



Texas Parks & Wildlife Department

PRESS RELEASE

Inland Fisheries District 1E

April 23, 2008

Water hyacinth has been a problematic aquatic plant on Lake Corpus Christi for a long time with some TPWD reports dating back to the 1950s. Surface area coverage of water hyacinth peaked in 1970, when nearly 7,000 acres were present in the reservoir. In March 2008, TPWD met with the City of Corpus Christi to revisit the need to control this aggressive, exotic species. The result is that the City of Corpus Christi is concerned about the water hyacinth and will begin a treatment plan to control the infestation with the assistance of TPWD.

Water hyacinth is an exotic species from South America, making its way to the United States in the 1880s as a plant for water gardens. Since that time the plant has made its way into numerous reservoirs throughout Texas, causing lots of problems. Water hyacinth flourishes in these new environments because they are far removed from their natural control mechanisms, such as herbivores and harmful micro-organisms. Generally, the water hyacinth will out-compete local native vegetation, becoming the only aquatic plant species in a water body. This can have a negative impact on habitat for structure seeking fish species.

The treatment plan was implemented the first week of April 2008, when TPWD conducted a four-day GPS/GIS survey of the water hyacinth on Lake Corpus Christi to share with the City of Corpus Christi. Data collected during this vegetation survey will be used to estimate the total surface acreage of water hyacinth present. Thus it was very important to survey the entire reservoir and collect the most accurate data

as possible. A little over 97% of the data collected was accurate inside one meter. TPWD forwarded the resulting GPS files to the City of Corpus Christi for the creation of a reservoir wide map using GIS software. This survey was also necessary to assist the City of Corpus Christi and TPWD with creating a logical, cost-effective treatment plan that will maximize water hyacinth control.

While the water hyacinth survey was being conducted, the City of Corpus Christi was in the process of hiring a contractor to begin shredding water hyacinth on the reservoir. Shredding efforts will begin near the Beeville raw water intake on April 28, 2008 and last through the week. Other areas of the lake, such as Buckeye Knoll and Lagarto Creek, are scheduled to be shredded as time permits. **If you own lake-front property in these areas please remove any floating barriers so that the shredding effort can be maximized.**

The primary reason for starting at the Beeville raw water intake is that aquatic herbicides cannot be applied legally within one mile of this intake. Currently, the City of Corpus Christi is exploring all avenues for water hyacinth control, including aquatic herbicides. Only herbicides approved by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Texas Department of Agriculture will be used on the reservoir. These herbicides have been thoroughly tested and are safe for aquatic environments. Herbicide labels as well as restrictions from both the federal

and state governing entities will be followed to ensure the safety of the drinking water supply and environment. The City of Corpus Christi is currently working on acquiring approval for funding this part of the vegetation treatment plan

It is expected to take two to three years for the water hyacinth to be controlled at Lake Corpus Christi. TPWD and the City of Corpus Christi are committed to controlling water hyacinth on Lake Corpus Christi and have begun taking steps to do so. Please help prevent the spread of water hyacinth by cleaning all vegetation from boat trailers before leaving the reservoir. For more information contact:

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