

Giant salvinia making parts of Caddo impassable

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Budget constraints and weather conditions have helped the wildly growing invasive plant giant salvinia to spread in Caddo Lake this year, making some areas of the lake impassable

The Cypress Valley Navigation District is tackling as much giant salvinia as possible with the money provided for invasive aquatic plant spraying efforts.

According to Robert Speight, since receiving its \$75,000 grant award from Texas Parks and Wildlife in September 2011, CVND has sprayed about 482.5 acres of giant salvinia to date.

“By August 31st, we should have 700 acres sprayed,” he said.

But while a large amount of acreage has been sprayed, the invasive plant continues to spread in areas like Clinton Lake, making it impassable. Speight described the conditions at Clinton Lake as “horrible”.

He noted that Texas A&M recently sprayed some of the lake with the money allotted in their contract.

“We sprayed about 110 acres in Clinton early on before A&M went up there,” he said of CVND’s efforts.

But, despite spraying efforts, “it’s not looking good,” Speight said of conditions at Clinton Lake, sharing a commissioner in Marion County told him within the last week, the salvinia has flourished a lot around his area in Clinton.

“We’re throwing all we can in it,” he said of CVND’s financial resources, adding that he doesn’t know how much Texas A&M is spending on its spraying efforts for the area.

Speight said because there is so much salvinia on the lake this year, he made sure CVND’s boats didn’t overlap with A&M’s spraying efforts.

He advised that CVND’s boats are mainly spraying around houses, boat ramps, in the Uncertain area, the gulf shore and by Tucker’s camp.

And because of budget constraints, Speight said they are only running one boat instead of two.

“Sounds like we’re doing all we can financially with what we have available,” Harrison County Commissioner Jeff Thompson, CVND board chair, said.

Speight said they haven’t sprayed much in the last couple of weeks due to the Fourth of July holiday and the rain.

“We try to avoid getting on the lake when all the tourists are out there,” he said. “But, we’ll continue to monitor it within this next month.”

Anticipating on the funding from TPWD again, Speight proposed to maintain the same budget amount — \$75,000 — for this upcoming fiscal year for spraying efforts.

Thompson said if they do not receive the funding this year, they will have to adjust the budget, and possibly go back to strictly doing what they used to do — focusing on navigation of the waterways “and navigation only.”

“If we only get what’s contributed from Harrison County and Marion County for our budget for 2012-2013, there’s no way we can do the amount of spraying on limited funds,” said Thompson. “And, it doesn’t sound like the vegetation is slowing down.”

Speight noted that during CVND’s last fiscal year, beginning July 1, 2011, and ending June 30, 2012, approximately 658.5 acres of giant salvinia was sprayed — surpassing their goal of 600 acres.