

Hydrilla Management in Florida

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Summary

Convened a meeting of agency biologists.

USACOE

FLDEP

FWC

County Governments

WMD's

USFWS

BASS

Discussed hydrilla management

Situation

- hydrilla is an exotic plant
- provides quality fish and wildlife habitat
- can dominate lakes, too much is a problem for Florida Lakes

Control Measures

Sonar (Fluridone)

Grass Carp

Other Herbicides

Mechanical control

Situation

Sonar (Fluridone)

- has been the common control method for the past 15 years
- control of large acreages of hydrilla
- economical compared to other methods
- selective for hydrilla (low damage to native plants)

****Resistance has developed in some areas**

Situation

Sonar (Fluridone) will still kill resistant hydrilla, but we have lost the selection option

- rates required to kill hydrilla will harm native plants
- use of Fluridone now has implications for other beneficial habitat

Situation

Grass carp - usually result in either no control or complete removal of all plants

- lack of selectivity

- Lake Yale

Other herbicides - will kill hydrilla but very expensive, not feasible on large lakes

Situation

Mechanical control - effective on small areas

- boat ramps

- canals

- fish camps

Not feasible for large areas of big lakes

Results

- eradication of hydrilla from lakes with established populations is not likely

- continued treatment with Fluridone will harm native plants and increase tolerance of hydrilla

Business as usual with Fluridone on large lakes is unlikely to be successful

Conclusions

- moderate levels of hydrilla coverage do not harm fish and wildlife populations, and have some benefits
- high coverage (> 70%) cause access problems and are an economic concern
- we need to change the way hydrilla is managed in Florida

Recommendations

- lake management plans needed
- stop consecutive years of Fluridone treatment
- discontinue an eradication policy on large lakes with hydrilla
- research needed for grass carp removal
- new herbicides needed

Process

- send summary document out to participants for comment
- revise and include management recommendations
- agencies should then gather public comment
- adopt recommendations

Questions?