

COOPERATING TO CONTROL HYDRILLA IN KANSAS. Jeffrey W. Vogel, State Weed Specialist, Kansas Department of Agriculture, Topeka, KS 66619.

Hydrilla is a federal noxious weed and considered one of the worst invasive aquatic weeds in the United States. It is an exotic submersed plant that is able to survive the harsh winters of the northern states. Currently, the Kansas Department of Agriculture (KDA) quarantines hydrilla which prevents the selling, bartering or transport of this plant and the Kansas Department of Wildlife (KDWP) and Parks classifies it as an Aquatic Nuisance Species. Prior to 2008, no wild infestations of hydrilla were reported in the State of Kansas.

During the summer of 2008, KDWP employees reported a wild infestation of hydrilla in an Olathe Park Pond that was later confirmed by the KDA and the United States Department of Agriculture. It was determined that the most likely source of hydrilla was an “aquarium dump” because several small pebble piles were located around the pond and that the infestation has been present from 2-4 years. Realizing that hydrilla was not required to be controlled by state law and considering the risk of this population spreading, a meeting was called between all interested parties to discuss a possible management plan. Attending the initial meeting in November of 2008 were representatives from the City of Olathe, KDWP, and KDA.

Produced from that meeting was a management plan that outlined a plan to monitor and control the established population with integrated methods, and survey for new infestations downstream. During the spring of 2009, we realized that not only was the pond infested with hydrilla but also curly leaf pondweed. This delayed the onset of the hydrilla until later in the summer when water temperatures increased. The City of Olathe provided a licensed applicator and applied granular fluridone to the pond at the beginning of June and monitored the application throughout the summer. Fluridone proved to be effective on all submersed weeds with no recreational, irrigation, or drinking water restrictions except the treatment was considerably expensive. To offset the City’s expense, KDA provided the funds to purchase the herbicide through the Emergency Pest Fund which is funded by a five dollar fee added to each nursery business license. In addition, employees from KDWP and KDA survey downstream from the hydrilla infestation, once in July and again in late September. Results from the survey show that no hydrilla has established downstream from the pond. Biannual surveys will continue three years past the last known occurrence of hydrilla.