

Kissimmee Interagency Meeting – 9/7/06

Keshav Setaram (SFWMD) gave an update on the management of floating plants on the Kissimmee chain of lakes. Hyacinths and lettuce are under very good control in all the lakes. The crews are continuing to sweep every lake in the chain. Lake Runnymede is experiencing a hyacinth bloom. Keshav will take a look at the water levels and put a crew in the lake as soon as water levels permit.

Ed Harris (FDEP) gave an update on the tussock harvesting in Lake Runnymede. Weedbusters is continuing to work additional areas of the lake as water levels rise. Spoil dumping at Chisolm Park will continue for several more weeks. After that, an alternative dump site will be utilized on the south side of the lake. FDEP is working with Osceola County Parks to spread the spoil and seed the pasture areas. Also, the roads in Runnymede trailer park will be repaved.

Kimberly Lawrence (Osceola County) inquired about the status of smartweed in the north end of Toho. Tim Coughlin (FFWC) commented that his agency did not want total eradication of the plants but supported efforts to provide relief to homeowners in the area. There was discussion about the feasibility of harvesting these plants as opposed to chemical treatments. Jeff Schardt (FDEP) stated that FDEP would fund harvesting projects on large floating tussocks or those that posed an immediate problem for public access or flood control. Otherwise, the plants should be treated chemically. It was generally agreed to leave as much of the rooted vegetation as possible for fish and wildlife habitat.

Jeff Schardt and Matt Phillips (FDEP) discussed the new scope of work being performed by ReMetrix. FDEP has contracted with them to survey 5 lakes – Toho, Cypress, Hatchineha, Kissimmee, and Istokpoga – to provide bathymetry and submerged biovolume assays. Jeff will contact Ryan Moore at ReMetrix to check about the time required to provide maps and data. Matt will get the current survey schedule and check with FDEP staff about the possibility of internet data availability.

Jeff Schardt reported on the latest round of meetings regarding the long term Kissimmee Chain of Lakes management plans. That group is investigating a revision of the current water level schedules. Staff from Post, Buckley, Schuh, and Jernigan is devising new water level models. Additionally, the US Army Corps of Engineers will model the KCOL system to generate data about how aquatic vegetation (especially hydrilla) impacts the movement of water through the system.

Mike Netherland (USACE) has designed a research project to measure the effects of half-rates of fluridone on hydrilla's ability to produce tubers in the autumn months. It has been proposed to use about 1500 acres in the north end of Toho as a treatment site and an equivalent area in south Toho as a control site. Tuber formation begins mid-September and peaks at the end of September. It is proposed to treat the areas every September for several years and monitor tuber production. David Tarver (SePro) explained that SePro would be responsible for collecting water, plant, and sediment samples during the project. Ed Harris explained that he was also available for sampling duties, if the need arose. It was stressed that this treatment was specifically designed to manage tuber formation and was not an attempt to kill hydrilla in the treatment area. David Tarver will write a prescription for the initial treatment and subsequent treatments needed to maintain a fluridone rate between 14 – 18 ppb in the treatment zone. Treatments will continue until mid-December. Newton Cook (United Waterfowlers) commented that this type of plant management was more desirable from a waterfowl perspective as opposed to total plant removal. There were also questions about Mike Netherland's ability to include native plant impacts in his study. It was agreed that the initial application of Sonar Q should be ASAP. September 14 was given as a target date. (It was later determined that the aerial contractor would not be available until September 21, but Mike Netherland agreed that this was an acceptable date)

BobYuskaitis gave an update on the proposed imazamox (Clearcast) application in his neighborhood's canal system. He will let us know when BASF and UF staffs are prepared to undertake those treatments.

Possible treatments of hydrilla in Goblett's Cove were also discussed. It was agreed that cooler weather was more conducive to the successful contact treatments. Since water flow is a serious concern during storm events, SFWMD field staff will monitor the hydrilla growth over the next few months to determine if treatments are needed sooner. Dharmen Setaram (Cerexagri) informed us that at least 30 days is required to formulate and deliver the herbicide for these treatments.

Kimberly Lawrence had questions about the proliferation of American lotus at the Granada boat ramp. SFWMD crews will inspect the site ASAP.

Tim Coughlin informed us that FFWC is planning to harvest about 30 acres of smartweed adjacent to Lanier Point (Lake Toho).

Danielle Sobczak (FDEP) reported that the eastern cove of Lake Hatchineha was regrowing with hydrilla after the recent spring treatment. She recommended treating a 200-acre trail through this area ASAP. At an average depth of 8', Dharmen Setaram estimated that approximately 21,000 pounds of Aquathol Super K would be needed to achieve a 3 ppm concentration. Keshav Setaram recommended treating this area at the same Goblett's Cove was treated. He and Danielle will coordinate survey and treatment of these areas.

It was recommended that Ron Mierau (SFWMD) be contacted 3 weeks prior to these treatments to determine if water flow could be slowed for several days to increase herbicide efficacy. It was determined that Mike Bodle (SFWMD) was the best contact person to make this happen.

The next interagency meeting has been scheduled for Friday, November 17th, at the SFWMD Kissimmee Field Station.