

# Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

## Invasive Plant Management Section



# FWC's Position and Guidance on Hydrilla Management



Hydrilla infestation  
on Lake Okeechobee  
Photo by Jeff Schardt  
2003 Florida D.E.P.



# 2008 Legislative Session

## Authority in Chapter 369 Florida Statutes *“Invasive Plant Management”*

**Was Moved from DEP to the FWC - 2008**



***FWC is designated by the Florida Legislature as the lead agency for...***

**Coordinating and funding two statewide programs controlling invasive plants:**

- 1. Aquatic plants in public waterways**
- 2. Upland plants on public conservation lands**



# Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund

## Revenue Sources:

- **Documentary Stamps**
- **Motor Fuel Tax**
- **Commercial & Recreational Vessel Registration**



# Invasive Plant Management Funding

## *“Control of Invasive Exotics” Funding Category*

**From 2005 - 09 Appropriations = \$39.4 million**

**FY 10-11 (current year) = \$29.8 million**

**FY 11-12 Appropriations = \$23.3 million (proposed)**



## **s. 369.252 , Florida Statutes:**

***A minimum of 20 percent of the documentary stamp funds credited to the Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund shall be used **for the control of upland invasive exotic plants** on public lands***



# Invasive Plant Management Funding

**FY 11 - 12:**

***Upland Plant Management***

**~ \$4.7 million**

***Aquatic Plant Management***

**~ \$18.6 million**





# AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT SUB-SECTION



# Public Water Bodies

- Sovereignty lands
- Public ramps
- 450 lakes and rivers
- 1.25 million acres
- 350 active management programs



# Use of Florida Public Waters

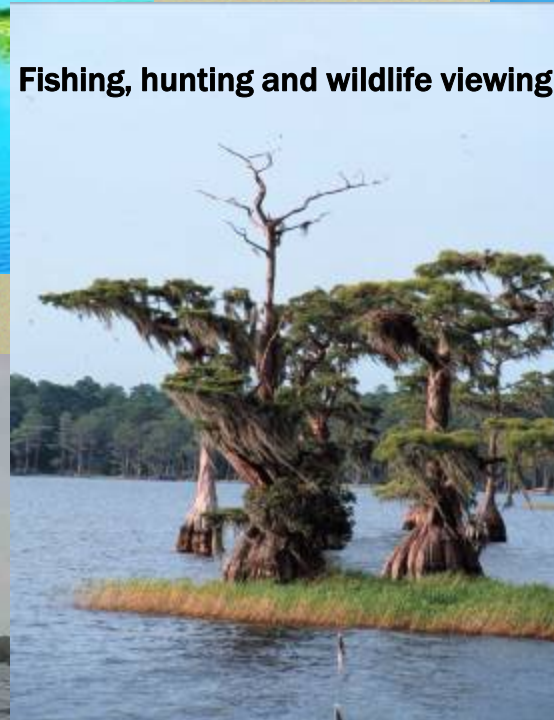
**Boating & swimming**



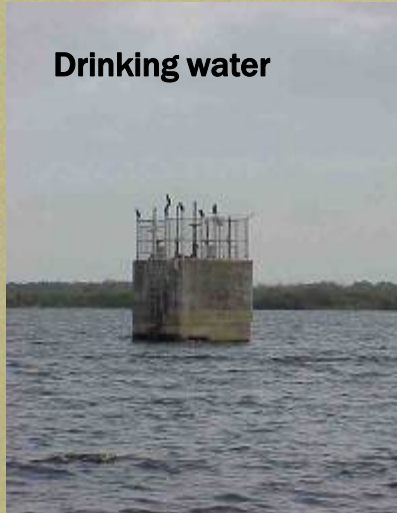
**Flood control**



**Fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing**



**Drinking water**



**Commercial uses**



# Funding Priorities

1. Floating plants (hyacinth/lettuce)
2. New hydrilla infestations
3. Plants blocking access & navigation
4. Open areas in dense hydrilla mats
5. Large-scale hydrilla control
6. Control other noxious plants
7. Residential canals



# Hydrilla

Public boat ramp



Flood control structure



# Management Objectives for Hydrilla

- *DEP – maintain at lowest feasible level as determined by DEP*
- *Disagreement between user groups and managers*
- *Contentious at times*



# Purpose of the Position Statement:

- *Establish a consistent agency position*
- *Provide guidance to staff*
- *Establish a process to determine how hydrilla will be managed on a specific waterbody*



# Hydrilla Management Issue Team

- *Hunting and Game Management*
- *Freshwater Fisheries Management*
- *Fish and Wildlife Research Institute*
- *Invasive Species Management – animals*
- *Aquatic Habitat Conservation & Restoration*
- *Species Conservation Planning – threatened sp.*
- *Invasive Plant Management*
- *Office of Recreation Services*
- *Law Enforcement*





# FWC's Hydrilla Management Position Statement

*Native aquatic plant communities provide ecological functions that support diverse native fish and wildlife*



*FWC considers hydrilla to be an invasive plant, at high densities, it will adversely impact:*

- *Native plant abundance*
- *Sportfish growth*
- *Recreational use*
- *Flood control*
- *Dissolved Oxygen*



*Once established, hydrilla has proven difficult if not impossible to eradicate with current technology and is expensive to manage*

*Therefore, FWC opposes the deliberate introduction of hydrilla into waterbodies where it is not currently present*



*FWC prefers to manage for native aquatic plants, but recognizes that in waterbodies where native submersed aquatic plants are absent or limited, hydrilla at low to moderate densities can be beneficial to fish and wildlife*

*FWC will manage hydrilla on a waterbody by waterbody basis using a risk-based approach to determine the level of management*



*In waterbodies where hydrilla is well established, it will be managed at levels that are commensurate with the primary uses and functions of the waterbody and fish and wildlife*



*FWC will determine the level of hydrilla management on each public waterbody using a risk-based analysis that considers:*

- *Human safety*
- *Economic concerns*
- *Budgetary constraints*
- *Fish and wildlife values*
- *Recreational use*

*Input from resource management partners and local stakeholders will be considered*



## *Factors that will influence timing and level of hydrilla management:*

- *Available control technology*
- *Current waterbody conditions*
- *Activities occurring within the watershed*



# Implementation Guidelines

Solicit input from external stakeholders on desired future condition

- *Public user groups*
- *Water management districts*
- *Federal, state, county govt. organizations, or other stakeholders that have an interest*
- *Non-governmental organizations*
- *Contractors/cooperators*





- *Estimate hydrilla acreage and location*
- *Determine primary uses of the waterbody using a tiered approach*

*Tier one:*

- *Flood Control*
- *Hydropower*
- *Irrigation*
- *Listed species*
- *Navigation*
- *Potable water*

*Tier two:*

- *Angling*
- *Waterfowl*
- *Fish and wildlife habitat*
- *Recreation*
- *Technological & economic*



- *Draft a treatment plan for upcoming year*
- *Request input from FWC staff*
  - *Utilize existing teams/committees, etc.*
- *Hold public meetings, where necessary*
- *Adaptively manage based on current conditions*



# Summary

- **Hydrilla is invasive and at high densities causes adverse effects**
- **Hydrilla is difficult and expensive to manage**
- **FWC opposes the deliberate introduction of hydrilla in lakes where it is not present**
- **FWC prefers to manage for native plants**
- **In waters with no or limited native submerged plants, hydrilla at low to moderate densities can be beneficial to fish and wildlife**
- **FWC will manage hydrilla on a waterbody by waterbody basis using a risk-based approach**
- **Input from stakeholders is a key component in developing a hydrilla management plan for a waterbody**

