

Hydrilla Eradication Challenges, Partnerships and Lessons Learned. David Kratville, Michelle Dennis and Jonathan Heintz. California Department of Food and Agriculture, Sacramento, CA. david.kratville@cdfa.ca.gov

The California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) has housed the Hydrilla Eradication Program since 1977. Detection and eradication of hydrilla is a cooperative state effort, sharing resources between several sister agencies including the Department of Water Resources and the Department of Parks and Recreation Division of Boating and Waterways. Other partnerships include the Delta Conservancy and Delta Area-wide Aquatic Weed Management effort, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, United States Bureau of Reclamation, and United States Geological Survey. Each lead agency has unique but complementary roles and are now strategic partners in the fight against aquatic weeds in the state. Since the Hydrilla Eradication Program's inception it has achieved some of the Department's greatest successes by keeping California effectively free of this destructive weed. One of the Program's greatest challenges has been 43,000-acre Clear Lake. Hydrilla was initially found in the lake in 1994. Herbicide treatments reduced the population to only a single plant find in 2003. Per protocol all treatments ceased in 2006 but the population quickly rebounded in the lake in 2007. The number of plants found in Clear Lake has fallen from a high of 196 in 2008 to only 4 plants in 2015. Infestations in the counties of Shasta and Nevada are approaching eradication, with no plants for up to nine years. Eradication in those counties would leave Lake and Yuba Counties with the only active hydrilla infestations in the State.