

Summary of Public Comments, Responses, and Plan Modifications to the Draft 2008 South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Plan

Lake Murray:

Commenters: Grayson Mathis

Comments:

Why is the state pouring more money into fighting the "weed" problem? Is it because of pleasure boaters and jet skiers who are too lazy to go around the weeds? Why does the DNR constantly comply with whatever these well-to-do people want, rather than focus on what is best for the NATURAL RESOURCES. Look at the state of Georgia, they are not killing off their fisheries by taking out the weeds. Since you have killed the hydrilla in Lake Murray, the fishing is getting worse. Tournament weights are down, considerably. This is a major problem since fishing is a large, large portion of the attractiveness of the Lake Murray region. I just don't understand why the DNR continuously pursues these pork belly projects to make a few people happy. You should be focusing on what your job title is, dealing with natural resources, not destroying them because those with money want.

Response:

The budget for 2008 of \$760,000 is lower than the average cost in the 90's of 1.484 million dollars spent per year. The budget has decreased in part because early detection and proactive management techniques have kept invasive species in check. Municipal water intakes, recreational activities, hunting, fishing and various other water uses are affected by invasive species in South Carolina. The Aquatic Plant Management Program tries to take into account all of the varied uses of our waterways when determining management methods. In all cases an integrated, balanced management approach is used to minimize impact to the habitat of South Carolina waters while aggressively pursuing control of any federally and state listed invasive species.

There is no plan to stock grass carp in 2008 for Lake Murray and only a limited number of acres in the plan for primrose control. A late fall survey showed no appreciable hydrilla, so a dramatic increase in that acreage would have to occur to even consider stocking more carp. The information in the 2008 plan pertaining to triploid grass carp stockings for hydrilla control is part of an early detection, rapid response protocol for long term control of hydrilla in Lake Murray.

The state of Georgia does indeed use and recommend aquatic weed control methods using triploid grass carp in several lakes. Georgia has also recently created the Georgia Exotic Pest Plant Council in response to increasing awareness of non-native invasive species. Hydrilla is listed as one of their most problematic invasive weeds.

Tournament weights were up in the last major tournaments held at Lake Murray. There were four new records set at the February 2006 FLW tour event held on Lake Murray which occurred after the 2003 stocking. Inspection of BASS events from 1991 to 2006 on Lake Murray has shown that the tournament weights appear to have remained fairly constant. In addition, SCDNR Fisheries biologists have stated that Lake Murray was at or above average when looking at the condition factors for largemouth bass, their population numbers were at favorable levels as well and the overall health of the system is good for a large impoundment with other fish species also having healthy populations represented.

Plan Modifications:

None at present.