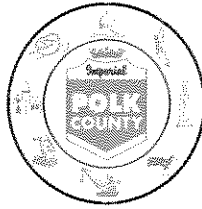


**PARKS & NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION**



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Board of County Commissioners

February 13, 2012

Dear Lake Gibson Residents and Stakeholders;

As many of you know a large percentage of Lake Gibson has become infested with hydrilla. Hydrilla is an exotic aquatic plant spread easily by boats throughout the state's lakes and rivers. It clogs waterways, making recreational activities difficult or impossible, and it chokes out beneficial native plants. Managing and treating it is necessary for the health of Florida's waters and to enable continued recreational boating and other aquatic activities. Hydrilla grows from the lake bottom up to the surface where it forms dense mats.

The Polk county Invasive Plant Management team in cooperation with The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission will apply the aquatic herbicide SONAR to Lake Gibson for hydrilla control on February 20th, 2012 weather permitting. We are also tentatively planning to stock Lake Gibson with hydrilla eating fish (sterile triploid grass carp) in the fall of 2012 depending on the results of the spring herbicide treatment and hydrilla re-growth post treatment. Hydrilla is one of the carp's favorite foods and proper stocking of the fish can help mitigate how rapidly hydrilla regrows after treatments of this nature.

IRRIGATION: Once the Sonar herbicide hydrilla treatment has been applied to Lake Gibson, using water from the lake to irrigate could result in injury to irrigated vegetation. We will be monitoring the SONAR concentrations in the lake throughout the hydrilla treatment period with water sampling and lab tests, and we will notify residents when the SONAR herbicide concentrations have dissipated, and it is safe to resume irrigation with lake water. Therefore, an irrigation precaution is recommended for at least 90 days during treatment.

THERE ARE NO FISHING, SWIMMING, OR LIVESTOCK CONSUMPTION RESTRICTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TREATMENT.

Aquatic vegetation plays an integral part in maintaining clear water, shoreline stabilization and balanced fish and wildlife populations. Thank you for your concern for the management and preservation of Lake Gibson. If you have any questions or concerns about this treatment, please contact Bryan Finder, 863-534-7377 (Lead Environmental Technician for Polk County Invasive Plant Section), or Kelle Sullivan, 534-7074 (Regional Biologist for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission).

Thanks again for your concern

Bryan Finder
Lead Environmental Tech
Polk County Parks and Natural Resources