



KATHLEEN BABINEAUX BLANCO
GOVERNOR

State of Louisiana
DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

BRYANT O. HAMMETT, JR.
SECRETARY

September 17, 2007

Pete J. Camp
10009 Thornwood Drive
Shreveport, LA 71106

Steve Shows
1328 CC Sandidge Road
Elm Grove, LA 71051

Dear Gentlemen:

We appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and other concerned individuals at the August 21st meeting. A great deal of information was exchanged, and like you, we believe that while the problem is very large, it can be managed.

You requested that we respond to the reality of your calculations and the following statements address this request. Though a crew can spray 50 acres a day when spraying large expanses of vegetation, when navigating trees and treating fringes of vegetation, the acreage drops. While we had five crews on Bistineau the week of August 20th, they averaged 34 acres per day, per crew. Additionally, while we are treating, other plants continue to grow. Researchers have found giant salvinia capable of doubling in 3-5 days and we suspect it doubles on Lake Bistineau in 10-14 days. Another complication is that salvinia grows vertically as well as horizontally. As Dr. Sanders mentioned at the meeting, you can kill the top salvinia plants, but if there are 2-5 layers beneath the top layer, they will survive current herbicides. It will take several days for the top layer to decompose enough that the next layer is exposed and susceptible to herbicides. Again, while this process is taking place, the plants continue to grow.

We are in the process of finding ways of using contract sprayers to treat giant salvinia and ensuring the control level required by the contract is obtained. We will also be using them to treat alligator weed in the northern part of the lake.

As you mentioned, there will always be unforeseen events. For example, one of the primary problems we have had throughout the state is retaining our sprayers. In July, we had four permanent sprayer positions filled in District 1 and were in the process of filling two new temporary sprayer positions. Currently, all four permanent positions are now vacant and we only had one applicant for the two temporary sprayer positions. This employee shortage occurs in a district that includes Caddo Lake, Lake Bistineau and six other lakes with giant salvinia. We have a responsibility to treat all lakes, including Lake Bistineau.

Mr. Camp and Mr. Shows

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Primarily due to recent mild winters, many of the state's waterbodies are experiencing problems with nuisance aquatic vegetation. We believe the giant salvinia problems on Lakes Bistineau and Caddo warrant large-scale efforts. As we have in the past, we will send crews from throughout the state to assist District 1 personnel. We will also utilize additional personnel to move additional weevils from Toledo Bend to Bistineau and Caddo Lakes, and will continue to work with the Corps and LSU. We welcome the assistance of local government and private organizations, and we are also exploring the possibility of contracting with Sheriff offices for prison labor.

As we have in the past, we will continue to request additional funding for aquatic plant control. Currently, no state general funds are used for the control of aquatic plants. Funding is derived from the department's Conservation Fund, the Aquatic Plant Control Fund, and federal funds from excise taxes on fishing equipment and motorboat fuel. Numerous beneficiaries of aquatic plant control contribute very little to the control program. These include those using surface water for irrigation, drinking water and aesthetic values.

You made a suggestion to make boat ramps a priority. We will attempt to treat these areas on a routine basis, but as you know, wind and water currents can change an open area into a clogged area overnight.

We appreciate your offer to disseminate information to all interested parties through your website and plan to monitor your site to remain informed of local concerns. I hope that we have addressed your concerns and look forward to working with you to find a viable solution to the aquatic weed problems our state faces.

Sincerely,



Bryant O. Hammett, Jr.
Secretary

gat

c: Janice Lansing
Don Maddox
Gary Tilyou
James Seales