

Summary of Public Comments, Responses, and Plan Modifications to the Draft 2014 South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Plan

Santee Cooper Lakes

14 Comments

Comments

Opposed:

Supported:

As a member of the Goat Island boat Club, I am very interested in health of our lake system. I am in favor of the plan as written. Thank you for your time and commitment. Sincerely, Jennifer Conlin Miller H. Robert Miller
Jennifer Miller [jconmil@gmail.com]

I am in total support of DNR's actions to control the invasive weeds choking out the shoreline of our lake. I remember the terrible Hydrilla problem many years ago and now we have it and Floating Crested Heart choking out many of the coves on the lake. As a sportsman that has enjoyed hunting and fishing on both lakes I hope that DNR can find a solution to control the invasive weeds as well as support the fishing and wildlife habitat. Jerry McCown
McCown, William J (Jerry) [William.McCown@workflowone.com]

First off, thanks to the Aquatic Plant Management Council for the outstanding work you do trying to rid our lakes of invasive weeds. My one comment on the Aquatic Plan Management Plan as posted on your web site is that I prefer that you develop a more robust annual maintenance stocking plan for triploid grass carp in the Santee Cooper Lakes to eliminate the spikes in hydrilla growth when the grass carp numbers in the lakes decline. Suspending the stocking of grass carp because the current level of hydrilla has declined will only put the lakes in another period of hydrilla growth the Council will have to face in the future.

Looking at Appendix G, Summary of Plant Control Expenditures:

1989 - stocked 100,000 grass carp in Lake Marion

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1991 - third stocking of grass carp

1992 - reported widespread control of hydrillia in Lake Marion

1993 - reported control over 9000 acres of hydrillia in Lake Marion

1994 - stocked 150,000 grass carp in Lake Moultrie

1995 - stocked 91,000 grass carp in Santee Cooper Lakes

1996 - reported hydrillia declined by 80%

1997 - 2005 reported widespread control of hydrillia, no mention of additional stocking, assume there was none

2006 - growth of hydrilla indicates additional stocking of grass carp would be required

2007 - maintenance stocking of 2620 grass carp in Santee Cooper Lakes

2008 - reported hydrilla rebounded across the state and maintenance restocking of grass carp would be reconsidered

2009 - maintenance stocking of grass carp in Santee Cooper Lakes

2010 - maintenance stocking of grass carp in Santee Cooper Lakes

2011 - reported hydrilla growth increased by 160%, forced to forego maintenance stocking of grass carp for an adaptive management strategy, 109,000 grass carp to be stocked

2012 - reported hydrilla increased to 7210 acres

2013 - reported hydrilla acreage down to 1100 acres

Clearly this shows the positive effects of stocking large numbers of grass carp to effectively control hydrilla. Just as apparent is the rapid growth of hydrilla once there are insufficient grass carp in the lakes to maintain control of the invasive weed. I believe a robust annual maintenance stocking plan is the correct path to follow, but there must be sufficient fish added each year to keep the numbers in the lakes at a level to control or eradicate the hydrilla altogether. Not adding any fish or an insufficient

number is surely a recipe for aggressive hydrilla growth.

Thanks for allowing me to comment on your plan. Other than my one concern over suspending the grass carp stocking plan for the Santee Cooper Lakes, you have my full support.

Dale Cozart

306 Broad River Drive

Santee, SC 29142

843 697-2103

Dale Cozart [cozartd@gmail.com]

I am submitting this comment to ask that you pay particular attention to the coves and inlets south of the I-95 Bridge. In the DRAFT 2014 SOUTH CAROLINA AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT PLAN regarding Lake Marion (Calhoun, Clarendon, Orangeburg, Berkeley, and Sumter Counties), Water Hyacinth is identified as a problem plant species. The stated goal in the plan is to "Reduce water hyacinth populations throughout the lakes to enhance boating, fishing, hunting, public access and prevent spread to other areas of the lake."

Unfortunately, the plan states that there are approximately 4000 acres of Water Hyacinth throughout the lake, but "*mostly in the upper lake area above I-95 Bridge.*" There may be a lot of Water Hyacinth north of the I-95 Bridge, but there is also a great deal below the Bridge in coves and inlets that are choking the ability of residents and visitors alike from access to Lake Marion. The plan states that Water Hyacinth treatments will be considered a *high priority to minimize spread to other areas of the lake system*. I would especially like to emphasize this point – Water Hyacinth does travel by wind and currents to infest coves and inlets south of the I-95 Bridge and must be vigorously treated and to prevent its continuing expansion.

Thank you for soliciting comments – please listen! Mike Kirk Santee, S.C.

Michael Kirk [mkk@att.net]

I, Sandra J. Rolland, President of the Goat Island Boat Club, am in total support of this program, I want what's best for our waters, and safety for our boats, swimmers etc, please, please keep up what you are, and have been doing, in the past!!

I'am in total Support!! Thank You, for hearing me out! Sandra J. Rolland

Robin Rolland [rjroll@bellsouth.net]

Thank you to everyone involved in the making of the Aquatic Plant Management Plan for 2014. All of your hard work is greatly appreciated. My one concern is the decision to temporarily suspend the stocking of triploid carp in Santee Cooper Lakes. I have witnessed the rapid growth of hydrilla in the past and I do not want to see that happen again. I'm concerned that we may find ourselves in a position of playing 'catch up'. With that being said, I have faith that the very knowledgeable staff of SCDNR and Santee Cooper will diligently monitor for a resurgence of hydrilla and will respond with herbicides and a restocking of triploid carp. Again, thank you all for all your hard work.

Debra Gleaton

1043 Autumn Lane

Summerton, SC 29148

Debra Gleaton [dgleaton@ftc-i.net]

As a home owner living on lake Marion, I have always supported the control of non-native weeds in our lake and always will. I am 66 years old and since I can remember the highlight of my earlier years was looking forward to getting away and going fishing for bream on lake Marion. Just the thought of fishing for these fighters (and other species), and the over all beauty of this lake was the main reason I retired here. In 1998 when I did retire here, I started to realize the problems of home owners living on the lake concerning these unwelcomed non-native weeds. For such a long time, you could not even pull your boat (or recreational vehicle) up to your on dock. Boat landings were closed because of the weed hydrilla. As I have stated, I very much support the efforts of DNR in controlling these aquatic plants that do not belong on our lake.

Winston Hinds

Proud member of Goat Island Boat Club

MarleHin@aol.com

I'm writing to thank you for the work you have done on the invasive weed program and pledge my support for the future.

Please do not hesitate to call on me or the Goat Island Boat Club for support. Thank you again for the work you have done.

Carl Cagle
1321 Holland Rd.
Summerton, SC 29148
carlmcagle@FTC-I.NET

I fully support the 2014 S.C. Aquatic Plant Management Plan.

Eddie V. Gleaton, Jr.
1043 Autumn Lane
Summerton, SC 29148
Eddie Gleaton [manningit@cityofmanning.org]

As residents who live on the lake and enjoy all recreational activities the lake has to offer, we support all efforts to control the invasive weeds. The weeds often severely detract from the recreational value of the lake. It is disturbing that in recent years, new species have appeared that require constant and expensive defensive measures. We think the cost is necessary to preserve this valuable resource.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter,
William and Wanda Johnson
wanda@whjohnsonlaw.com

Re: 2014 South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Plan

The Santee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) would like to express support for the 2014 South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Plan developed by the SC Aquatic Plant Management Council and SCDNR. The plan is consistent with U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) policy on control and removal of exotic, invasive organisms that have harmful impacts on aquatic natural resources and on the human use of these resources. Additionally, the plan is consistent with the Santee NWR Comprehensive Conservation Plan goals and objectives. The occurrence and spread of exotic, invasive, and nuisance plant and animal species has been identified by Service staff and intergovernmental partners as one of the priority management issues facing Santee NWR.

We support your efforts to enhance the biological integrity, desirable native vegetation, compatible public uses, and control of aquatic invasive species on the refuge and contiguous ecosystems.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Marc Epstein, Refuge Manager
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Santee National Wildlife Refuge
2125 Fort Watson Road
Summerton, SC 29148
<http://www.fws.gov/santee/> - marc_epstein@fws.gov

As a fourteen (14) year resident of the Lake Marion area and a member of the Goat Island Boat Club, I feel I must express my appreciation to you, the SCDNR, and Mr. Larry McCord of Santee Cooper for your continued efforts to control the spread of invasive and nuisance weeds that reside in our beautiful lake. Having said that, please count me as a supporter of the DNR 2014 SC Aquatic Plant Management Plan. I firmly believe the plan always has and continues to strike a balance between the needs of both fisherman and recreational boaters.

Hal White
1021 Carving Trace
Manning S.C. 29102

The purpose of this letter is to express my support for your Draft 2014 Aquatic Plant Management Plan. I believe that your current plan for control of nuisance weeds is geared to minimizing the impact the weed control will have on fishing while insuring that recreational activities on the lake will not be impacted.

Michael T. Young

1061 Carving Trace
Manning S.C. 29102

I have reviewed the DNR's Draft 2014 Aquatic Plant Management Plan and support the plan as it is written. As a recreational bass fisherman I frequently visit the many piers and sloughs around Wyboo Creek and can attest to both the quantity and quality of the fish that populate this area of our lake. I appreciated that the SC DNR has an invasive weed control program that allows excellent fishing opportunities and, at the same time, is compatible with recreational boating.

John V. Hall
1042 Carving Trace
Manning S.C. 29102

Comments and Revisions:

Response:

Most of the problems that were commented on are solely contributed to the problematic water hyacinth that got pushed out of the upper lake's swamps in 2014 by extremely high flows. That was an unusual situation as heavy rainfall dominated the areas climate last year. That rainfall also led to poor growing conditions for submersed plants and made it extremely difficult to survey for said plants. With the absence of the large acreage in 2013 surveys we find it problematic to continue stocking at the same rate as in 2013. As the season progresses and we can further analyze the acreage and composition of the submersed species we have the option available to stock additional triploid carp if conditions warrant. Hopefully we are going to get into more of a maintenance mode for the stocking cycle of grass carp, which is having about 1 triploid carp for every 8 surface acres.

Plan Modifications:

None at present time.