

# Before treating salvinia, residents must file paperwork

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At left - John Sanders, a Marshall native and Kansas businessman, cuts through patches of giant salvinia in his mechanical harvester in June 2012, near Tucker's Camp on Caddo Lake.

Any shoreline property owner that wants to conduct their own treatment of giant salvinia or other invasive plants on Caddo Lake must file an Aquatic Vegetation Treatment Proposal and get approval from TPWD, informed Tim Bister, district fisheries biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

“Even if someone wants to pull it out by hand, they should be filing one of these treatment proposals,” said Bister.

The proposal, which has to be filed with the agency, details the measures that need to be taken to control nuisance aquatic vegetation in public water. Additionally, Bister said, it outlines the type of aquatic vegetation such as floating, emergent or submerged; the target aquatic vegetation species name; the estimated amount of aquatic vegetation acreage to be treated; and the proposed treatment type whether it is mechanical, biological or chemical.

A treatment proposal, accompanied by a map of the proposed treatment site, must be submitted to the TPWD 14 days before anticipated implementation, according to the guidelines. Failure to provide a map may slow the review process, the guidelines indicate.

“It’s a pretty big document, but it’s a lot of information there and outlines the steps someone



needs to make,” Bister said of the Guidance Document for Controlling Nuisance Aquatic Vegetation, which has to be reviewed by all applicants.

According to the document, correctly identifying aquatic vegetation species is critical for understanding what management options are available, and which are most effective.

“Often, vegetation species that are similar in appearance have entirely different management options,” the document explains.

If one is not sure of the type of vegetation they have, they are urged to request assistance from a TPWD biologist.

Some selected problematic aquatic and riparian exotic invasive plants that are regulated by either the Texas Department of Agriculture or TPWD include: Alligatorweed, Eurasian watermilfoil, Giant Reed, Hydrilla, Salvinia, water hyacinth and water lettuce.

The guidelines explain that a notice letter should also be provided to the governing entity, TPWD, 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 other persons who have requested notice. “There’s a list of people to notify any time herbicide is to be used in public water,” Bister informed.

He said if people pump out water for gardening purposes, for example, they don’t want to spray out water that’s had an application of herbicide. “Just because someone has a dock on public water doesn’t mean they own the public water,” said Bister.

According to the guidelines, TPWD may accept, accept with amendments, or disapprove treatment proposals.

Bister said, so far, he’s only had one treatment proposal from a private cabin owner that has been filed, requesting to spray an area off of a main travel road that will not get sprayed by any agencies contracted by TPWD.

Other than that, Bister said no one else has filled out an application, mainly because of the pretty intense spraying efforts conducted on the lake through contracts with Cypress Valley Navigation District, for instance, which has an active invasive aquatic plant spraying program.

“There’s been a lot of spraying activity out there,” said Bister, noting that there isn’t any spraying going on currently because of the cooler temperatures, which makes treatment less effective.

Nevertheless, he wants individual homeowners, who may have problems with nuisance aquatic vegetation on their property, to know that there are steps they can take individually to control it.

“Anyone that has a desire, it needs to be done under an approved plan using an approved herbicide,” Bister reiterated. “We want to protect the water.”