



NEWS

GUADALUPE-BLANCO RIVER AUTHORITY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Tuesday, October 13, 1998
Contact: Judy Gardner, [830] 379-5822

Media Advisory and News Release

WHO: Biologists from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Inland Fisheries Office, Mathis, TX
Representatives from Clean Up Lake Placid (CULP)

WHAT: Stocking of a Lettuce Weevil population into a small area of Lake Placid currently infested with water lettuce, a non-native nuisance aquatic plant.
Opportunities for photos and interviews with TP&WD and CULP representatives.

WHEN: 11 a.m., Wednesday, October 14, 1998

WHERE: Lake Placid, Seguin, TX
Directions: From New Braunfels, take Highway 46 South to Highway 90 (E. Kingsbury Street). Turn Right. Continue across Guadalupe River bridge to blinking light - turn left into Lake Placid Estates.
From San Antonio, take first Seguin Exit off I-H 10 at Highway 90. Continue to second blinking light and turn right at Lake Placid Estates sign.
Stay on Lake Placid Drive to Lakewood Drive. Stocking site is at 2327 Lakewood Drive.

SEGUIN.....Approximately 750 waterlettuce weevils, a small insect that feeds exclusively on the non-native nuisance aquatic plant waterlettuce, will be stocked Wednesday in a section of Lake Placid near Seguin by biologists with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Inland Fisheries Division from Mathis, TX. The stocking project was requested by the Clean Up Lake Placid organization and is being supported by contributions from CULP and the Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority (GBRA).

According to TP&WD project supervisor Mike Reed, waterlettuce weevils or *Neohydronomous affinis*, are an effective, natural, biological approach to the control of waterlettuce. The tiny insect, about the size of a nail head, feeds exclusively on the plant's leaves. Once the plant is gone, the weevil cannot continue its lifecycle.

(more)

Waterlettuce weevils stocked in Lake Placid

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“Waterlettuce weevils are an environmentally-friendly alternative to the use of aquatic herbicides or mechanical means of control for waterlettuce,” said Reed. “Their introduction to a water body requires no use restrictions. TP&WD and the organizations supporting this project are committed to using the least invasive methods, whenever possible, to treat the problem of nuisance aquatic plant overgrowth.”

Waterlettuce is a prohibited exotic plant, native to South America. It resembles small heads of yellow-green lettuce and was first identified in the Guadalupe River in the 1970's. Waterlettuce is susceptible to cold weather and several hard freezes can slow its growth. However, since most Texas winters are relatively mild, it doesn't take long for dense mats of vegetation to form, blocking shoreline access and clogging natural flow channels in rivers and lakes.

Waterlettuce weevils were first released in the United States in 1987 at Lake Okeechobee in Florida. In just two years, the weevils reduced the original 50 acres of waterlettuce to 5 acres.

Locally, a population of 200 weevils was introduced to Lake Dunlap near Seguin in September, 1991 and eliminated nearly all of the waterlettuce overgrowth at that time. An additional 1,400 weevils were stocked in Lake H-4 near Gonzales, in June 1998. According to Reed, it is too early to evaluate their impact but TP&WD biologists will be monitoring their progress. Reed said additional lettuce weevils may be introduced to other portions of Lake Placid in 1999.