

Kissimmee Interagency Meeting – Aquatic Plant Management

December 12, 2007

Keshav Setaram (SFWMD) gave an update on SFWMD's plant management activities throughout the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes (KCOL). Water levels in the lake are close to the regulation schedule. Floating plants are under control in most areas of the chain. He has requested a Task Assignment Change Order (TACE) through FDEP to add West Indian marsh grass and frog's bit to several areas. Hydrilla in Lake Jackson was recently treated with Galleon (penoxsulam) and personnel from SePro and the University of Florida are monitoring the results. Additional applications will be made as needed to keep the herbicide concentration at desired levels. Approximately 450 acres of hydrilla in the north end of Lake Toho were targeted with a combination of Aquathol and Reward herbicides. UF staff has also been collecting data and monitoring that treatment. 600 acres of hydrilla in Lake Hatchineha was treated to maintain navigation and water flow. The tussock on Lake Mary Jane that was threatening the Moss Park bridge has been removed and disposed of within the county park.

Ed Harris and Jeff Schardt (FDEP) gave an update on the tussock harvesting on Lake Runnymede. Work is nearly complete and the contractor will be demobilizing by the end of December. After the last of the harvested material is stabilized, the site will be graded and seeded. At present, no additional harvesting work on this lake will be undertaken by FDEP due to the logistics of plant disposal. SFWMD and Osceola County will need to address future problems related to floating islands and flood control on this lake. Several suggestions were made about possible strategies but local staff will need to develop a flood protection plan independent of FDEP funds.

Ed Harris introduced a preliminary plan to treat hydrilla throughout Lake Cypress utilizing Galleon. There was considerable discussion about the particulars of such a treatment. SePro staff recommends maintaining a concentration of 5-10 parts per billion (ppb) of penoxsulam for at least 100 days. Current water levels and predicted precipitation through the spring look promising. There was discussion about the potential impacts to non-target vegetation from the herbicide. FDEP and SePro staff related the impacts and regrowth of native plants in other central Florida waterbodies that had undergone similar treatments. Eelgrass, in particular, showed good recovery once the herbicide concentration dropped below 5 ppb. Mike Netherland (UF/USACE) suggested that it would be useful to do some level of Aquathol application in conjunction with the Galleon treatment. He suggested treating 100 acres with Aquathol K prior to or during the Galleon application. Ed Harris and Keshav Setaram will find a suitable location ASAP and coordinate the Aquathol application. SFWMD will provide airboats and crews to facilitate the Galleon treatment, which should cover approximately 300 acres.

There was also lengthy discussion about the expanding hydrilla in Lake Toho. Mike Netherland recommended a treatment in Goblet's Cove that mirrored the last treatment done there. A treatment of that size would cover ~400 acres at an approximate cost of \$300,000. In addition, hydrilla is rapidly expanding throughout the main body of the lake. However, funding may be an issue in treating large amounts of hydrilla in that part of the lake until 2009. It was agreed that a large trail should be maintained through the marked navigation channel utilizing Aquathol K. This trail would be ~120 acres in size and cost approximately \$300,000 to maintain for 12 months. An initial treatment should be done ASAP, with subsequent treatments as needed (keeping in mind the schedule for fishing tournaments on the lake). Finally, the southern lobe of the lake has an ever-increasing hydrilla infestation. It is not feasible to use Galleon in this part of the lake at this time. Therefore, it was suggested to treat ~2000 acres of the densest hydrilla with Aquathol at an approximate cost of \$1.2 million. Treating hydrilla throughout the entire lake utilizing Galleon may be feasible by this time next year. In addition to Aquathol treatments, Mike Netherland recommended some additional control activities to generate research data for comparison. He suggested treating 100 acres with Aquathol Super K granular herbicide, harvesting 100 acres by mechanical means to document regrowth and non-target fauna by catch, and treating 100 acres with Reward herbicide. A suggestion was made that the Cypress Cove area be treated with a mixture of Aquathol and Reward.

Heather Tipton (USFWS) gave an update on snail kite activities in the chain. At present, there is no nesting activity observed in any of the lakes and USFWS and FWC staffs are continuing to survey and monitor the

population. She will ensure that the lake managers continue to get current data on snail kite activities in order to minimize activities in the vicinity of active nests.

Danielle Sobczak (FDEP) gave an update on hydrilla expansion in Lake Kissimmee. There is ~450 acres of hydrilla adjacent to the state park, ~300 acres in the NE cove, and ~200 acres in close proximity to the S-65 water control structure. She will work with Keshav Setaram to map and schedule treatments. Also, there are several areas of dense spatterdock near the structure that may or may not be an issue to water flow. A recommendation will be made to selectively treat some of these areas.

Mike Bodle (SFWMD) mentioned that an exotic Luziola species had been discovered on Lake Okeechobee near Fisheating Bay. He will provide more information as it becomes available.

Bruce Jagers (FWC) gave an update on Chinese tallow treatments in Lake Toho utilizing BASF's imazimox herbicide. It appears to have been effective on this plant but has shown little activity on other woody species. His group will continue to monitor the treatment sites and prepare a final evaluation sometime in April, 2008. He also reported finding wetland nightshade near some of their treatment plots.

Eleanor Foerste (IFAS) mentioned that she was interested in having people look for tropical soda apple sites. IFAS and USDA need new locations for the release of a biocontrol insect, the TSA beetle. Please contact her for more information on what she is looking for.

The next group meeting was tentatively scheduled for February 19, 2008, in this same location.