 10 acres or more, and with little to no water flow, fluridone products such as Sonar SRP, Sonar AS, Sonar PR, and Sonar Q are probably most appropriate. With either chemical, treatment should be conducted as soon as possible after the infestation is discovered to decrease fragmentation and turion or tuber production. However, fluridone products will only work when water temperatures are warm enough for active growth and photosynthesis (usually 60-65° F). Treated areas should be surveyed often to determine effectiveness of treatment and possible plant re-growth. Chelated copper compounds are also acceptable, and early studies suggest efficacy of chelated copper may be enhanced when used in combination with other herbicides such as

diquat. . A program using both contact (diquat or endothall) and systemics such as fluridone has been demonstrated to be highly effective.

Recommended Hydrilla Treatment Options

Treatment Methods	Tier I	Tier II
Harvesters	No	Yes
Shredders	No	Yes
Shading	Yes	Yes
Herbicide	Fluridone, Endothall, Diquat, Copper	Fluridone, Endothall, Diquat, Copper
Triploid Grass Carp	Yes	Yes ¹
Water level manipulation	Yes	Yes

¹Grass carp may be used at low stocking rates in Tier II situations to help put added stress on hydrilla populations.

3. Waterhyacinth

Like a number of other exotic floating plants, waterhyacinth is considered a nuisance aquatic plant because of its 1) rapid growth, 2) ability to spread easily by floating into previously uncolonized areas, 3) ability to form dense surface mats that block sunlight and inhibit surface oxygen exchange, 4) ability to inhibit navigation and other water uses, and 5) its ability to outcompete native plants and decrease plant community diversity.

Recommendations:

Mechanical/Physical Control – Mechanical removal may be a viable and economically feasible method of waterhyacinth control. For moderately large infestations (on the order of approximately 100 acres or less) in water more than 2 feet deep with few stumps or other obstructions, shredding may be used effectively. For larger infestations, shredding quickly becomes logistically difficult with current technology. Harvesting may be used on small infestations in water greater than 2 feet deep with few stumps and other obstructions.

Water Level Manipulation – Specific strategies vary depending on the reservoir situation, but dropping the water level several feet through the fall and winter can strand plants on the bank. Waterhyacinth can survive for long periods on moist damp soil so stranding plants during cold weather when there is a chance of freezing is most effective.

Biological Control – Waterhyacinth weevils may be used to slow the growth of waterhyacinth populations and reduce their ability to flower and produce seeds. In some cases, waterhyacinth populations have also been significantly reduced by weevil introductions. In general, triploid grass carp are not a viable biological control option for waterhyacinth since they rarely eat the plant unless all other vegetation is removed.

Chemical Control – In Tier I situations, herbicide use may be the most efficacious means of waterhyacinth control in areas with many stumps or other obstructions, or in areas with water depths less than two feet. Similarly, in Tier II situations herbicides are probably the most efficient control method in areas with extremely large infestations where aerial application is required. In general, the cheapest and most efficacious herbicide for waterhyacinth is 2,4-D. , although both diquat and glyphosate products are very effective as well. Diquat works best when used as a spot treatment or boat application in areas where drift may be of concern with other products.

Recommended Waterhyacinth Treatment Options

Treatment Methods	Tier I	Tier II
Harvesters	Yes	Yes
Shredders	Yes	Yes
Booms	Yes ¹	Yes
Herbicide	2,4-D, diquat, Glyphosate, Imazapyr, Triclopyr	2,4-D, diquat, Glyphosate, Imazapyr, Triclopyr
Waterhyacinth Weevils	Yes	Yes
Water level manipulation	Yes	Yes

¹Booms may be used to help prevent the spread of waterhyacinth while other methods are used for actual eradication.

4. Eurasian watermilfoil

Eurasian watermilfoil can out-compete native plant species and create a mono-specific plant community. Because it can grow to be very dense at the surface, Eurasian watermilfoil stands can inhibit angling, boating, swimming, and other forms of aquatic recreation if not controlled.

Recommendations:

Typically, Eurasian watermilfoil causes few problems in Texas waters. TPWD has conducted no herbicide treatments for Eurasian watermilfoil for at least 10 years. Therefore, **Eurasian watermilfoil infestations usually will be considered Tier III situations.**

Mechanical/Physical Control – Due to the likelihood of Eurasian watermilfoil spread due to fragmentation, the only appropriate mechanical control in a Tier I situation is complete removal of small patches with shovels or other implements designed to carefully avoid fragmentation. If mechanical removal is attempted in this manner it should be accomplished as soon after discovery of the infestation as possible to lessen the chance of fragmentation or turion production. Infested area(s) should be frequently monitored and plant re-growth removed or treated appropriately. In Tier II situations mechanical harvesters may be effectively used to remove Eurasian watermilfoil in areas where water depth is greater than 2.0 ft.

Water Level Manipulation –Specific strategies vary depending on the reservoir situation but dropping the water level several feet through the fall and winter

dries the vegetation killing much of the plant outright. This strategy has proven effective for Eurasian watermilfoil control. However, care should be exercised if hydrilla or some other extremely invasive species is also present. Since drawdowns have very limited efficacy on hydrilla, removal of Eurasian watermilfoil by this method may simply open new areas for colonization by hydrilla.

Biological Control – Triploid grass carp are the only effective biological control agent currently available for Eurasian watermilfoil. However, since Eurasian watermilfoil is typically low on their dietary preference list, they are rarely recommended for its control in Texas. Grass carp should only be considered if watermilfoil populations grow beyond the point at which they can be controlled with herbicides or drawdowns, and complete eradication of all vegetation becomes preferable to the milfoil infestation.

Chemical Control – In Tier I situations herbicide use may be the most efficient means of Eurasian watermilfoil control in non-potable water lakes and in waterbodies that also have hydrilla. In general, the cheapest and most efficient herbicide is 2,4-D. In areas where 2,4-D use is limited and at times of the year where its use is restricted, diquat, endothall, and fluridone products can be used effectively.

Recommended Eurasian watermilfoil Treatment Options

Treatment Methods	Tier I	Tier II
Harvesters	No	Yes
Herbicide	2,4-D, Diquat, Endothall, Fluridone, Triclopyr	2,4-D, Diquat, Endothall, Fluridone, Triclopyr
Water level manipulation	Yes	Yes

5. Waterlettuce

The floating growth characteristic and fast reproductive rate of waterlettuce cause environmental problems similar to those encountered with waterhyacinth. Waterways can be clogged and access to fishing, swimming, and boating may be reduced or eliminated. Dense mats of waterlettuce may cause oxygen depletion (Attionu 1976) and increase siltation, which effectively reduce the suitability of the underlying substrate for nesting fish (Beumer 1980) and invertebrates (Roback 1974). The seeds, which may remain dormant for months, are resistant to both drought and freezing.

Recommendations:

New infestations of waterlettuce or recurrence in areas where it has previously been problematic should be considered a Tier I situation. Because of the extreme nature of the problems encountered with overabundant waterlettuce most occurrences of waterlettuce will be considered Tier I situations.

Mechanical/Physical Control – Mechanical removal may be a viable method of waterlettuce control. Shredding may be used effectively for removal of moderately large infestations (100 acres or less), in water more than 2 feet deep, in areas with few stumps or other obstructions, and where (if) biological control has proven ineffective.

Water Level Manipulation – Specific strategies vary depending on the reservoir situation but generally lowering the water level several feet through the fall and winter can strand plants on the bank. Waterlettuce can survive for long periods on moist damp soil so stranding plants during cold weather when there is a chance of freezing is most effective.

Biological Control – Waterlettuce weevils are currently the only viable option, although research into other biological controls is now underway.

Waterlettuce weevils – Waterlettuce weevils have proven effective so far at every location they have been tried in Texas. Within a year or two waterlettuce populations have usually been eliminated.

Waterlettuce infestations should be surveyed by a qualified person(s) to determine if waterlettuce weevils are already present, and if so at what density. Waterlettuce weevils are stocked at densities of 500 – 1,000 per site. Stocking sites should be surveyed to determine if either or both species of waterlettuce weevils is established and additional weevils should be stocked as necessary to insure the population remains at optimum density.

Chemical Control – Herbicide use is a viable means of waterlettuce control in areas with many stumps or other obstructions, in areas with water depths less than two feet, in the case of extremely large infestations where aerial application is required, and in areas where biological control may prove ineffective. Currently, there are three primary options for herbicide use.

Reward, Weedtrine D – Diquat, the active ingredient in Reward, is a fast acting contact herbicide, generally considered the best for waterlettuce control. Surfactants are spray additives used to enhance adherence to and penetration through the plant leaf surface. These additives are especially critical to achieving desirable efficacy levels when using diquat for waterlettuce control. A combination of two surfactants, one silicone-based, and the other petroleum based, are used to properly penetrate the dense covering of hairs on the leaf surface.

Aquathol k, Aquathol Super k – Endothall is the active ingredient in Aquathol. Aquathol is applied into the water and quickly absorbed up by plants. Results may take days to become apparent.

Aquamaster, Aqua Star, Aquaneat, AquaPro, Eagre, Eraser, Rodeo, and Touchdown Pro, – Glyphosate, a fast acting herbicide, is the active ingredient in these products. These herbicides are used as a topical spray on waterlettuce, and as with Reward should be used with a combination of two surfactants, one silicone-based and the other petroleum based, to properly penetrate the dense covering of hairs on the leaf surface.

Recommended Waterlettuce Treatment Options

Treatment Methods	Tier I
Harvesters	Yes
Shredders	Yes
Booms	Yes ¹

Herbicide	Diquat, Fluridone, Imazapyr
Waterlettuce Weevils	Waterlettuce Weevils
Water level manipulation	Yes

¹Booms may be used to help prevent the spread of waterlettuce while other methods are used for actual eradication.

6. Alligatorweed

Alligatorweed can cause a variety of problems. Free floating plants can choke waterways, and rooted plants can even invade moist pastoral and agricultural land (Coulson 1977, Julien and Bourne 1988, Julien and Broadbent 1980).

Recommendations:

In general, alligatorweed causes very little problem in Texas. Since the release of the alligatorweed flea beetle, very few areas have required active control efforts. Therefore, alligatorweed infestations will usually be considered Tier III “wait and see” situations.

Mechanical/Physical Control – Mechanical removal may be a viable method of alligatorweed control. Costs for shredding floating alligatorweed plants are equivalent to herbicide treatments. However, in order to use machinery, infestations must occur in water more than 2 feet deep, and in areas with few stumps or other obstructions.

Biological Control – Alligatorweed flea beetles have effectively controlled alligatorweed in a number of areas of Texas. Alligatorweed infestations should be surveyed by qualified person(s) to determine if alligatorweed flea beetles are already present and if so at what density. Flea beetles should be stocked at densities of 500-1000 per stocking site. Stocking sites should be surveyed to determine if the flea beetles are established and additional flea beetles should be stocked as necessary to insure optimum densities.

Chemical Control - Herbicides are an effective means of alligatorweed control for rooted infestations that are apparently less susceptible to control by the flea beetle. Fluridone, glyphosate, imazapyr, and triclopyr products may be used when the flea beetle is ineffective.

Recommended Alligatorweed Treatment Options

Treatment Methods	Tier II
Harvesters	Yes
Shredders	Yes
Booms ¹	Yes

Herbicide	Fluridone, Glyphosate, Imazapyr, Triclopyr
Alligatorweed Flea beetle	Yes
Water level manipulation	Yes

¹Booms may be used to help prevent the spread of alligatorweed while other methods are used for actual eradication.

7. Other Exotic Species

Responses to infestations of other exotic species will depend on which species are involved and information regarding potential threat. New infestations by species for which there is evidence of environmental or economic damage or for which no information is available will generally be considered Tier I situations. However, if evidence suggests the species will not grow to overabundance and become problematic it will be treated as Tier III.

8. Native Plant Species

Since native species rarely become overabundant and create environmental difficulties they will nearly always be classified in the Tier III response category. See Fassett (1957) for descriptions of native species.

E. Develop and Submit Your Treatment Proposal

A Treatment Proposal details what will be done to manage nuisance vegetation in Texas' public water. Although there is latitude in how vegetation can be managed, the Treatment Proposal formalizes those actions and provides a basis for future efforts. A Treatment Proposal, accompanied by a map of the proposed treatment site, must be submitted to the TPWD 14 days before anticipated implementation. Failure to provide a map may slow the review process. A blank Treatment Proposal Form is found in Appendix C. A separate treatment proposal should be filled out for each plant species treated. Below is a step-by-step guide to development and submittal of a Treatment Proposal. Individuals who are planning to conduct vegetation control activities on a public body of water should follow these steps:

STEP 1 – Obtain a copy of “Aquatic Vegetation Management in Texas: a Guidance Document” (Guidance Document) from TPWD staff or from the TPWD web page at:

<http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/fish/infish/vegetation/media/guiddoc.pdf>

STEP 2 - Using the Guidance Document and/or other materials identify what plant species are causing a problem. If necessary, contact a professional pond manager or aquaculturist, a botanist, the local governing entity, local water authority, or TPWD staff. A list of TPWD staff is available on page 58.

STEP 3-5 Consult “Aquatic Vegetation Management in Texas: a Guidance Document” as well as the governing entity to determine the level of concern (Steps 3) for managing the species in question, appropriate treatment methods (Step 4), and appropriate management options (Step 5). In many cases a variety of control techniques may be used in concert. At this step, the individual should assess which management response tier (I, II, or III) is appropriate.

STEP 6 - Complete the Treatment Proposal form (found in “Aquatic Vegetation Management in Texas: a Guidance Document” or available from TPWD Inland Fisheries Division staff). If herbicide use is proposed, go to Step 6. If herbicide use is not proposed, go to Step 11.

STEP 7 - Contact TCEQ's Public Drinking Water Section (512-239-6020) to obtain a list of public potable water intakes on the waterbody in question, and their locations.

STEP 8 - Assure that at least 14 calendar days prior to the proposed herbicide use, the treatment proposal, map, and notice letter are provided to the governing entity, TPWD (Dr. Earl Chilton, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744, earl.chilton@tpwd.state.tx.us, fax 512-389-4405), all drinking water providers that have an intake within two river miles of a site at which an application of aquatic herbicide is proposed to occur, and all persons who have requested notice. The list of persons who have requested notice is available from Dr. Earl Chilton at TPWD. The 14-day notice period runs from the date notice is received by TPWD. The notice letter must include: all label information for the aquatic herbicide to be applied (This requirement may be fulfilled by providing the URL of an internet site with the specimen label, and may be waived if the same herbicide has been used under an approved proposal for that water body within the previous year); a statement that the guidance document has been reviewed and the proposed herbicide application is consistent with the principles of integrated pest management, § 57.932(a)(2) of TPW rules, and the guidance document; information demonstrating that the proposed application will not result in exceeding the maximum contaminant level of the herbicide in finished drinking water as set by the TCEQ and the EPA, or if the aquatic herbicide does not have an MCL established by the TCEQ and the EPA, the maximum label rate; and the TDA applicator license number, if any. A sample “Proposed Herbicide Use Notice” is provided with this guidance document on page 41.

STEP 9 - The governing entity must also notify the individual in writing that it is a violation of state law to apply aquatic herbicides in a public body of water in a manner inconsistent with the state

plan. A sample "Notice From Governing Entity in Response to Proposed Herbicide Use" is provided with this guidance document.

STEP 10 -TPWD and the governing entity will respond to the treatment proposal, map and notice no later than the day before the herbicide application is to occur. Both TPWD and the governing entity must approve herbicide applications. Note that if the individual proposing to apply the herbicides is not a licensed applicator, the herbicide application may not proceed in the absence of an affirmative finding by the governing entity and TPWD that the application will be consistent with the state plan (or an approved local plan if one has been adopted for the particular public body of surface water in question). In a case where the herbicide application would be done by a licensed applicator, however, the application may proceed if the governing entity or TPWD do not disapprove the application no later than the day before it is scheduled to occur.

STEP 11 -If approved, the herbicide use called for in the treatment proposal may be carried out.

STEP 12 -In a case where the treatment proposal does not include herbicide use, TPWD will review and may disapprove or amend the treatment proposal no later than the day before the proposed control measures are to begin.

STEP 13 -If approved, the measures called for in the treatment proposal may be carried out.



Aquatic Vegetation Treatment Proposal

****A map of the water body with proposed treatment sites indicated should be attached.****

****A separate form should be filled out for each plant species treated.****

Water Body Name: Lake Dunlap *Submission Date: 5/5/99

Date Surveyed: 5/3/99 Proposed Treatment Date: 6/1/99

Target Plant Species: Salvinia Estimated Acres: 2.3

Recommended Treatment: Mechanical ☐ Biological ☐ Chemical ☒

Tier: _____

Method of Treatment: Reward herbicide, Boat and Backpack

Applicator Name: Jane Smith

TDA Applicator License Number
(if applicable): 950762

Floating or Emergent Vegetation:

Treatment Location	Relative Surface Coverage	Treatment Area (acres)	Treatment Rate/type (organisms, gals, lbs. /acre, harvested or shredded)	Total (organisms, gals., lbs, acres harvested or shredded)	Mean water depth
.025 East of I-35 Bridge	Heavy	2.0	0.75 gal.	1.5 gal.	2.0 m
	Heavy	0.3	0.75 gal.	0.23 gal.	2.0 m
Total		2.3		1.73 gal.	

Submerged Vegetation:

Treatment Location	Relative Surface Coverage	Treatment Area (acres)	Treatment Rate/type (organisms, gals, lbs./acre, harvested or shredded)	Total (organisms, gals., lbs, acres harvested or shredded)	Mean water depth
Total					

Comments:

***Proposals are good for six months from the date of submission, unless application plans change.**

PROPOSED HERBICIDE USE NOTICE

TO: TPWD; Governing Entity; Public Drinking Water Providers With an Intake Within Two River Miles of the Proposed Herbicide Application; All Persons Who Have Requested Notice

This is a notice of proposed herbicide use on [water body], as described in the enclosed treatment proposal. Following is the label information for [the herbicide to be applied] [a copy of the label is adequate]. [Name of person proposing herbicide use] has reviewed TPWD's guidance document and determined that the proposed herbicide application is consistent with the principles of integrated pest management, § 57.932(a)(2) of TPWD rules, and the guidance document.

The information demonstrating that the proposed application will not result in exceeding the maximum contaminant level of the herbicide in finished drinking water as set by TCEQ and EPA, or if there is no MCL, the maximum label rate, is [see section III.B.3 of guidance document for discussion of how this information is developed]:

The TDA license number for the herbicide applicator is:

NOTICE FROM GOVERNING ENTITY IN RESPONSE TO PROPOSED HERBICIDE USE

To: [Person(s) proposing herbicide use]

[Name of Governing Entity] has received your Proposed Herbicide Use Notice, Treatment Proposal, and map. As state law requires, [governing entity] is providing you, as an attachment to this letter, a copy of the state aquatic vegetation plan. It is a violation of state law to apply aquatic herbicides in a public body of water in a manner inconsistent with the state plan.

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Appendix A. Parks and Wildlife Code subchapter G, Aquatic Vegetation Management (§§ 11.081-11.086)

§ 11.081. Definitions

In this subchapter:

(1) "Governing entity" means the state agency or other political subdivision with jurisdiction over a public body of surface water.

(2) "Integrated pest management" means the coordinated use of pest and environmental information and pest control methods to prevent unacceptable levels of pest damage by the most economical means and in a manner that will cause the least possible hazard to persons, property, and the environment.

(3) "Local plan" means a local aquatic vegetation management plan authorized by Section 11.083.

(4) "Public body of surface water" means any body of surface water that is not used exclusively for an agricultural purpose. The term does not include impounded water on private property.

(5) "State plan" means the state aquatic vegetation management plan authorized by Section 11.082 and developed and implemented under this subchapter.

(6) "Water district" means a conservation and reclamation district or an authority created under authority of Section 52(b)(1) or (2), Article III, or Section 59, Article XVI, Texas Constitution, that has jurisdiction over a public body of surface water. The term does not include a navigation district or a port authority.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1461, § 1.

§ 11.082. State Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan

(a) The department shall develop and by rule adopt a state aquatic vegetation management plan following the generally accepted principles of integrated pest management. The state plan shall apply throughout the state unless a governmental entity has adopted an approved local plan.

(b) The department shall develop the state plan in coordination with the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, the Department of Agriculture, water districts and other political subdivisions of the state with jurisdiction over public bodies of surface water, and public drinking water providers.

(c) The state plan must:

(1) establish minimum standards for a governing entity that regulates a public body of surface water;

(2) require that any application of aquatic herbicide complies with label rates approved by the United States Environmental Protection Agency;

(3) ensure that any public drinking water provider that has an intake within two river miles of a site at which an application of aquatic herbicide is proposed to occur receives notice of the proposed application not later than the 14th day before the date the application is to occur;

(4) provide for the coordination, oversight, public notification, and enforcement of all aquatic herbicide use to protect state fish and wildlife resources and habitat and to prevent unreasonable risk from the use of any aquatic herbicide; and

(5) require that the written notice of a proposed application of herbicide include information demonstrating that the proposed application of herbicide under a plan will not result in exceeding:

(A) the maximum contaminant level of the herbicide in finished drinking water as set by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission and the United States Environmental Protection Agency; or

(B) the maximum label rate, if the aquatic herbicide does not have a maximum contaminant level established by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission and the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1461, § 1.

§ 11.083. Local Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan

Text of section effective upon notice of adoption of aquatic vegetation management plan

(a) A governing entity may develop and adopt a local aquatic vegetation management plan. A local plan must be approved by the department, the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, and the Department of Agriculture.

(b) A local plan may take into account the particular needs and uses of the public bodies of surface water to which it will apply, but the plan may not be approved unless the plan meets the minimum standards set by the state plan. The local plan may allow herbicide use if the person proposing to apply the herbicide notifies the governing entity not later than the 14th day before the proposed date of application.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1461, § 1.

§ 11.084. Application of Aquatic Herbicide in Public Body of Surface Water

Text of section effective upon notice of adoption of aquatic vegetation management plan

(a) No person may apply aquatic herbicide in a public body of surface water unless the herbicide is applied in a manner consistent with the plan adopted by the governing entity.

(b) State money may not be used to pay for treatment of a public body of surface water with a chemical herbicide unless the application of the herbicide is performed by an applicator licensed for aquatic herbicide application by the Department of Agriculture.

(c) An individual who does not hold an applicator's license and who desires to apply an aquatic herbicide on a public body of surface water shall give written notice not later than the 14th day before the date the application of the aquatic herbicide is to occur to the governing entity with jurisdiction over the body of water on which the application of the herbicide is proposed. The governing entity shall respond to the individual's application not later than the day before the date the application of the aquatic herbicide is to occur. The individual may not apply the aquatic herbicide unless the governing entity finds that the application will be consistent with the state or local plan adopted by the entity.

(d) The state plan may provide for use of an aquatic herbicide consistent with the plan if:

(1) the individual who desires to apply the aquatic herbicide gives notice to the appropriate governing entity in the same manner as provided by Subsection (c) for an unlicensed applicator; and

(2) the governing entity does not disapprove the application.

(e) After receiving notice of a proposed application of aquatic herbicide, the governing entity shall:

(1) provide the individual proposing the application with a copy of the state or local plan, as appropriate;

(2) notify the individual in writing that it is a violation of state law to apply aquatic herbicides in that body of water in a manner inconsistent with the plan; and

(3) determine whether the proposed application is consistent with the plan.

(f) The governing entity shall:

(1) prohibit a proposed application of aquatic herbicide if the governing entity finds that the proposed application is inconsistent with the appropriate plan; or

(2) notify the individual proposing the application of the herbicide that the proposed application is not inconsistent with the appropriate plan if the governing entity finds that the proposed application is not inconsistent with the plan.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1461, § 1.

§ 11.085. Liability

Text of section effective upon notice of adoption of aquatic vegetation management plan

(a) The liability under other law of a governing entity that receives notice of a proposed application of aquatic herbicide is not affected by the requirements of this subchapter.

(b) Notice by a governing entity to an individual under Section 11.084(f)(2) does not constitute authorization by that entity for the application of the herbicide.

(c) This subchapter does not relieve an individual who applies aquatic herbicide to a public body of surface water of the obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state, or local laws, rules, ordinances, or orders relating to the application of the herbicide in the body of water.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1461, § 1.

§ 11.086. Records

Text of section effective upon notice of adoption of aquatic vegetation management plan

A governing entity shall maintain for not less than five years all records relating to notifications received under Section 11.084 and any other information relevant to a particular individual request for shoreline treatment.

Added by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1461, § 1.

Appendix B. 31 Texas Administrative Code subchapter K, Aquatic Vegetation Management Rules, §§ 57.930-57.934 and 57.936 (includes the State Plan as § 57.932).

§57.930. Definitions. The following words and terms, when used in this subchapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise. All other words and terms in this subchapter shall have the meanings assigned in the Texas Parks and Wildlife Code.

(1) Canal – an artificial waterway used for the transportation of water for agricultural and/or industrial purposes but for no other purpose.

(2) EPA - the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

(3) Governing entity - the state agency or other political subdivision with jurisdiction over a public body of surface water.

(4) Integrated pest management - the coordinated use of pest and environmental information and pest control methods to prevent unacceptable levels of pest damage by the most economical means and in a manner that will cause the least possible hazard to persons, property, and the environment. Integrated pest management includes consideration of ecological, biological, chemical, and mechanical strategies for control of nuisance aquatic vegetation.

(5) Licensed Applicator - a person who holds a valid license for aquatic herbicide application from the Texas Department of Agriculture.

(6) Local plan - a local aquatic vegetation management plan authorized by Parks and Wildlife Code, §11.083 and meeting the requirements in §57.933 of this title (relating to Adoption and Applicability of Local Aquatic Vegetation Plans) and §57.934 of this title (relating to Local Aquatic Vegetation Plan).

(7) MCL - maximum contaminant level.

(8) Nuisance aquatic vegetation - any non-native or native vascular plant species that is determined, in consideration of TPWD guidance, to have the potential to substantially interfere with the uses of a public body of surface water.

(9) Public body of surface water - any body of surface water that is not used exclusively for an agricultural purpose. The term does not include impounded water on private property or water being transported in a canal.

(10) Public drinking water provider - any person who owns or operates a system for the provision to the public of water for human consumption through pipes or other constructed conveyances, if such system has at least fifteen service connections or regularly serves at least twenty-five individuals at least 60 days out of the year.

(11) State plan - the state aquatic vegetation management plan authorized by Parks & Wildlife Code, §11.082, and described in §57.931 of this title (relating to State Aquatic Vegetation Plan Applicability) and §57.932 of this title (relating to State Aquatic Vegetation Plan).

(12) TDA - the Texas Department of Agriculture.

(13) TNRCC* - the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission.

(14) TPWD - the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

(15) Treatment proposal – a submission to TPWD on a TPWD-approved form that describes intended measures to control nuisance aquatic vegetation.

(16) Water district - a conservation and reclamation district or an authority created under authority of Section 52(b)(1) or (2), Article III, or Section 59, Article XVI, Texas Constitution, that has jurisdiction over a public body of surface water. The term does not include a navigation district or a port authority.

§57.931. State Aquatic Vegetation Plan Applicability. The state plan governs throughout the state except where a governing entity has adopted an approved local plan.

§57.932. State Aquatic Vegetation Plan.

(a) Requirements Applicable to All Measures to Control Nuisance Aquatic Vegetation.

(1) Purpose. The purpose of the state aquatic vegetation plan is to provide for the coordination, oversight, guidance and where applicable public notice and enforcement of all activities related to the management of nuisance aquatic vegetation on public bodies of surface water. This includes, but is not limited to, coordination, oversight, public notification and enforcement of all aquatic herbicide use to protect state fish and wildlife resources and habitat and

to prevent unreasonable risk from the use of any aquatic herbicide.

(2) Standards. All measures that a person undertakes to control nuisance aquatic vegetation shall be consistent with the principles of integrated pest management as defined in §57.930 of this title (relating to Definitions). A guidance document prepared by TPWD will describe measures to control nuisance aquatic vegetation, and the minimum standards applicable to governing entities that regulate a public body of surface water and persons who propose to treat nuisance aquatic vegetation. The guidance document will include:

(A) Encouragement of the growth and, where lacking, establishment of native aquatic vegetation that provides habitat for fish, the food chain that supports desirable fish populations, other desirable aquatic organisms and wildlife without interfering with reasonable recreational use, navigation, drinking water supply, flow of water to power plants, industrial use, irrigation, or other beneficial uses;

(B) Encouragement of efforts to address the root causes supporting the overgrowth of nuisance aquatic vegetation;

(C) Support for continued monitoring and assessment activities to identify new nuisance aquatic vegetation species and act appropriately to eliminate or minimize ecological impacts;

(D) Support for continued research and evaluation of vegetation control methods that will cause the least possible hazard to persons, property and the environment as required by application of integrated pest management principles;

(E) Encouragement of public input in decision-making processes;

(F) Encouragement of ongoing education and outreach efforts as to the importance of managing aquatic vegetation to assure the ecological health of public waters;

(G) Information to guide individuals wishing to treat nuisance aquatic vegetation; and

(H) Criteria for choosing management responses to nuisance

aquatic vegetation problems based on the uses of the water body and the nature of the problem. These criteria may take the form of a three-tier system: Tier I, which calls for immediate response and eradication; Tier II, which calls for ongoing control where nuisance aquatic vegetation is well-established; and Tier III, which calls for monitoring and a contingency plan in case the problem worsens. The three-tier system is subject to change as provided in paragraph (3) of this subsection.

(3) Modification of Guidance. TPWD will publish notice in the Texas Register and seek input from interested parties when it proposes to modify the guidance document. TPWD will also mail notice to persons who so request. Notice shall be provided at least 60 days prior to the effective date of any changes to the guidance document. The notice shall describe the proposed modifications and the reasons for the modifications, and how comments on the proposed modifications may be made to TPWD.

(4) Review by TPWD. Prior to undertaking any measures to control nuisance aquatic vegetation, a person operating under the state plan shall provide to TPWD a treatment proposal, on a form included in the guidance document, no later than the 14th day before the measures are to begin. TPWD will review and may disapprove or amend any treatment proposal and will respond no later than the day before the proposed control measures are to begin. Where appropriate, TPWD will provide technical advice and recommendations regarding prevention of nuisance aquatic vegetation problems. The person submitting the treatment proposal shall have the burden of demonstrating compliance with the state plan. Where a local plan governs, treatment proposals are not subject to TPWD review, approval, and amendment, but are to be submitted to TPWD (pursuant to §57.934(b) of this title, relating to Local Aquatic Vegetation Plan)) for informational purposes.

(b) Additional Requirements Applicable to the Use of Aquatic Herbicides to Control Nuisance Aquatic Vegetation.

(1) No person shall apply aquatic herbicide in a public body of surface water where the state plan governs unless the herbicide is applied in a

manner consistent with the state plan. No person shall apply aquatic herbicide in a public body of surface water where a local plan governs unless the herbicide is applied in a manner consistent with the local plan. Where a local plan has been adopted and approved, the requirements of the local plan supersede the requirements of this subsection.

(2) All persons intending to apply an aquatic herbicide shall provide written notice to the governing entity, TPWD, all public drinking water providers that have an intake within two river miles of a site at which an application of aquatic herbicide is proposed to occur, and all persons who have requested notice (TPWD will maintain a list) no later than the 14th day before the application is to occur. The notice shall include:

- (A) the dates of the proposed application;
- (B) all label information for the aquatic herbicide to be applied;
- (C) a statement that TPWD's guidance document has been reviewed and the proposed herbicide application is consistent with the principles of integrated pest management as set forth in subsection (a)(2) of this section and that document;

- (D) information demonstrating that the proposed application will not result in exceeding:

- (i) the maximum contaminant level of the herbicide in finished drinking water as set by the TNRCC* and the EPA; or

- (ii) if the aquatic herbicide does not have an MCL established by the TNRCC* and the EPA, the maximum label rate; and

- (E) TDA applicator license number, if any.

(3) An individual who is not a licensed applicator may not apply aquatic herbicides unless the governing entity affirmatively finds, after receiving the proper notice as provided in subsection (b)(2) of this section, that the application will be consistent with the state plan. The governing entity shall respond to the notice given by an individual who is not a licensed applicator no later than the day before the date the application is scheduled to occur.

(4) An individual who is a licensed applicator may apply aquatic

herbicide after notice consistent with subsection (b)(2) of this section if the governing entity finds that the application would be consistent with the state plan or does not disapprove the application no later than the day before the application is to occur.

(5) After receiving notice of a proposed application of aquatic herbicide, a governing entity, or TPWD in the absence of such an entity, shall:

(A) provide the individual proposing the application with the state plan;

(B) notify the individual in writing that it is a violation of state law to apply aquatic herbicides in a public body of water in a manner inconsistent with the state plan; and

(C) determine whether the proposed application is consistent with the state plan.

(6) The governing entity shall prohibit the proposed application of aquatic herbicide if the governing entity finds that the proposed application is inconsistent with the state plan, or, if the proposed application is consistent with the state plan, so notify the person.

(7) State money shall not be used to pay for treatment of a public body of surface water with an aquatic herbicide unless the application of the herbicide is performed by an applicator licensed for aquatic herbicide application by the TDA.

(8) Any application of aquatic herbicide shall comply with label rates approved by the EPA.

§57.933. Adoption and Applicability of Local Aquatic Vegetation Plans. A local aquatic vegetation plan may be adopted and shall apply to particular public bodies of surface water as provided in Texas Parks and Wildlife Code, §11.083. A governing entity intending to operate under a local aquatic vegetation plan shall seek approval of its proposed local aquatic vegetation plan under §57.934 of this title (relating to Local Aquatic Vegetation Plan).

§57.934. Local Aquatic Vegetation Plan.

(a) To be approvable by TNRCC*, TPWD, and TDA, a local plan must

meet the minimum standards set forth in §57.932 of this title (relating to State Aquatic Vegetation Plan). Additional or more specific requirements are approvable.

(b) A local plan may take into account the particular needs and uses of the public body or bodies of surface water to which it will apply. The local plan may allow herbicide use if the person proposing to apply the herbicide notifies the governing entity not later than the 14th day before the proposed date of application. The local plan shall provide that treatment proposals shall be submitted concurrently to TPWD and the governing entity (on the form provided in the guidance document) no later than the 14th day before the measures are to begin and that the governing entity will review and may disapprove or amend any treatment proposal and will respond no later than the day before the proposed control measures are to begin. The person submitting the treatment proposal shall have the burden of demonstrating compliance with the local plan.

(c) Proposed local plans should be developed in cooperation with TPWD, TDA, and TNRCC*, and shall be submitted to TPWD on a form prepared by TPWD. TPWD will coordinate review of the plan by TNRCC* and TDA.

(d) Governing entities shall seek and encourage public participation in the creation and review of local plans. At a minimum, TPWD, TNRCC*, or TDA will hold at least one public meeting in the area affected by the local plan. Public comment will be received by TPWD, TNRCC*, and TDA for 30 days after the local plan is submitted for agency approval. TPWD, TNRCC*, and TDA will review and respond to local plan submittals within 60 days of receipt.

§57.936. Recordkeeping. Governing entities shall retain copies of the following documents generated under this subchapter for a minimum of five years from generation: all local plan submissions and approvals, all treatment proposals submitted to TPWD, all notices received and provided, all control measures taken by the governing entity (including records of date, place, location, type, and amount of all aquatic herbicide applications), and any other information relevant to a particular individual request for shoreline treatment.

***TNRCC is now Texas Commission for Environmental Quality (TCEQ)**



Appendix C

Aquatic Vegetation Treatment Proposal

****A map of the water body** with proposed treatment sites indicated should be **attached.****

****A separate form** should be filled out for **each plant species treated.****

Water Body Name: _____ ***Submission Date:** _____

Date Surveyed: _____ Proposed Treatment Date: _____

Target Plant Species: _____ Estimated Acres: _____

Recommended Treatment: Mechanical ☐ Biological ☐ Chemical ☐

Tier: _____

Method of Treatment: _____

Applicator Name: _____

TDA Applicator License Number
(if applicable): _____

Floating or Emergent Vegetation:

Treatment Location	Relative Surface Coverage	Treatment Area (acres)	Treatment Rate/type (organisms, gals, lbs. /acre, harvested or shredded)	Total (organisms, gals., lbs, acres harvested or shredded)	Mean water depth
Total					

Submerged Vegetation:

Treatment Location	Relative Surface Coverage	Treatment Area (acres)	Treatment Rate/type (organisms, gals, lbs./acre, harvested or shredded)	Total (organisms, gals., lbs, acres harvested or shredded)	Mean water depth
Total					

Comments: _____

***Proposals are good for six months from the date of submission, unless application plans change.**

Appendix D. TPWD Contacts

Inland Fisheries Division Personnel Involved in Aquatic Vegetation Management

Austin Headquarters

4200 Smith School Road, Austin Texas 78744

Philip P. Durocher, Division Director	512-389-4643
Bill Provine, Chief, Management & Research	512-389-4855
Earl Chilton, Aquatic Habitat Enhancement.	512-389-4652

Regions – Inland Management

I	3407-B S. Chadbourne, San Angelo 76903	325-651-4846
II	1601 E. Crest Dr., Waco 76705	254-867-7974
III	11810 FM 848, Tyler 75707	903-566-1615

District Management Offices

1-A	P. O. Box 835, Canyon 79015	806-655-4341
1-B	5325 N. 3 rd , Abilene 79603	325-692-0921
1-C	3407-A S. Chadbourne, San Angelo 76903	325-651-5556
1-D	134 Braniff Dr., San Antonio 78216-3392	210-348-6355
1-E	P. O. Box 116, Mathis 78368-0116	361-547-9712
2-A	P. O. Box 1446, Pottsboro 75076-1446	903-786-2389
2-B	8684 LaVillage Ave., Waco 76712	254-666-5190
2-C	505 Staples Road, San Marcos 78666	512-353-0072
2-D	6200 Hatchery Rd., Ft. Worth 76114	817-732-0761
2-E	409 Chester, Wichita Falls 76301	940-766-2383
3-A	3802 East End Blvd. So., Marshall 75672	903-938-1007
3-B	2122 Old Henderson Hwy, Tyler 75702	903-593-5077
3-C	11942 FM 848, Tyler 75707	903-566-2161
3-D	Rt.2, Box 535, Jasper 75951	409-384-9572
3-E	1004 E. 26 th St., Bryan 77803	979-822-5067

Aquatic Vegetation Control

Howard Elder	Rt. 2, Box 535, Jasper 75951	409-384-9965
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Heart of the Hills Science Center

Dick Luebke, Supervisor	5103 Junction Hwy., Ingram, TX 78025	830-866-3356
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Appendix E. How to Develop a Local Management Plan

1. Consistency with State Plan

Local plans may take into account particular local needs and uses of the water bodies and/or systems for which they are written; needs which may not be addressed in the broader statewide plan. In order to address local issues individual lake management plans may be more restrictive than the statewide plan. However, all individual lake management plans must meet the minimum standards set by the statewide plan.

2. How a Local Plan Differs from a Treatment Proposal.

The purpose of a local plan is to transfer to a governing entity TPWD's authority to oversee nuisance aquatic vegetation control on the public bodies of surface water that the local plan covers. Local plans must be approved by TCEQ (Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, formerly TNRCC), TDA, and TPW, as provided in §57.934. Where a local plan governs, treatment proposals are not subject to TPW approval. Local plans may or may not address specific nuisance aquatic vegetation problems and treatment alternatives. The law requires that the local plan be at least as stringent as the state plan.

Treatment proposals, by contrast, describe specific actions planned to address one or more nuisance aquatic vegetation problems. Where no local plan is in place, treatment proposals are subject to review and approval by TPW as provided in §57.932(a)(3). A treatment proposal may propose a one-time treatment event, or a series of treatment events over several months. Where a local plan is in place, treatment proposals are to be submitted to the governing entity for approval, and to TPWD for informational purposes.

3. Standards for governing entities preparing local plan

- i.** Local plans shall be developed in cooperation with, and approved by, TPWD, TDA, and TCEQ. The plan should be submitted to TPWD, which will coordinate approval by the other agencies. Other requirements for the content of local plans are in § 57.934 of the rules.
- ii.** Before final approval, there shall be a period of public review and comment for local vegetation management plans. The review period will include at least one public meeting sponsored by TPWD, TCEQ, or TDA.
- iii.** The period of public review will be no less than one month in duration.

4. Format for local plans

- i. The rules do not prescribe in detail what local plans must look like. In developing the regulations, TPWD chose to allow governing entities maximum flexibility in designing local plans. One simple way of adopting a local plan is for a local governing entity to submit a document to TPWD stating that the local plan is the same as the state plan, with a list of exceptions where the local plan is more stringent. The governing entity should also describe how the local plan will be implemented, for example, through local ordinances or pesticide labeling. The local plan need not describe specific management actions, such as details of where target plants are. Maps may be included with the local plan if they would be helpful.

Appendix F. Evaluation of Triploid Grass Carp Permit Applications for Public Water

The use of biological controls, such as grass carp, is often viewed as a very popular option to control nuisance aquatic vegetation since they are usually cheaper than herbicides or mechanical harvesting. Unfortunately, the introduction of exotic species, even to help control existing problems, has often led to other problems. Therefore, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department issues permits for triploid (sterile) grass carp use only, so that unchecked reproduction and over population should not occur. Each application for a permit to stock triploid grass carp in public water will be reviewed and evaluated following the procedure developed by Inland Fisheries Division to ensure compliance with Section §57.126 of the Parks and Wildlife Proclamations.

Procedure:

Step 1. Persons or entities that wish to use triploid grass carp in Texas' public waters must submit a completed "Application to Stock Triploid Grass Carp in Public Water" to the Inland Fisheries Division.

Step 2. The District Biologist responsible for managing the public water body in question reviews a copy of the permit application. The biologist is responsible for making a recommendation of whether or not to grant the permit based on the following criteria:

- a. Is there is a valid vegetation problem? In general, triploid grass carp stockings in public water will be considered only if nuisance vegetation is beginning to detrimentally affect resident fish communities, and/or is a significant impediment to recreational access (including boating, fishing, swimming, hunting, etc.). Floating exotic vegetation species are usually not controlled very well by grass carp. Typically, vegetation is considered a problem only when it covers more than 20-40% of a water body. However, lesser amounts may be deemed a "problem" if infestations have spread to a large proportion of key access or use areas, and the potential for further spread is high. With exotic plant species it is often prudent to be proactive in order to avoid more serious problems in the future, which may require more drastic action. If there is no vegetation problem, the biologist may recommend against permit issuance.
- b. Will the fish escape if stocked? Grass carp will not be effective if they are allowed to move away from targeted use areas. If the probability of escape is high, the biologist will recommend against permit issuance. If escape potential is high, but the construction of a containment structure is deemed feasible, the biologist may recommend issuance conditionally (i.e., only after the containment structure is in place).
- c. Will the stocking detrimentally affect threatened or endangered species populations in the area? Unless the probability of negatively impacting T+E species is very low, the biologist will recommend against permit issuance.
- d. Will the stocking detrimentally affect coastal wetland or estuarine areas? Public waters south and east of the freshwater/coastal water boundary line are defined as coastal waters. If stocked in this area the risk of grass carp moving into wetlands or estuaries is considered

high. Biologists usually recommend against permit issuance and permits are rarely issued in the area.

- e. Will the stocking, and its consequences, conflict with TPWD management objectives, or environmental policy? If so, the biologist may recommend against permit issuance.

Additionally, Biologists may contact and obtain input from nearby field personnel in other resource Divisions where appropriate. Much time can be saved if comments from the Resource Protection, Wildlife, and Coastal Divisions (where applicable) are received early in the process, and come from field personnel who are familiar with local circumstances.

District Biologists will include an evaluation of economic and recreational considerations, as well as a Checklist for Triploid Grass Carp Stocking in Public Water (completed in cooperation with headquarters staff), on the attached forms (pages 65-67) in the recommendation report.

- Step 3.** In order to provide a forum for public input, when the Department receives a request to use grass carp for the first time in a public water body, a public meeting or hearing will be arranged by the parties requesting stocking and held by the Department near the lake involved. Supplemental stockings do not require a public hearing, but may still be held by the Department if it is deemed necessary.
- Step 4.** The biologist's report, a copy of the permit application, a copy of permitting criteria, a report from public hearings or meetings held, and any other pertinent information are then routed through designated staff in Inland Fisheries.
- Step 5.** Inland Fisheries staff will collate comments, and if appropriate meet with representatives of other affected resource Divisions and draft a recommendation for approval or disapproval of the permit. If appropriate, special conditions (including mitigation for loss of desirable aquatic plant species) may be negotiated with applicants and set as terms of permit issuance in order to ensure minimal escape potential, and compliance with Section §57.126 of the Parks and Wildlife Proclamations.
- Step 6.** Upon review and approval of the final recommendation and supporting materials by the Director of Inland Fisheries (or a designated staff member) applicants will be notified of the status of their applications. The Director of Inland Fisheries (or a designated staff member) may approve or deny permits, or forward them to the Executive Director for review before a final decision is made.
- Step 7.** Upon notification of approval applicants must submit the permit fee (\$2.00 per permitted fish) to the Revenue subsection of the Chief Financial Office for placement in the proper account. In some cases permits may be issued before permit fees are collected. However, remittance must be received BEFORE permitted grass carp are stocked or it will be deemed an illegal stocking and all appropriate fines will be levied. In the case of multiple stockings under a single permit, the permit fee of \$2.00 per fish will be collected for the number of fish actually being stocked at that time, NOT for the total number of fish permitted. However, remittance must be received BEFORE permitted grass carp are stocked.

Biologists Report

Triploid Grass Carp Public Water Stocking

Lake Name: _____ County: _____

Location: _____ Size (Acres): _____

Problem Plant(s): _____ Area Covered: _____

Percent of Shoreline
Developed: _____

Recommendations: Stock _____ (Number) Deny Permit _____ (Check)

Biological Considerations:

Economic/Recreational Considerations:

Checklist for Triploid Grass Carp Stocking in Public Water

Water Body Name: _____

1. Applicant has **completed** and **submitted** to the Department a **triploid grass carp permit application**.

- Date Accomplished: _____
- Comments: _____

2. Applicant has **remitted** to the Department all **pertinent fees**.

- Date Accomplished: _____ Fee: _____
- Number of Fish in Initial Stocking: _____
- Comments: _____

3. **All information provided** in the triploid grass carp permit application **is true and correct**.

- Date of Inspection or Inquiries: _____
- Person Conducting Inspection or Inquiries: _____
- Comments: _____

4. Applicant has **not been finally convicted**, within the last year, for violation of the Parks and Wildlife Code, 66.007, 66.015, or these rules.

- Date of Criminal Background Check: _____
- Person Requesting Background Check: _____
- Comments: _____

5. Issuance of a triploid grass carp permit is **consistent with department fisheries or wildlife management activities**.

- Date of Discussions and Considerations: _____
- Persons Involved: _____
- Comments: _____

6. Issuance of a triploid grass carp permit is **consistent with the Parks & Wildlife Commission's environmental policy**.

- Date of Discussions and Considerations: _____
- Persons Involved: _____
- Comments: _____

7. Issuance of a triploid grass carp permit and subsequent stocking **does not conflict with specific management objectives of the department**.

- Date of Discussions and Considerations: _____
- Persons Involved: _____
- Comments: _____

8. Issuance of a triploid grass carp permit and subsequent **stocking will not detrimentally affect threatened or endangered species** populations or their habitat.

- Date of Discussions and Considerations: _____
 - Persons Involved: _____
 - Comments: _____
-

9. Issuance of a triploid grass carp permit and subsequent stocking **will not detrimentally affect coastal wetland** and estuarine ecosystems.

- Date of Discussions and Considerations: _____
 - Persons Involved: _____
 - Comments: _____
-

10. Determination of the number of triploid grass carp authorized for possession under a triploid grass carp permit will include the **consideration of the surface area of the pond or lake** named in the permit application and, as appropriate, the **percentage of the surface area infested** by aquatic vegetation.

- Date of Discussions and Considerations: _____
 - Persons Involved: _____
 - Comments: _____
-

11. A hearing or meeting was conducted to provide the TPWD with public input relative to the proposed triploid grass carp stocking.

- Date of Meeting or Hearing: _____
 - Persons Involved: _____
 - Comments: _____
-

12. Biologists Report submitted to Austin headquarters staff.

- Date of Report: _____
 - Comments: _____
-



4200 Smith School Road
Austin, TX 78744

PWD PL T3200-1066

Texas Parks and Wildlife receives federal financial assistance from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the U.S. Department of the Interior and its bureaus prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex (in educational programs). If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any Texas Parks and Wildlife program, activity, or facility, or if you desire further information, please call or write: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office for Diversity and Civil Rights Programs - External Programs, 4040 N. Fairfax Drive, Webb 300, Arlington, VA 22203, (703) 358-1724.