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## Weevils released in Lake Bistineau in effort to combat invasive salvinia

Posted: Jul 30, 2015 5:30 AM CDT  
Updated: Jul 30, 2015 5:39 AM CDT

By Erin Buchanan [CONNECT](#)

BOSSIER PARISH, La. (KTBS) - The war on giant salvinia rages on as Bossier Parish officials try to find a way to eliminate the invasive plant.

A drawdown of Lake Bistineau is set to begin August 3rd, but that's not the only measure being taken.

A team of volunteers recently [released 35,000 giant salvinia-eating weevils](#) into a slough at Lake Bistineau as part of a project to test the weevil's effectiveness during their growing season.

These insects are descendents of those who survived the winter. And signage marking the test site, which is in Webster Parish, will be going up soon.

Salvinia is devastating to water that it invades, and wildlife experts say the lake is a breeding ground for the plant.

"Lake Bistineau is one of those lakes, it's a cypress tree filled lake and it's very similar to a swamp habitat. Basically, the dam was put in place in an area that was a swamp before," explains Jeff Sibley, with the LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries.

Members of the Bistineau Task Force and the LA Dept. of Wildlife & Fisheries, will be monitoring the site throughout the project.

Officials are also investigating additional sites, including a private pond near Lake Bistineau that's infested with salvinia.

"[The lake's history] entails a lot of organic material, it's a very fertile area," says Sibley. "And so all these vegetation problems that Bistineau has had for years are a symptom of the aging process of a lake."

It's all being funded through private donations to the Bistineau Task Force.

Wildlife officials estimate the salvinia is currently covering over 1,700 of the 17,000 acre lake. That means it [reaches the threshold for a drawdown](#).

The lake will be lowered at a rate of four to six inches per day, but won't exceed a level of seven feet below normal pool stage.

Boaters will be able to access the lake during the drawdown from several public boat launches.

Those include facilities at Port of Bistineau, the Bossier public launch, the launch at Grice's and the Bayou Dorcheat public launch.