

APPENDIX G

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

**Summary of Public Comments, Responses, and Plan Modifications to the Draft 2010
South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Plan**

Synopsis of Comments for the Santee Cooper Lakes

As of March 2, 2010 - 675 comments, 69 opposed = about 10%

Opposed:

1. Opposed to all hydrilla control, support management not control
2. Opposed to hydrilla control by grass carp
3. Use mechanical or herbicides
4. Grass carp ate all native vegetation, unacceptable
5. DNR, S-C and APMC is limiting to 10% when 20% is needed, 50% coverage would have no impact on boating, 20-30% on Moultrie and 10% on Marion would be extremely beneficial to economy around the lakes, 30% coverage on Moultrie and 10% on Marion is a great start
6. The current 16-18% coverage figure is inaccurate
7. The plan is not supported with science
8. Needs of fishery are not given adequate weight
9. Not supported by others managing reservoirs, e.g., the Corps of Engineers
10. Resulted in loss of fish and waterfowl habitat, current plan is not working, waterfowlers have seen a severe decline in the numbers of migratory ducks over the last 10-15 years
11. Need to promote selective allowance of native vegetation above I-95, Hatchery, etc.
12. Carp compete directly with waterfowl and other water birds
13. What are the alternatives to grass carp?
14. DNR and S-C should have the responsibility of sustaining and reintroducing natural vegetation to the lakes
15. Suspend carp stocking for one year
16. Opposed on grounds of economic impact, lost fishing license sales, other revenues
17. Carp caused the collapse of the largemouth bass fishery on Lake Murray

Opposed but offered:

1. Complete coverage of our lakes by any submerged aquatic vegetation should be avoided at all costs

Supported:

1. SNWR supports as consistent with refuge goals and objectives, also the Berkeley Chamber, Santee Cooper Striped Bass Coalition, Santee Cooper Country, Orangeburg County Chamber of Commerce, Swamp Fox Boat Club, Santee Cooper, Striped Bass Stakeholders, and SC Aquatic Plant Management Society
2. This effort has focused on maintaining biological balance and diverse recreational opportunities, and the draft plan will allow for these efforts to continue
3. an effort is underway to reintroduce hydrilla to the Santee Cooper lakes, and we fervently object to this proposal
4. Hydrilla put a strangle hold on this lake and the thought of putting hydrilla back into this system is appalling, shocking and sickening
5. Please continue stocking grass carp
6. Please approve the draft plan

7. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the council and DNR in using financial wisdom in order to meet the objectives of invasive species control in light of the current budget constraints on state and federal funds.

Santee Cooper Lakes:

The total number of comments received was 675, of which 606 (90%) supported the plan and 69 (10%) opposed the plan.

A summary of the responses follows and has been divided into two sections, **Opposed** and **Supported**.

Commenters: Anderson, L.; Adams, John; Adcox, Allen; Adcox, Jean; Aldridge, R.; Allen, Joey; Anderson, Chris; Anderson, Rachael; Andrews, P.; Ard, C.; Ardis, R.; Ardis, Ashley; Asbill, K; Austin, M.; Baggett, Kim; Baker, B.; Baker, Letitia; Bakley, Karen; Baldy, Johnny; Ballard, Ronald; Ballard, Linda; Balle, Michelle; Balrick, Trina; Barb, Susan; Barb, Raymond; Barker, E.A.; Barr, Matthew; Barr, Nancy; Baucom, Viola; Baur, Robert; Beard, Betsy; Beckham, Marley; Beckman, Alan; Beckman, Billie; Bell, B.; Bell, Charles; Bell, Maureen; Benbow, Loretta; best, Arthur; Bevacqua, David; Billings, C.; Bilton, J.; Black, Brittany; Blakley, Linda; Blascak, Evelyn; Booke, Jully; Boudreau, Perry; Bowers, Donnie; Bowers, William; Bowick, Patrick; Bowick, Donna; Bozard, Bo; Bradham, C.; Brady, J.; Brasington, Jeretta; Bratton, Ruth; Breitner, Bruce; Brewer, K.; Brixto, Mike; Brogdon, G.; Broughton, Ted; Broughton, Vicki; Brown, Cory; Brown, Frances; Brown, Kenneth; Brown, Joni; Brown, Wanda; Brown, Bernie; Brown, Dwight; Brown, George; Brown, Dianne; Brown, Joni; Brown, Charles; Brown, Franklin; Brown, Judy; Brown, D.; Brunson, D.; Brunswick, Gary; Bruzik, Martin; Bruzik, Sandy; Bryan, Jerry; Bryant, Randy; Burbage, Bill; Burns, L.; Burns, M.; Butler, Michele; Buxton, Nancy; Cagle, Carolyn; Cagle, Jill; Cagle, April; Cagle, Kevin; Cagle, Carl; Cagle, Carolyn; Calloway, Ricky; Calters, Bobby; Camp, Delores; Campbell, K.; Campbell, Thomas; Campbell, Grover; Canttey, Heather; Carl, Joseph; Carman, Kay; Carman, Jason; Carr, Fredrick; Carrio, Pauline; Carroll, Wiley; Carroll, Lynda; Cathern, Chris; Catoe, Wayne; Catoe, Suzette; Caycile, Keith; Chapel, Keith; Chapel, Anetta; Chaplin, K.; Chapman, Virginia; Chapman, RM; Charles, Pamela; Chauver, R.J.; Chilst, Logan; Christian, Mary; Christian, Curtis; Church, Ricky; Churty, Harry; Clelteirs, Del; Coffey, Juanita; Cogdill, Wendy; Coker, Amanda; Colclough, Albert; Coleman, D Orangeburg County Chamber of Commerce; Collins, M.; Compton, Sherry; Condon, A.; Conner, Thomeas; Connor, Deane; Cook, Hermin; Costa, Joe; Costa, Gloria; Coto, Robert; Coto, Diane; Coulter, M.; Creel, R.S; Cregan, Daniel; Cross, Charles; Cunningham, Ronald; Cunningham, Kent; Curran, Charmie; Dailey, K.; Dalton, G.; Dalton, Robbie; Danner, Jason; Davis, B.; Davis, H.; Davis, I.; Davis, Jeremy; Davis, Edward; Davis, Elizabeth; Dayle, Leroy; Dean, Brooke; Dehreus, WJ; DeKalb, Robert; Demars, R.; Denit, Clifford; Denning, Margie; Dennis, Ruthie; Dennis, Bobby; Dennis, Margie; Dennis, Jamie; Derr, Barbara; DeWitt, Corrilie; Dixon, D.; Dolgas, Sandra; Dolgas, Richard; Dorman, Pamela; Dow, Jerry; Downs, Barry; Drastura, Lilian; Duckworth, Bitsy; Dugan, Christina; Duncan, Sandy; Duncan, Ronnie; Durant, John; Edwards, Blake; Edwards, Jerry; Edwards, Brenda; Edwards, Trent; Edwards, James; Elerts, Steven; Enzor, Martha; Epstein, M. USFWS; Erthley, Frank; Espey, J.; Evan, William; Evans, Carl; Evans, Jonda; Ewen, William; Ezor, Kathy; Failmezzar, Suzanne; Feagers, Feller, L. SC Aquatic Plant Management Society; James; Fincannon, Stephanie; Fletcher, Robert; Fletcher, Julia; Flowers, RL; Floyd, Earl; Floyd, Tonya; Folkers, Harriette; Formler, Nathan; Foster, Wesley; Foxe, Barbara;

Foxworth, Keith; Francis, Barbara; Fraraccio, Robert; Frye, M.; Furse, Judy; Gainey, Frances; Gainey, Harvey; Gainey, Wayne; Gainey, Brenda; Gainey, Keith; Gannon, Kelly; Garlen, Bert; Geddings, Billy; Gerald, Roger; Gibson, Nancy; Gilkers, John; Gleaton, Eddie; Gleaton, Debra; Gleaton, Meloyne; Gleaton, Debra; Gleaton, E.V.; Gleaton, Debra; Glenn, J.; Glenn, Danny; Glenn, Mary; Godfrey, J; Godfrey, Cathy; Goebel, James; Goldsbury, Ralph; Goodman, Al; Goodson, William; Gragan, D.; Gragan, Susan; Grate, Francis; Green, J.; Greenwell, Allen; Gregg, Richard; Gregory, W.T; Groch, D.; Haley, Peggy; Haley, Randi; Ham, Jerry; Hanna, Dale; Hanna, Debbie; Hanna, David; Hanna, Debra; Hanna, Paul; Harkins, James; Harlin, C.; Harmon, F.; Harper, Andy; Harper, Sandy; Harrelson, Alice; Harrington, Walter; Harris, A.; Harris, J.; Harrison, Dolores; Harvin, Thomas; Haselden, M.; Hatte, Charlie; Hawlig, Fran; Hawthorne, D.A.; Hayes, Bobby; Hayes, Beth; Hayes, G.G.; Hayes, Melanie; Hayes, Chrystal; Hayes, Ladd; Haynacki, Judy; Hearn, G.; Heeton, Jeffery; Helton, Sherri; Herbert, Eddie; Herley, Sylvia; Higgins, J.; Hinds, John; Hinds, Winston; Hinds, Marlene; Hobbes, Myrtle; Hobbs, Kim; Hobbs, Rodney; Hodge, W.; Hodge, Brian; Hodge, Martha; Holaber, Katie; Holcombe, Jeremy; Holden, David; Holden, Phyllis; Holliday, William; Holt, Bob; Hooker, Robert; Hooks, C.; Hopkins, Ray; Horne, Cathrine; Horton, Brock; Howe, Sue; Hubbard, Mike; Hubbard, Carolyn; Huff, Shirley; Huff, Jeffery; Huff, Angie; Huff, Courtney; Hughes, Dianne; Hulony, Don; Hunsucker, Dot; Hunsucker, Ed; Hurst, Pat; Huston, Joseph; Huttner, G.; Hutto, Ray; Hutto, Bobbie; Ibert, J.; Jackson, R.; James, Matthew; Janic, Mike; Jarvis, Dwight; Jenkins, James; Johnson, W.; Johnson, Gloria; Johnson, Mitchell; Johnston, T.; Jones, C.; Jones, P.; Jones, Harvey; Joyl, Chan; Just, Amy; Just, William; Just, Pam; Justice, Jack; Keefe, Joni; Kelley, Ann; Kelley, Hoyt; Kelley, Stephanie; Kelley, Ann; Kelley, Alfred; Kelley, Alfred; Kennedy, Susan; Kennedy, Neal; Kennedy, Von; Kimbrell, Tripp; Kindle, Juanita; Kinman, Angela; Kinsler, Emily; Koranloo, Kamran; Krout, Alfred; Lane, Linda; Langston, Iris; Langston, David; Laslo, SJ; Lee, D.; Lee, Marie; Lee, Kathy; Lee, Neil; Lelroy, Leonard; Lemorie, Catherine; Lesemann, John; Lesemann, Linda; Lewis, Joy; Lewis, Stephen; Lewis, J.; Lewis, TR; Lewis, Thomas; Lewis, Karen; Littell, L.; Little, Robert; Lockett, Mary; Locklair, K.; Locklear, I.; Locklear, J.; Logan, Teresa; Londeree, Joe; Londeree, Jean; Lookabill, Ray; Lorthun, Phillip; Love, Bob; Love, Joy; Lowe, P.; Luis, Timothy; Luosrue, Danny; Lykes, Jamie; Lyons, Robert; Magnus, Ryan; Mahoney, Joe; Main, R.; Main, D.; Maletz, William; Martin, B.; Martin, Christine; Martin, Arthur; Mathis, John; Mathis, Matt; Maynard, Gail; Maynard, Rex; McCarthy, John; McCarthy, Betty; McCrary, C.; McCratchen, Craddack; McDonnough, Bob; McDuffie, Scott; McElveen, Robert; McElveen, Brenda; McElveen, Lauri; McElveen, Barber; McElveen, Mike; McElveen, Frankie; McElveene, Luis; McPherarr, Melville; McWatty, S.; Mercer, Wanda; Miles, Julie; Miles, DJ; Miles, Alene; Miles, Iven; Miller, JenniferJo; Miller, Hugh; Miller, Christina; Milley, Jennifer; Mims, Wendell; Mints, Lisa; Mintz, Dan; Mirmow, N.; Mitchell, B.; Moody, E.; Moody, Fred; Moore, Jody; Morford, Charles; Morford, Betty; Morgan, E.; Morris, L.; Morris, Dale; Morris, K.O.; Morris, Barbara; Morrison, K.; Moye, Joyce; Mozdehi, Louise; Mozhdehi, Bruce; Murley, Karen; Murphy, W.; Nadeau, Doris; Nadeau, Henry; Nalley, R.; Nethermann, Jodie; Newman, Claude; Newman, Faye; Newman, Kevin; Norris, Edward; Norris, Francis; Norris, Tony; O'Neal, Doris; O'Neal, G; Obertacz, Carolyn; Odicher, E.; Odom, William; Odom, Marian; Odom, Larry; Odom, Alice; Orders, J.; Osborne, Nikki; Osborne, David; Oseman, A.; Outin, Michael; Outin, Pamela; Owens, Bobby; Paccadori, B.; Pace, J.; Pallodimo, Michael; Pappas, Chris; Parker, Kelly; Parker, Bret; Parker, William; Perkins, Lynn; Peyton, Sarah; Peyton, Donny; Phelps, PD; Phillips, T.; Plowden, Judy; Polk, Timothy; Poucee, Sandra; Powell,

Annelle; Powell, Nelson; Powers, Ronny; Preston, M.E.; Prevatte, Harry; Price, Ronnie; Price, Robert; Price, Larry; Prichard, Pete; Printzrow, Jay; Pritchard, Betty; Prote, Vicki; Ptolemy, Dianne; Puin, Xavier; Quinn, Hazel; Rauber, Linda; Ray, James; Ray, Margaret; Ray, Chris; Raybits, Pat; Raybits, Stan; Reaves, Jim; Reed, Leigh; Reese, Jeannette; Reeves, Darlene; Regan, J.; Reidy, Taylor; Reynolds, R.; Richard, Celia; Richardson, B.; Richburg, Terry; Richmond, Will; Rikalts, Robby; Riley, E. Santee Cooper Striped Bass Coalition; Rimer, Mindy; Rimer, Ricky; Robinson, W.; Robinson, Libby; Robinson, Becky; Robinson, Joyce; Robinson, Paul; Robinson, Elijah; Robinson, Joe; Robinson, Raine; Rodgers, Harry; Rodgers, Michele; Rodgers, Jerry; Rodgers, Luanne; Rogers, John; Rolle, Jon; Ross, Bill; Rosser, C.; Rosul, L.B.; Rourke, Donna; Rouse, Terra; Royue, Jesse; Rudman, Ronald; Runyah, Marc; Samuels, Dona; Sarrio, Charles; Sauyir, Danny; Sayers, Danny; Schmag, Edward; Schmitty, Mike; Schrader, Harry; Schroeder, James; Schulman, Wendi; Schulz, Dina; Sebock, Joanne; Sebock, Randall; Sein, Parris; Seoulnil, B.; Sheek, Robin; Sherma, John; Shriner, M. Santee Cooper Country; Shriner, William; Shuhan, Michael; Shumahe, Christi; Shumahe, John; Sigman, L.; Silver, T.; Simons, T.; Simpson, Grey; Singelton, Alice; Singletary, Mic; Singletary, R. Santee Cooper; Smith, Faye; Smith, Susan; Smith, Joseph; Smultz, Kimberly; Sommers, Pamela; Stackhouse, Dan; Stagg, Julia; Stanbelv, Gus; Steele, Chip; Stickle, V.; Stone, A.; Stoughton, R.; Stours, Debra; Stutts, Kristen; Suis, Susan; Sullivan, Brent; Summersett, Jerry; Summersett, Carla; Summersett, Carson; Summersett, Hunter; Sunderman, Edward; Sweat, Joel; Swetham, J.; Talley, Marla; Tapley, HL; Tapley, Catherine; Terry, Jay; Thames, Jefferey; Thigpen, Cheryl; Thomas, S.; Thompson, A.; Thompson, R.; Thompson, S.; Thompson, T.; Thompson, Marilyn; Thots, Bernie; Thysine, Dwayne; Tiller, S.; Timdall, Angela; Timmerberg, T.; Tomlinson, Jeromy; Toporek, Matt; Truesdale, Harold; Tucker, J.R.; Turner, Clyde; Valdaliso, Darren; Vallieres, Juan; Vanderbard, Ross; Vandyke, C.; Varn, R.; Varn, Gerald; Varn, Paula; VonLinsome, Richard; VonLinsovch, Richard; Wagner, N.; Wagner, B.; Walker, Robert; Walker, Norvelle; Walker, Nelson; Walters, S.; Ward, Kathy; Warren, Linda; Warren, Harvey; Warren, Harvey; Warren, Linda; Watson, P.; Watson, Leroy; White, Hallett; Williams, J.; Williams, L.; Wilson, W.; Wilson, James; Wilson, James; Wilson, Andy; Wilson, Jon; Wing, Robin; Wise, Bridget; Wolter, Elizabeth; Worsham, Marion; Worsham, Freda; Wright, Jimmie; Wright, P.; Wyndam, Shirley; Yaeger, Michael; Yaeger, Mary; Yailyer, Robbie; Young, Henry; Young, Margaret; Young, Francis; Young, Michael

Comments:

Opposed:

As a member of Santee Bass Matters, a group of over 40 members and growing rapidly, we are most defiantly against any more stocking of grass carp for the control of these plants. Our data and research has revealed that even the Corp of Army Engineers do not endorse the use of grass carp as a means of grass control. They prefer herbicide and mechanical when possible. Their reasoning is that grass carp is an uncontrollable means that is potentially devastating to natural vegetation after the targeted hydrilla is eradicated. In their efforts of control of hydrilla for the Lake Seminole, they stated that % vegetation should be at least 20%. Why then is DNR trying to control to 10%, when all data we have accumulated states that a minimum of 20% is needed. Our contention is that after the hydrilla was gone, the remaining grass carp devastated the remaining natural vegetation to the point it was impossible to sustain fish reproduction as needed. We contend the lake has never come close to recovering. This lack of recovery and the inability to catch fish has severely cost our local economies many millions of dollars.

We have lost over 50% out of state license sales in the past 5 years alone. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out how much this has affected our local economy. (Avin, J. Santee Bass Matters)

Santee has gone from a fish and duck haven to a grass carp, cormorant, and catfish haven, thanks to DNR and your supposedly diploid grass carp. (Green, J).

Surely there is a way to allow some beneficial vegetation in areas above the 95 bridge, Ferguson and Rocks Pond flats, the Hatchery, and other areas too shallow or stumpy for water skiing and pontoon playing. (Green, J).

No more grass carp in Santee Cooper and Lake Murray please. (Green, J).

The eradication of all vegetation that we witnessed in the late 90's -2007 is unacceptable to our environment. This was a huge natural resource blunder that take Santee Cooper many years from which it can recover. Complete coverage of our lakes by any submerged aquatic vegetation should be avoided at all costs. Even 7 grass carp/submersed vegetated acre resulted in the complete elimination of submersed and emergent vegetation, creating an underwater desert like we witnessed on Santee Cooper lakes system. Proceed with caution so we avoid, at all costs, another colossal Natural Resource error that we experienced over the past decade by creating an underwater desert again. I noticed this year that the management plan indicates that goal for hydrilla is to "Manage hydrilla growth in the main lake and sub impoundments to minimize its spread within the lake, which is different from prior years. (Williams, J.)

Please help weeds come back to the lakes. Manage them in a controllable way, not uncontrollable carp. Please think about the sportsmen that try to fish and hunt the public waterways also. (Collins, M.)

I am opposed any additional releases of grass carp into Lakes Marion and Moultrie. The introduction of sterile, triploid, grass carp into these lakes in the mid-1990's not only removed the problematic hydrilla, it devastated many native aquatic plants species as well. Grass carp, of course, only control plant species of the highest food value thereby competing directly with waterfowl and other native water birds. I support only the selective spraying and/or harvesting of non-native and invasive species along with the planting and cultivation of plant species that are either native to the system or beneficial as food or habitat for wildlife and fisheries.(Davis, H.; Orders, J.; Bradham, C.; Thomas, S.; McWatty, S.)

They are in dire need of substantial aquatic vegetation.

It has come to my attention that most of these concerned citizens feel that the SCDNR, The APMC, and Santee Cooper Electric Cooperative have no desire to increase the amount of aquatic vegetation on these reservoirs.

So, why is that only 10% of the total system is allowed to host aquatic vegetation, when nearly 50% coverage could be maintained with no effect on recreational boaters(a minority on the Santee Cooper lakes) and hydro power functioning? It states that hydrilla will be managed on the lakes and sub impoundments to control the spreading throughout the whole lake system.

I was happy to see this, versus Mr. Delokosloski's plan of total eradication. (McCrary, C.)

I have seen a continued decline in the lake as a world class fishery and duck hunting hot spot. I would however like to ask that we try to manage aquatic grass rather than eliminate it. (Bilton, J.)

Please allow the use of controlled hydrilla or something to bring our birds back. (Harlin, C.)

So Chris if you could help us as SC residents keep the grass on the lake and send me a little info on the things being done for the lake that would be appreciated. (Stoughton, R.)

I have a great deal of concern for the lack of habitat for fingerling fish and the lack of a food source for migratory waterfowl. The supporting, funding, and release of nuisance fish and/or use of chemicals being applied to public waters for the sole purpose of aquatic vegetation destruction (i.e. destruction of waterfowl food source and fingerling fish habitat) must be stopped. **I would like to hear what alternatives there are instead of total habitat destruction?**(Nalley, R.; Hooks, C.)

As a sportsman I find the policies of eradication rather than management concerning. Please consider reducing the number and frequency of stocking nonnative "sterilized" grass carp and other methods used to eradicate aquatic veg. (Condon, A.)

I see a direct correlation with this decline to the massive eradication of invasive weeds that took place in the late nineties. **The current weed control plan is not working** where the fish and waterfowl are concerned. (Johnston, T)

Just another quick note to express my concerns about the lack of vegetation on the santee-cooper lakes. I would like to see more aquatic vegetation that will help. (Asbill, K.)

Please take into consideration the impact on food sources for migratory waterfowl, and the habitat for fingerling fish. **Waterfowlers have seen a severe decline in the numbers of migratory ducks over the last 10-15 years.** And the quality of fishing is declining as well. (Little, T.)

I sincerely hope you will rigidly confine eradication of primrose, water willow, fragrant water lily and the others and even hydrilla to some extent to the areas stated in the plan. Many of us appreciate the fact that the expansion of hydrilla became a significant problem. We are not insensitive to the need for control. A concern is that there will be collateral elimination of habitat in the course of controlling hydrilla to the extent it appears is the plan. Both chemical and biological control will likely continue to result in indiscriminate loss of desirable habitat. More recently we've experienced the loss of vegetation that clearly contributed in making Santee Cooper a major destination for anglers pursuing a variety of fish species. An alternative and very popular approach could be to genuinely manage vegetation with fisheries interests in mind.(Glenn, J.)

I feel as if we (hunters and fisherman) are the only people that don't have a voice in how the aquatic nuisance program should be enforced on the lakes. There is no doubt that anyone who has fished or hunted on the lakes in the past has seen what once was a great thriving lake system, be turned into a dead lake system void of ANY type of useful vegetation. I also think that **DNR and Santee Cooper should and does, have the responsibility of sustaining and reintroducing natural vegetation to the overall Health of these Lake systems.** (Coulter, M.)

Why mess w/something NATURAL that works!!! Bring the grass back!!! (Jackson, R.)

This email is sent in opposition to overmanagement of aquatics in our waterways. (Haselden, M.)

I am deeply concerned about the continued introduction of grass carp and herbicides in the lakes to control weeds, as both are non-selective they not only destroy non-native strains but also all beneficial aquatic vegetation used by waterfowl and fish. The lakes used to be a waterfowl mecca...now they are a desert. There has to be a way to compromise to allow the growth of native vegetation beneficial to waterfowl and fish and re-introduction of beneficial aquatics, button brush, etc. to help encourage waterfowl to return to the lakes, benefitting not only waterfowl and fisheries, but also the economy around the lakes. (Campbell, K.)

Santee Cooper MUST realize it is a state agency to serve the people of SC and realize that is a lot more than the production of power and their wallets. (Watson, P.)

I AM SENDING YOU AN EMAIL IN REFERENCE TO SANTEE COOPER AND OTHERS TRYING TO ERADICATE ALL THE AQUATIC VEGETATION FROM LAKE MARION. I BELIEVE THAT THE PEOPLE THAT ARE COMING UP WITH THESE GENIUS IDEAS KNOW NOTHING ABOUT WHAT AQUATIC VEGETATION MEANS TO A BODY OF WATER. THERE ARE A LOT OF BENEFITS THAT COME FROM THE VEGETATION THAT "WAS" IN THE LAKE. (Phillips, T.)

I'm writing this letter because I feel that the way of dealing with invasive weeds and/or vegetation in Lakes Marion and Moultrie is not working. In times where our DNR budget is already strained. Why not look at other means of managing the vegetation in these lakes and others? The carp that have been put into the lake have destroyed almost all of the native and invasive vegetation in the lakes. I would like to see some kind of compromise. (Reynolds, R.; Higgins, J.)

I don't believe many want to see the 80-90% coverage we had in the early 90's, but 20-30% on Moultrie and 10% on Marion would be extremely beneficial to economy around the lakes. Certainly, the natives have started to make a comeback, and that is good, but we can not make the mistakes of the past with the overstocking of sterile grass carp and over spraying, and other control methods. (Oseman, A.; Tiller, S.; Lee, D.; Williams, J.)

Please allow the aquatic vegetation to once again grow in the Santee Cooper lakes. (Martin, B.)

Native vegetation, along with Hydrilla provided an extremely productive habitat for all species of fish, as well as creating a major food source for migratory waterfowl that wintered in SC. These fish, along with spraying chemicals to aid in killing Hydrilla, literally wiped out all of it, including native vegetation. The quality of habitat took a major hit, and our once nationally renowned fishery wasted away. (Regan, J.)

I would like to see the natural habitat allowed to come back to our lakes so we can again see waterfowl using our lakes again. (Ard, C.)

Sir, I do not know all about the good nor bad types of weeds (grass) that Santee Cooper Co-Op. wants to prevent from being in the lakes, but I do think there is some kind of middle ground that can be reached. (Brogdon, G.)

I have kept abreast of recent reports regarding the current amount of vegetation on both lakes Marion and Moultrie (listed as 16-18K acres). I feel that these numbers are completely inaccurate and do more damage than the actual vegetation itself. I believe that there is far less of this habitat and it has had a direct economic affect on our great state. I urge you to please verify these numbers

and furthermore to take into consideration the fisheries and wildlife habitat that these vegetations provide. (Stone, A.)

True, excessive coverage of the lakes is unacceptable, but "total eradication" as the stated DNR goal per my inquiries is equally unacceptable. **30% coverage on Moultrie and 10% on Marion is a great start** and would vastly increase the recreational dollars generated by these lakes. (Dalton, G.)

Since the habitat has been destroyed at Potato Creek, along with the rest of the lake, we have lost more than a place to hunt. I hope DNR along with Santee Cooper can take this into consideration when deciding where to kill habitat in the future. (Dixon, D.)

What concerns me is the lack of habitat for the new fry and fingerlings brought to the lake and born into the lake each year. I know it is a long shot, but I would like to see some of the aquatic vegetation put back into the lake. (Murphy, W.)

I along with many others are very concerned with the habitat situation on the Santee Cooper lakes. There is little to no food source in the lake for migratory waterfowl and very very little food on the refuge for waterfowl. (Brewer, K.)

I ask that the release of carp be suspended for one year. (Lowe, P.)

I sent a message last night & also ment to mention also that if any spraying is to be done on any lakes including the Santee Cooper Lakes, it should not start until early June, let the fish finish their spawn & have a little time to move from the shallows to other cover. This might give the fry a better chance to survive. (Davis, I.)

Please get some aquatic vegetation back into our state lakes. **The effort to eliminate hydrilla kills fishing for all kinds of fish. Loss of tourist dollars and in state fishing licenses is huge.** The impact on the state economy is huge when all the fish are killed by the current policy of complete eliminate of aquatic vegetation. Some hydrilla in the water is money in the bank for a state that needs help. (Harmon, F.)

The fishing & hunting have both decreased due to the lack of good habitat, but I do understand the power generation side and how the grass is a potential problem. There has to be a good balance of the two. Our local economy depends on a healthy lake system. As a result the big fishing tournaments are leaving and our tourism is suffering. This is a fact. (Baker, B.)

I strongly believe that our lakes have been severely harmed by the extent of eradication of hydrilla and the introduction of grass carp. The grass carp are destroying all grasses not just controlling them. I strongly urge the adoption of a plan to control both the carp and the hydrilla. I'm told that the goal of many is total eradication.

The Management Plan does not require a documented review of the impact of desirable fish populations following aquatic plant eradication in the large state reservoirs. The plan simply reviews reduction of the targeted aquatic plants and not what subsequently happens to desirable fish populations.

The aquatic plant eradication at Lake Murray has been overly effective and caused an unwanted collapsed of the large mouth bass population for Lake Murray. (Timmerberg, T.)

I am a concerned outdoorsman who writes in opposition to the 2010 Draft S.C. Aquatic Plant Management Plan, particularly as it applies to Lake Marion and Moultrie. I support the position taken by Santee Bass Matters, a rapidly growing group of fishery advocates on the Santee Cooper lakes.

First, I am concerned that the needs and importance of the Santee Cooper fishery are not given adequate weight in this plan.

In the past 5 years alone we have lost 50% of our out-of-state license sales, which has had a devastating effect on marinas, motels, restaurants, tackle shops, gas stations, guide services, grocery stores, real estate companies, local boat and motor repair shops, live bait providers, convenience stores and multitudes of other local businesses. Tens of millions of dollars are lost each year.

Second, I am adamantly opposed to the use of grass carp to control aquatic vegetation on Santee Cooper. They have nearly destroyed the Santee fishery once, and as the Army Corps of Engineers states they are uncontrollable and will not stop at eating hydrilla – they also consume native vegetation. Herbicide and/or mechanical treatment should be used where necessary.

Third, 10% vegetated acreage is not enough, and the Corps has stated that 20% is ideal.

Finally, I support control of hydrilla, not eradication of hydrilla. I am not opposed to complete control in high traffic areas such as housing, boat ramps, marinas and campgrounds, but outlying areas should be the focus of a controlled return. This should be undertaken with herbicides and/or mechanical control, instead of grass carp. (Demars, R.; Hearn, G.; Silver, T.; Morrison, K.; Anderson, L.; Mirmow, N.; Austin, M.; Morris, L.; Bradham, C.; Wagner, B.; Frye, M.; McWatty, S.; Ardis, R.; Groch, D.; Davis, B.; Billings, C.; Mitchell, B.; Williams, J.; Hodge, W.; Davis, I.; Locklear, J.; Locklear, I.; Moody, E.; Richardson, B.; Bell, B.; Avin, J. Santee Bass Matters)

Supported:

The Santee National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) would like to express support for the 2010 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 SanteeNWR. The Service supports: 1) the control of exotic invasive species, 2) enhancement of native plants for the benefit of our natural resources, and 3) the stated management objectives and techniques for invasive species prevention, detection and treatment leading to control and enhancement of fish and wildlife habitats. (Epstein, M. USFWS)

The Berkeley Chamber supports the S.C. Aquatic Plant Management Plan. We feel that to have the balance in the lakes that we need to maintain the aquatic vegetation. The Santee Cooper lakes are an economic engine for our region and one with great potential for future development. We appreciate DNR and Santee Cooper's commitment in keeping our lakes healthy. (Morgan, E.)

The Santee Cooper Striped Bass Coalition wishes to voice its support of the 2010 South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Plan. The controlled stocking of Sterile Grass Carp has been the primary resource of managing the Hydrilla and allowing native aquatic vegetation to flourish which is Santee Cooper's and SCDNR's main objective. Our group will continue to support the 2010 SC Aquatic Plant Management Plan as long as the efforts are intended to control the Hydrilla while enhancing native aquatic plant populations. We strongly feel that it is an important factor that we

place our trust with the professionals at Santee Cooper. the SCDNR and other associated agencies which are the most qualified in making the responsible decisions based from decades of data collection.(Riley, E. Santee Cooper Striped Bass Coalition)

That being said we want to thank DNR and Santee Cooper for the excellent job they have done in the past to control the non-native plants that exist in our lake system so we can accomplish our goals. We remember all too well the negative impact hydrilla had on our lakeside businesses, homes, boating and fishing and the huge negative impact it had on tourism in our region. The vegetation was so thick that many areas of the lakes were inaccessible. Marina operators worried that they may go out of business due to the lack of fishermen coming to their properties and lakefront homeowners worried about how this infestation would affect their property value. This commission is committed to supporting all efforts that prevent this from ever happening again and backs DNR's the proposed 2010 plant management plan for the Santee Cooper lakes system.(Shriner, M. Santee Cooper Country)

The South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Plan is a reasonable proposal to control non-native, invasive plants from detracting from the recreational uses of Santee Cooper Lakes. Good fishing, boating, skiing, and swimming conditions are important features in maintaining a desirability quality of life in area around the lakes. In closing, the Orangeburg County Chamber of Commerce believes that the South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Plan is a responsible approach to protect the ecological and recreational character of the Santee Lakes.(Coleman, D Orangeburg County Chamber of Commerce)

Santee Cooper wishes to voice its support of the 2010 South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Plan. In particular, we strongly support that portion of the plan concerning higher maintenance stocking rates of sterile grass carp to control increasing growths of the submersed noxious plant hydrilla. Detrimental impacts included degradation of water quality and associated large-scale fish kills, displacement of desirable native aquatic plant species, interference with boating, swimming, fishing and other recreational activities, disruption of hydroelectric power generation and suppression of local area economies. Santee Cooper, along with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources and the United States Army Corps of Engineers, expended some \$20 million to bring this plant under control, something that did not happen until the lakes were stocked with sterile Chinese Grass Carp, under a plan approved by the Aquatic Plant Management Council. Today, despite recent grass carp maintenance stocking efforts, our staff is observing a rapid increase in the level of hydrilla in the lakes. This increased infestation is already having a negative impact on the growths of native vegetation that have become established throughout the system.(Singletary, R. Santee Cooper)

My concerns are the concerns of many homeowners on Lake Marion. I have been living here (Taw Caw Subdivision) for twelve years. I was here when hydrilla put a strangle hold on this lake and I am appalled, shocked and sickened by the thought of putting hydrilla back into this Lake.(Hinds, W.)

We, the Swamp Fox Boat Club, voted unanimously Monday night February, 22, 2010 to support the 2010 C Aquatic Plant Management Plan which was developed by the SC Aquatic Plant Management Council and SCDNR. Santee Cooper and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources have worked together in the past to rid the lakes of this terrible invasive weed. We do not want to see this again. The lakes were famous for all kinds of fishing before hydrilla and with native plants restored the lakes can again be a drawing card for fishermen and all other persons who want to engage in various kinds of recreation on our beautiful lakes.(Godfrey, S.)

Please do not stop this control of the weeds. (Simons, T.)

I am writing this letter to voice my support of the work you are doing for us to eradicate the weed problems threatening to choke the Santee Lakes. In 2006, after the hydrilla, Preston Clark broke the all time record by more than seven (7) pounds on his first visit to the Santee Lakes. I crappie and cat fish and I was recently asked by a fellow guide if I didn't catch more fish when we had the hydrilla The answer was a firm, "no." I support all efforts that prevent the hydrilla from returning to the lake, ruining it for all but a few. (Cagle, C.)

We have learned from several sources that an effort is underway to reintroduce Hydrilla to the Santee Cooper lakes, and fervently object to this proposal. There are enough problems encountered with other invasive plants and animals.

I understand that Santee Cooper and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources have been hard at work to deal with this invasive species. We support this effort. (Gragan, D.)

I write on behalf of the Santee Cooper Striped Bass Stakeholders. The stakeholders have reviewed the Draft 2010 Aquatic Plant Management Plan and have asked me to express their unequivocal support. (Espey, J.)

We approve of your Aquatic Nuisance Species Program to keep the lake as clean as possible. (Andrews, P.)

My family is in complete and total agreement for SCDNR to suppress the growth of hydrilla in the Santee Cooper Lakes. (Locklair, K.)

We STRONGLY disagree with the initiative of SANTEE BASS MATTERS to reintroduce hydrilla to Lake Marion/Santee Please know that property owners on Lake Marion want the lake to stay clean and free of invasive weeds - especially hydrilla. (Thompson, S.; Thompson, T.; Thompson, A.; Thompson, R.)

Hydrilla may provide cover for bass but if you can't get your boat in the water what good is it. I strongly oppose any attempt to block the control of aquatic nuisances in the lake. (Rosser, C.)

I have read and would like to indorse the SCDNR plan to control aquatic plants in SC and in particular the Santee Cooper Lakes. (Littell, L.)

WE SUPPORT THE 2010 MANAGEMENT PLAN TO CONTROL INVASIVE WEEDS. (Harris, J.; Harris, A.; Wilson, W.; Chaplin, K.; Huttner, G.; Williams, L.)

please continue to spray for the reduction of hydrilla weed. I just want to make it known that I am in favor of spraying for aquatic weed. (Brady, J.; Varn, R.)

I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the council and DNR in using financial wisdom in order to meet the objectives of invasive species control in light of the current budget constraints on state and federal funds. As a South Carolina tax payer and the current President of South Carolina Plant Management Society, I support the plan as written. I would encourage you not to succumb to the pressures of this or any group who would try to destroy efforts to keep the waters of South Carolina fully functional. Allowing the re-introduction or spread of hydrilla or any other invasive species is

not only illegal, but doing so to satisfy the desires of a few would be fiscally irresponsible for the whole.

In the plan, I noticed you have Floating Heart (*Nymphoides* spp.) listed as a target plant. Like hydrilla, it will become a problem if not controlled. (Feller, L. SC Aquatic Plant Management Society)

PLEASE CONTINUE YOUR EFFORTS TO KEEP HYDRILLA OUT OF LAKE MARION. IT IS IMPERATIVE TO THE FUTURE OF OUR LAKE, OUR LAKE AREA BUSINESSES & OUR LAKE PROPERTY VALUES. (Vandyke, C.; Stickle, V.)

I strongly support that portion of the plan to increase the use of Chinese Grass Carp to control the increasing growths of the non-native aquatic plant hydrilla in the Santee Cooper lakes. In the late 1980's through late through the late 1990's, hydrilla covered approximately 25% of Lake Moultrie and Lake Marion. This is something that must not be allowed to happen again. Experience has also clearly shown us that the only way to control hydrilla in these lakes is through the use of grass carp. By using low stocking rates which have been shown to be effective in controlling the regrowth of the plant, we can avoid stocking massive numbers of the fish to once again bring the plant under control. (Wagner, N.)

I would like to state my support for the 2010 SC Aquatic Plant Management Plan developed by the SC Aquatic Plant Management Council and SCDNR. (Adcox, Allen; Adcox, Jean; Anderson, Rachael; Ardis, Ashley; Ballard, Ronald; Ballard, Linda; Bell, Maureen; Booke, Jolly; Bowick, Patrick; Bowick, Donna; Bozard, Bo; Brown, George; Brown, Dianne; Brown, Joni; Brown, Charles; Brown, Franklin; Brown, Judy; Butler, Michele; Cagle, Carl; Cagle, Carolyn; Carr, Fredrick; Catoe, Wayne; Catoe, Suzette; Chapman, Virginia; Chapman, RM; Christian, Mary; Christian, Curtis; Compton, Sherry; Conner, Thomeas; Connor, Deane; Cregan, Daniel; Curran, Charmie; Dailey, K.; Davis, Edward; Davis, Elizabeth; Dean, Brooke; Dehreus, WJ; Derr, Barbara; Downs, Barry; Durant, John; Edwards, James; Fletcher, Robert; Fletcher, Julia; Francis, Barbara; Furse, Judy; Gainey, Frances; Gainey, Harvey; Gainey, Wayne; Gainey, Brenda; Gainey, Keith; Gannon, Kelly; Geddings, Billy; Gleaton, Debra; Gleaton, E.V.; Godfrey, Cathy; Goodman, Al; Goodson, William; Gragan, Susan; Haley, Peggy; Haley, Randi; Hanna, Paul; Hatte, Charlie; Herbert, Eddie; Hodge, Brian; Hodge, Martha; Horne, Cathrine; Horton, Brock; Howe, Sue; Hubbard, Mike; Hubbard, Carolyn; Huff, Jeffery; Huff, Angie; Huff, Courtney; Hurst, Pat; Jenkins, James; Kelley, Hoyt; Kelley, Stephanie; Kelley, Ann; Kelley, Alfred; Kennedy, Von; Kimbrell, Tripp; Kinsler, Emily; Lane, Linda; Lemorie, Catherine; Lewis, Karen; Lockett, Mary; Logan, Teresa; Lookabill, Ray; Love, Bob; Love, Joy; Martin, Arthur; Maynard, Gail; Maynard, Rex; McCratchen, Craddack; McDonnough, Bob; Miles, Julie; Miles, DJ; Miles, Alene; Miles, Iven; Miller, Jennifer; Miller, Hugh; Miller, Christina; Mims, Wendell; Mints, Lisa; Mintz, Dan; Newman, Kevin; O'Neal, Doris; O'Neal, G; Odom, Larry; Odom, Alice; Osborne, Nikki; Osborne, David; Paccadori, B.; Pappas, Chris; Phelps, PD; Price, Larry; Prichard, Pete; Printzrow, Jay; Pritchard, Betty; Ptolemy, Dianne; Rauber, Linda; Reese, Jeannette; Reidy, Taylor; Richard, Celia; Richmond, Will; Rimer, Mindy; Rimer, Ricky; Rodgers, Jerry; Rodgers, Luanne; Rourke, Donna; Runyah, Marc; Schmitt, Mike; Sheek, Robin; Shriner, Mary; Shriner, William; Shuhan, Michael; Simpson, Grey; Singleton, Alice; Singletary, Mic; Smith, Susan; Smith, Joseph; Stackhouse, Dan; Steele, Chip; Stutts, Kristen; Sunderman, Edward; Sweat, Joel; Tapley, HL; Tapley, Catherine; Thames, , Jefferey; Thompson, Marilyn; Toporek, Matt; Vallieres, Juan; VanderBard, Ross; VonLinsome, Richard; Walker,

Nelson; Warren, Harvey; Warren, Linda; Wilson, Jon; Wing, Robin; Wolter, Elizabeth; Wyndam, Shirley)

Aquatic plant management on the Santee Cooper lake system, as well as other public waters of the state, is carried out under the oversight of the SC Department of Natural Resources - Aquatic Nuisance Species Program. Federal, State, and local aquatic plant management professionals have worked together over the past three decades to remove this harmful, invasive plant from the Santee Cooper system, as well as from other lakes and reservoirs that have become infested.

The 2010 SC Aquatic Plant Management Plan proposes continued efforts aimed at controlling Hydrilla while enhancing native aquatic plant populations providing wildlife habitat and allowing for a variety of recreational opportunities for our citizens.

This effort has focused on maintaining biological balance and diverse recreational opportunities.

Approval of the Draft 2010 SC Aquatic Plant Management Plan will allow for these efforts to continue.

(Adams, John; Aldridge, R.; Allen, Joey; Anderson, Chris; Baggett, Kim; Baker, Letitia; Bakley, Karen; Baldy, Johnny; Balle, Michelle; Balrick, Trina; Barb, Susan; Barb, Raymond; Barker, E.A.; Barr, Matthew; Barr, Nancy; Baucom, Viola; Baur, Robert; Beard, Betsy; Beckham, Marley; Beckman, Alan; Beckman, Billie; Bell, Charles; Benbow, Loretta; Best, Arthur; Bevacqua, David; Black, Brittany; Blakley, Linda; Blascak, Evelyn; Boudreau, Perry; Bowers, Donnie; Bowers, William; Brasington, Jeretta; Bratton, Ruth; Breitner, Bruce; Brixto, Mike; Broughton, Ted; Broughton, Vicki; Brown, Cory; Brown, Frances; Brown, Kenneth; Brown, Joni; Brown, Wanda; Brown, Bernie; Brown, Dwight; Brunson, D.; Brunswick, Gary; Bruzik, Martin; Bruzik, Sandy; Bryan, Jerry; Bryant, Randy; Burbage, Bill; Burns, L.; Burns, M.; Buxton, Nancy; Cagle, Carolyn; Cagle, Carl; Cagle, Jill; Cagle, Carl; Cagle, April; Cagle, Kevin; Calloway, Ricky; Calters, Bobby; Camp, Delores; Campbell, Thomas; Campbell, Grover; Cantley, Heather; Carl, Joseph; Carman, Kay; Carman, Jason; Carrio, Pauline; Carroll, Wiley; Carroll, Lynda; Cathern, Chris; Caycile, Keith; Chapel, Keith; Chapel, Anetta; Charles, Pamela; Chauver, R.J.; Chilst, Logan; Church, Ricky; Churty, Harry; Cleteirs, Del; Coffey, Juanita; Cogdill, Wendy; Coker, Amanda; Colclough, Albert; Cook, Hermin; Costa, Joe; Costa, Gloria; Coto, Robert; Coto, Diane; Creel, R.S; Cross, Charles; Cunningham, Ronald; Cunningham, Kent; Dalton, Robbie; Danner, Jason; Davis, Jeremy; Dayle, LeRoy; DeKalb, Robert; Denit, Clifford; Denning, Margie; Dennis, Ruthie; Dennis, Bobby; Dennis, Margie; Dennis, Jamie; Dewitt, Corrilie; Dolgas, Sandra; Dolgas, Richard; Dorman, Pamela; Dow, Jerry; Drastura, Lilian; Duckworth, Bitsy; Dugan, Christina; Duncan, Sandy; Duncan, Ronnie; Edwards, Blake; Edwards, Jerry; Edwards, Brenda; Edwards, Trent; Elerts, Steven; Enzor, Martha; Erthley, Frank; Evan, William; Evans, Carl; Evans, Jonda; Ewen, William; Ezor, Kathy; Failmezzar, Suzanne; Feagers, James; Fincannon, Stephanie; Flowers, RL; Floyd, Earl; Floyd, Tonya; Folkers, Harriette; Formler, Nathan; Foster, Wesley; Foxe, Barbara; Foxworth, Keith; Fraraccio, Robert; Garlen, Bert; Gerald, Roger; Gibson, Nancy; Gilkers, John; Gleaton, Eddie; Gleaton, Debra; Gleaton, Meloyne; Glenn, Danny; Glenn, Mary; Godfrey, J; Goebel, James; Goldsbury, Ralph; Grate, Francis; Greenwell, Allen; Gregg, Richard; Gregory, W.T; Ham, Jerry; Hanna, Dale; Hanna, Debbie; Hanna, David; Hanna, Debra; Harkins, James; Harper, Andy; Harper, Sandy; Harrelson, Alice; Harrington, Walter; Harrison, Dolores; Harvin, Thomas; Hawlig, Fran; Hawthorne, D.A.; Hayes, Bobby; Hayes, Beth; Hayes, G.G.; Hayes, Melanie; Hayes, Chrystal; Hayes, Ladd; Haynacki, Judy; Heeton, Jeffery; Helton, Sherri; Herley, Sylvia; Hinds, John; Hinds, Winston; Hinds, Marlene; Hobbes, Myrtle; Hobbs, Kim; Hobbs, Rodney; Holaber, Katie; Holcombe, Jeremy; Holden, David; Holden, Phyllis; Holliday, William; Holt, Bob; Hooker, Robert; Hopkins, Ray; Huff, Shirley; Hughes, Dianne; Hulony, Don; Hunsucker, Dot; Hunsucker, Ed; Huston, Joseph; Hutto, Ray; Hutto, Bobbie; Ibert, J.; James, Matthew; Janic, Mike; Jarvis, Dwight; Johnson, W.; Johnson, Gloria; Johnson, Mitchell; Jones, C.; Jones, P.; Jones, Harvey; Joyl, Chan; Just, Amy; Just, William;

Just, Pam; Justice, Jack; Keefe, Joni; Kelley, Ann; Kennedy, Susan; Kennedy, Neal; Kindle, Juanita; Kinman, Angela; Koranloo, Kamran; Krout, Alfred; Langston, Iris; Langston, David; Laslo, SJ; Lee, Marie; Lee, Kathy; Lee, Neil; Lelroy, Leonard; Lesemann, John; Lesemann, Linda; Lewis, Joy; Lewis, Stephen; Lewis, J.; Lewis, TR; Lewis, Thomas; Little, Robert; Londeree, Joe; Londeree, Jean; Lorthun, Phillip; Luis, Timothy; Luosrue, Danny; Lykes, Jamie; Lyons, Robert; Magnus, Ryan; Mahoney, Joe; Main, R.; Main, D.; Maletz, William; Martin, Christine; Mathis, John; Mathis, Matt; McCarthy, John; McCarthy, Betty; McDuffie, Scott; McElveen, Robert; McElveen, Brenda; McElveen, Lauri; McElveen, Barber; McElveen, Mike; McElveen, Frankie; McElveene, Luis; McPherarr, Melville; Mercer, Wanda; Milley, Jennifer; Moody, Fred; Moore, Jody; Morford, Charles; Morford, Betty; Morris, Dale; Morris, K.O.; Morris, Barbara; Moye, Joyce; Mozdehi, Louise; Mozhdhehi, Bruce; Murley, Karen; Nadeau, Doris; Nadeau, Henry; Nethermann, Jodie; Newman, Claude; Newman, Faye; Norris, Edward; Norris, Francis; Norris, Tony; Obertacz, Carolyn; Odicher, E.; Odom, William; Odom, Marian; Outin, Michael; Outin, Pamela; Owens, Bobby; Pace, J.; Pallodimo, Michael; Parker, Kelly; Parker, Bret; Parker, William; Perkins, Lynn; Peyton, Sarah; Peyton, Donny; Plowden, Judy; Polk, Timothy; Poucee, Sandra; Powell, Annelle; Powell, Nelson; Powers, Ronny; Preston, M.E.; Prevatte, Harry; Price, Ronnie; Price, Robert; Prote, Vicki; Puin, Xavier; Quinn, Hazel; Ray, James; Ray, Margaret; Ray, Chris; Raybits, Pat; Raybits, Stan; Reaves, Jim; Reed, Leigh; Reeves, Darlene; Richburg, Terry; Rikalts, Robby; Robinson, W.; Robinson, Libby; Robinson, Becky; Robinson, Joyce; Robinson, Paul; Robinson, Elijah; Robinson, Joe; Robinson, Raine; Rodgers, Harry; Rodgers, Michele; Rogers, John; Rolle, Jon; Ross, Bill; Rosul, L.B.; Rouse, Terra; Royue, Jesse; Rudman, Ronald; Samuels, Dona; Sarrio, Charles; Sauyir, Danny; Sayers, Danny; Schmag, Edward; Schrader, Harry; Schroeder, James; Schulman, Wendi; Schulz, Dina; Sebock, Joanne; Sebock, Randall; Sein, Parris; Seoulnil, B.; Sherma, John; Shumahe, Christi; Shumahe, John; Sigman, L.; Smith, Faye; Smultz, Kimberly; Sommers, Pamela; Stagg, Julia; Stanbelv, Gus; Stours, Debra; Suis, Susan; Sullivan, Brent; Summersett, Jerry; Summersett, Carla; Summersett, Carson; Summersett, Hunter; Swetham, J.; Talley, Marla; Terry, Jay; Thigpen, Cheryl; Thots, Bernie; Thysine, Dwayne; Timdall, Angela; Tomlinson, Jeromy; Truesdale, Harold; Tucker, J.R.; Turner, Clyde; Valdaliso, Darren; Varn, Gerald; Varn, Paula; VonLinsovch, Richard; Walker, Robert; Walker, Norvelle; Walters, S.; Ward, Kathy; Warren, Linda; Warren, Harvey; Watson, Leroy; White, Hallett; Wilson, James; Wilson, James; Wilson, Andy; Wise, Bridget; Worsham, Marion; Worsham, Freda; Wright, Jimmie; Wright, P.; Yaeger, Michael; Yaeger, Mary; Yailyer, Robbie; Young, Henry; Young, Margaret; Young, Francis; Young, Michael)

Response:

Contrary to some comments, SCDNR and Santee Cooper wholeheartedly agree that we need aquatic vegetation in the Santee Cooper Lakes to have a great natural resource. We also agree that vegetation absolutely needs to be of the native variety and not hydrilla. Eradication of established hydrilla utilizing current technology is virtually impossible. The goal of aquatic plant management on the Santee Cooper Lakes is to reduce hydrilla acreage while promoting a diverse natural habitat for fisheries, waterfowl and other animals. That goal is set forth in a Memorandum of Understanding between Santee Cooper and the SCDNR. The MOU provides for a minimum of 10% of the surface area of the lakes to be maintained with a diverse assemblage of native aquatic plants which includes a combination of submersed, floating leaf, and emergent plant species that provide habitat and food for game and non-game fish and wildlife species. According to last year's survey almost 17% of the Santee Cooper system has aquatic vegetation. This is well above the 10% minimum. Hydrilla, at its peak coverage, never covered more than 25% of the total surface area of the Santee Cooper lakes. At this level, the plant had a devastating effect on all lake uses and users.

The proposed coverage figures of 20 to 50 % from some commenters represents coverage of between 28,569 – 80,240 acres.

In order to enhance native plant growth and habitat, innovative management techniques shall be utilized. These techniques will include introducing desirable native plant species, enhancing wildlife and waterfowl management areas and implementing strategic lake level management measures. Also included in the MOU is annual monitoring of the vegetative community and a cooperative effort to monitor the health of the fishery and waterfowl populations. The data derived from annual surveys will be utilized in an annual meeting between SCDNR and Santee Cooper to review the results of monitoring and treatment programs and to determine the effectiveness of the programs and to develop annual work plans.

Were too many carp stocked originally in the Santee Cooper system? The numbers stocked accomplished the task for which they were intended, i.e. to control the vast growths of hydrilla that infested the lakes at the time. We do not know if that level of control could have been achieved with fewer fish. The stocking rate that was utilized was developed jointly by the Army Corps of Engineers, the SC Water Resources Commission, SCDNR and Santee Cooper, utilizing the best information and research available at that time.

In the 15 years that hydrilla has been under control in the Santee Cooper system, the system has not experienced one single fish kill resulting from dissolved oxygen depletion; we do not have vast areas of our lake becoming “dead zones’ in the late summer due to anoxic conditions; there have been no commercial boat landings going out of business as a result of restricted access; no farmers have had to fight to keep their crops alive due to clogged irrigation intakes; no industries have had to curtail or cease operations because of hydrilla clogging water intakes; mosquito populations are a fraction of what they were during the peak of hydrilla infestation, one reason that we still have not documented a single human case of West Nile virus or any other arbovirus illness in the area; we have seen a significant expanse of native submersed vegetation under the current stocking plan/rate; bass fishing organizations have set all-time national records for daily and tournament catch rates; and we are no longer deluged with angry letters and telephone calls from area residents, lake users (including fishermen and hunters), businesses and politicians due to the problems caused by the uncontrolled growth of the plant.

Furthermore, the lakes were never an "underwater desert" as many claimed. While the vegetation was significantly impacted, hydrilla especially, the system still had some vegetation which persisted. Aquatic plant coverage of the Santee Cooper lakes is determined annually through the use of an independent, third-party contractor utilizing aerial infrared and multi-spectral photography, followed by intense ground truthing verification. This effort, conducted since the mid-1980's, represents the state-of-the-art in aquatic plant monitoring." According to surveys done in that period of time (1999-2007) the lowest amount of vegetation was about 9600 acres in 2003, with only 1200 acres of submersed vegetation. From 2003 forward submersed vegetation increased yearly with 1700 acres in 2004 up to 7122 acres in 2007 system wide. While 2008 showed a decrease to 6360 acres of submersed vegetation attributed to the lack of water in a severely drought impacted system, 2009 brought almost 12,000 acres of submersed vegetation alone. Sterile grass carp are utilized so that we may control their numbers in the lakes and eliminate an overabundance. Current research shows that the carp have an approximate mortality rate of 32% per year. Grass carp have been in the system throughout the entire recent period of vegetation expansion. Some \$400,000 was expended to determine the impacts of stocking grass carp in the Santee Cooper lakes, including impacts to fisheries, water quality, and vegetative coverage.

Additionally, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers developed and published a detailed Environmental Assessment for the use of grass carp to control hydrilla in South Carolina in both the late 1980's and again in 2005. The EA considered impacts to native fish populations, water quality, aquatic plant populations, as well as tourism and recreation (fishing, hunting and boating). Among other positive findings, the EA states that "sterile grass carp provide a safe, cost effective means of controlling nuisance aquatic vegetation in South Carolina. DNR and Santee Cooper are committed to protecting and enhancing the native vegetation community. We plan to continue to monitor their status and take corrective action if unnecessary impacts occur.

Carp stockings mentioned in some of the comments were based on a 7 fish per 1 acre ratio. . Specifically, in reference to the Lake Yale, Florida stocking they eventually stocked (7/Acre) 28,280 fish for a 4,040 acre lake. Even at the lower density mentioned (3/Acre) in Lake Yale they stocked 12,120. One of the more common misconceptions is that we are stocking 8 fish per acre. That is not true. We are only proposing maintaining 20,000 (1 fish per every 8 surface acres in the system) carp for a 160,000 acre system. This should keep a modicum of control of hydrilla while allowing native species to flourish. So instead of a 7 to 1 ratio we are looking at a 1 to 8 ratio. One fish per 8 acres is less than 2% of the 7 fish per acre rate. Seven fish per acre is 56 times the rate we are proposing. This is why the current plan calls for an annual stocking of 6,400 fish in 2011 and beyond. This compensates for the expected annual losses in the 20,000 fish population. We believe that our proposed rate is appropriate for the dual objective of controlling hydrilla while allowing native vegetation populations to flourish.

Another point to address is the apparent confusion about the management or eradication of hydrilla and other 'grasses'. Some have expressed the desire to allow hydrilla growth in areas where its direct impacts would be minimized. Unfortunately this is unfeasible. The basic problem with invasive species is their tendency to spread and expand uncontrollably. Hydrilla, specifically has the ability to break off in large free floating tussocks. This fragmentation on both small and large scale is the plant's primary means of reproduction. It is therefore essentially impossible to contain hydrilla populations in pre-designated areas. Native species, on the other hand, tend to be far less aggressive and can usually be maintained in appropriate areas. Equally unfeasible is the total eradication of hydrilla. Once established, the plant can persist at low levels that are nearly impossible to remove completely with current technology. Therefore, management is the only viable option. The responsible management approach that we are proposing aims to minimize hydrilla while allowing diverse, native communities to exist. A common suggestion for allowing the growth of hydrilla in specific areas is to control it through precise chemical applications. This is the approach that was taken up during the early phases of hydrilla invasion in the Santee Cooper lakes. Unfortunately, the costs associated with the approach were far too high to sustain. In terms of acre by acre control over long periods of time grass carp stockings are more economical than chemical treatments.

Interest has been voiced in fostering appropriate vegetation communities to help fish and waterfowl populations. One fear is that herbicides, carp, or both are indiscriminate killers of beneficial vegetation. This is not the case. Appropriate use of these tools can lead to very selective control of problematic vegetation while allowing beneficial vegetation to remain. These points are considered in all aspects of vegetation management. Current habitat enhancement projects are focusing on plants that provide cover for small fish and food for waterfowl both directly and as substrate for invertebrates. Many of the plants that are chosen for these projects are low on the list of preferred grass carp food sources and are more resistant to herbicides than hydrilla. Grass carp will therefore not be directly competing with waterfowl and herbicides will not be indiscriminately destroying all

vegetation and habitat. DNR and Santee Cooper are committed to providing quality habitat in the lakes to enhance both the fish and waterfowl populations. This is a goal that we share with the lake's sportsmen.

Some detractors have pointed to decreased license sales around the lake as evidence that the current state of the lake system has negatively impacted the area's economy. Licensing data indicates that, for the period of 2005-2009, there was indeed a decline in non-resident fishing license sales in the five county area surrounding the Santee Cooper lakes. The decline was 31.5%, not the "over 50%" cited in some comments. Many different factors could have contributed to this change in sales rate. This decline was partially attributed to the near record low lake elevations which the lakes experienced from mid-2007 through 2008. During this period, many of the commercial and public boat landings on the system were not usable and boating conditions were hazardous. Also, in 2009 the SCDNR went to a point of sale system which eliminated the hand written license sales and required a new point of sale system for all license vendors. This led to a decrease in the number of license outlets in the counties surrounding the lakes. Furthermore the decrease could be attributed to the suppressed economy and overall uncertainty. Interestingly, non-resident fishing license sales increased in SCDNR offices and online significantly during that same period.

One clear and constant indicator of the economic impact of travel and tourism in South Carolina is the state's 2% accommodations tax, a fee imposed on the gross proceeds derived from the rental of any accommodation. An analysis of the accommodations tax collected in the five county area surrounding the Santee Cooper lakes (all data provided by the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism) indicates a steadily increasing trend in visitation and tourism based spending from 1988 through mid-2007 (an increase of 214%), followed by a significant decrease of some 10.7% from mid-2007 through mid-2008 (the only year of decrease over a 20 year span). As was the case with the sales of non-resident fishing licenses, the decrease in the rate of tourism in the area was most likely the result of the near record low lake elevations which occurred during that same time period. Essentially, it resulted from the lack of water, not the lack of hydrilla or fish.

Plan Modifications:

**Change: Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie
Rate of control agents to be applied**

Triploid grass carp

Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie will be carefully monitored for additional increases in hydrilla acreage. Herbicide treatments will be used to provide temporary control until results from grass carp feeding become apparent. Changes to the maintenance stocking strategy will be considered if survey results, regrowth, **or habitat loss** warrant.

**Change: Lake Marion and Lake Moultrie
Long term management strategy**

a) Support the management goals established by the DNR and Santee Cooper (Appendix E) which attempts to achieve a diverse assemblage of native aquatic vegetation in **a minimum of** 10% of the total surface area of the lake and to effectively control non-native invasive species.

Change: Appendix E

This should be changed to reflect the new agreement which has been agreed upon by Santee Cooper and SCDNR.

Lake Greenwood: The total number of comments received was one, which supported the plan but was concerned that not enough was being done in a specific area on the lake.

Commenters: Fred Herman

Comment:

Having reviewed the content of the Lake Greenwood plan I have noticed one item. Your plan indicates the following goal.... *Eliminate hydrilla from Rabon Creek arm and around Greenwood State Park.*

However I reviewed the map that indicates where the lake will be treated and it shows only the upper Reedy River arm **and not** the Rabon Creek arm. I live on the Rabon Creek arm and we have been treated over the course of the last several years. I feel that we still have some problem in Rabon Creek and would like to think that this area will still be treated in the future as to stop any spread. I think both arms require treatment. ... (Herman, F.)

Response:

We agree that that there is still a very real threat of invasive plants occurring on the Rabon Creek arm of Lake Greenwood, especially on the shallow deltas that you mentioned. A herbicide treatment in 2008 greatly reduced the hydrilla population in the Rabon Creek arm. The area was surveyed periodically in 2009 in order to provide a rapid response in case the hydrilla began to repopulate the area. Also, sterile grass carp were placed in the vicinity to try and control any unwanted growth that may have occurred. Let me reassure you that in 2010 the Rabon Creek arm of Lake Greenwood will not be neglected. This year the SCDNR is proposing to place more grass carp in the areas where hydrilla is typically present, including the Rabon Creek area. We will also continue to monitor the area on a regular basis.

Plan Modifications:

None at present.