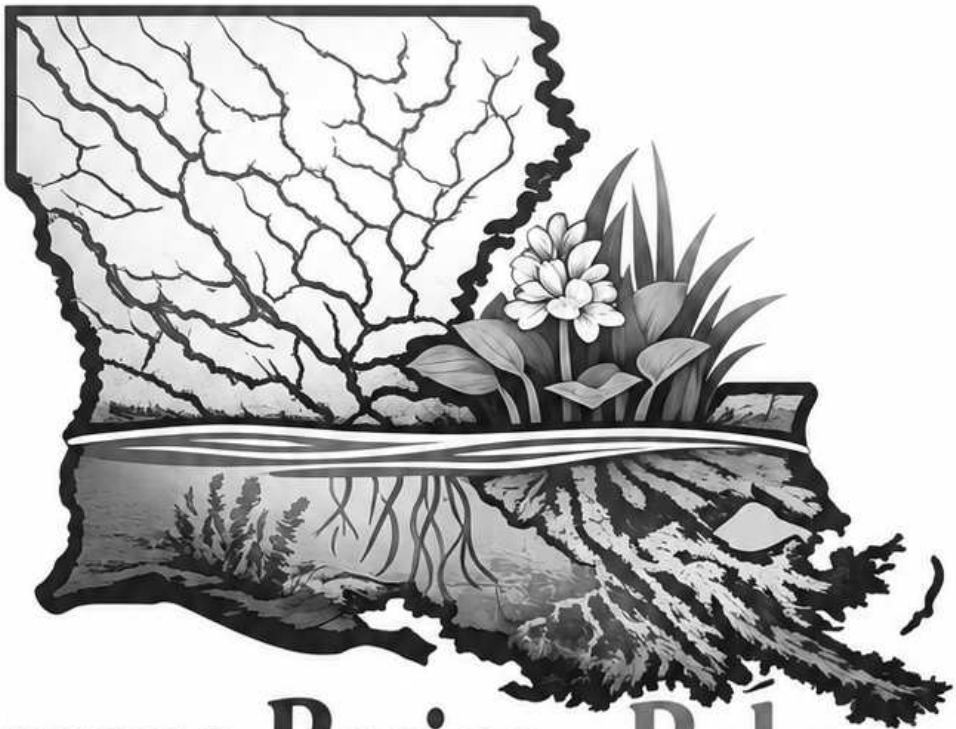
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MidSouth Aquatic Plant Management Society



Bayous, Basins, and Balance

PROGRAM

October 26–29, 2026

Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center
Baton Rouge, Louisiana

MidSouth Aquatic Plant Management Society

45th Annual Meeting

October 26-29, 2026 | Hilton Baton Rouge Capitol Center, Baton Rouge

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PROGRAM AT A GLANCE

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26

12:00 pm-5:00 pm	Exhibitor Move-In & Setup - Riverview B
12:00 pm-5:00 pm	Registration - Riverview Foyer
2:00 pm-5:00 pm	MSAPMS Board Meeting - Board Room

EVENING EVENTS - MONDAY

6:30 pm-7:30 pm	President's Welcome Reception - The Tunnel
Evening	Dinner on your own

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27

6:00 am-8:00 am	Continental Breakfast - Riverview B
7:00 am-5:00 pm	Registration - Riverview Foyer
8:00 am-10:00 am	General Session I - Keynote Session - Riverview A
10:00 am-10:20 am	Networking Break - Riverview B
10:20 am-12:00 pm	Research Session I - Riverview A
12:00 pm-1:20 pm	Lunch on your own
1:20 pm-3:00 pm	General Session II - Riverview A
3:00 pm-3:20 pm	Networking Break - Riverview B
3:20 pm-5:00 pm	General Session III - Riverview A

EVENING EVENTS - TUESDAY

5:00 pm-5:30 pm	MSAPMS Business Meeting - Riverview A
5:30 pm-7:00 pm	Student Meet & Greet - Paramount Room
Evening	Dinner on your own

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28

6:00 am-8:00 am	Continental Breakfast - Riverview B
7:00 am-5:00 pm	Registration - Riverview Foyer
8:00 am-5:00 pm	Exhibits Open - Riverview B
8:00 am-10:00 am	General Session IV - Riverview A
10:00 am-10:20 am	Networking Break - Riverview B
10:20 am-12:00 pm	General Session V - Riverview A
12:00 pm-1:20 pm	Lunch on your own
1:20 pm-3:00 pm	Research Session II - Riverview A
3:00 pm-3:20 pm	Networking Break - Riverview B
3:20 pm-5:00 pm	General Session VI - Riverview A

EVENING EVENTS - WEDNESDAY

5:30 pm-7:00 pm	Bayou Twilight Toast: Hosted Beer & Wine - Riverview Foyer
7:00 pm-10:00 pm	Awards Dinner - Riverview A

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29

6:00 am-8:00 am	Continental Breakfast - Riverview B
8:00 am-12:00 pm	Aquatic Plant Workshop & Interactive Plant ID - Paramount Room
12:00 pm	Closing Remarks & Adjourn - Paramount Room

MidSouth Aquatic Plant Management Society

2025-2026 Board of Directors

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2025 Terry Goldsby
2024 Family of the late Dr. David H. Webb

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS AWARD

2025 Colton Green
2024 Patrick Green

TUESDAY - OCTOBER 27 - RIVERVIEW A

GENERAL SESSION I - KEYNOTE SESSION: Welcome, Keynote & Regulatory Updates

8:00 am	Opening Remarks · Adam Charlton, President-Elect
8:10 am	Presidential Address · Stephen Turner, President
8:20 am	**Looking Back to See Forward: A History of Aquatic Plant Management in Louisiana** Dr. Dearl Sanders - Retired LSU Extension
9:10 am	**Aquatic Pesticide Applications: A Federal Perspective with a Historical Context** Carlton Layne - EPA Retired
9:30 am	**AERF: Integrating Restoration and Management Projects in the 21st Century** Jim Petta - Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Foundation
9:40 am	**EPA Updates Regarding the Endangered Species Act** Dr. Jay Ferrell - University of Florida
10:00 am	**Networking Break - Riverview B**

RESEARCH SESSION I: Aquatic Research

10:20 am	**Geographic and Genetic Patterns of Cuban Bulrush (Cyperus blepharoleptos) Morphology in the Invaded Range** Dr. Gray Turnage - Mississippi State University
10:40 am	**Initial Concentration-Exposure Time Relationships for Vallisneria X pseudorosulata with Select Herbicides** Maxwell G. Gebhart - Mississippi State University
11:00 am	**Can Planting Native SAV Suppress Hydrilla Regrowth after Herbicide Treatment?** Dr. Lyn Gettys - University of Florida
11:20 am	**Preliminary Results of Field Trials for Reduction of Invasive Vallisneria Taxa in Florida** Dr. Gray Turnage - Mississippi State University
11:40 am	**Preliminary Phenological Trends of Vallisneria Grown in Mesocosms** Maxwell G. Gebhart - Mississippi State University
12:00 pm	**Lunch on your own**

GENERAL SESSION II: Professional Development & Outreach

Moderator: Cody Bragg, Aquatic Control Inc.

1:20 pm **Boater Safety**
Corporal Hunter Pearson - Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

1:40 pm **Beyond the Label: ESA Compliance, Recordkeeping, and Telling Your Story**
Kim Brown - Kim Brown Consulting

2:00 pm **DOT Regulations and Common Violations: What Commercial Vehicle Operators Need to Know**
Lieutenant Brady Johnson - Louisiana State Police, Transportation Safety Section

2:20 pm **Tending What Matters: Finding Homeostasis in the Chaos**
Anne Stuckey-Williams - Louisiana State University

2:40 pm **APMS Update**
Dr. Lyn Gettys - University of Florida

3:00 pm **Networking Break - Riverview B**

GENERAL SESSION III: Resource Management & Technology

Moderator: Matt Townson, Aqua Services

3:20 pm **A Field Demonstration of Dioecious Hydrilla Control in the Spring Creek Arm of Lake Seminole**
Michael Durham - U.S. Army ERDC

3:40 pm **Aquatic Plant Management Activities of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources**
Mike Pursley - Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

4:00 pm **Less Is Best: Low Dose Copper Sulfate Treatments Can Improve Water Quality**
Alan Wilson - Auburn University

4:20 pm **Aquatic Vegetation Management in Mississippi: Successes, Failures, and Lessons Learned**
Buford Lessley - Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, & Parks

4:40 pm **Interactive Study Applications as a Foundation for an AI Field-Support Agent in Applicator Training**
Dr. Chris Taylor - Aqua Services, a Jones Lake Management Partner

5:00 pm **Day 1 Presentations Conclude**

EVENING EVENTS

5:00 pm-5:30 pm **MSAPMS Business Meeting - Riverview A**

5:30 pm-7:00 pm **Student Meet & Greet - Paramount Room**
Students, Advisors, Current and Past Board Members and Invited Guests

GENERAL SESSION IV: Student Presentations

Moderator: Tim McLean, Alabama Power

8:00 am **Control of Vallisneria nana Grown in Mesocosms**
Adrian Horstead - Mississippi State University

8:20 am **Seasonal Efficacy of Herbicide Mixtures for Giant Salvinia Management in Mesocosms**
Kori Paliwoda - Texas A&M University

8:40 am **Aquatic Use and Select Non-Aquatic Use Herbicide Efficacy on Vallisneria spiralis in Mesocosms**
Abigail Pugh - Mississippi State University

9:00 am **How Do Salvinia Weevils Respond to Herbicide Treated Giant Salvinia?**
Dr. Samantha Prinsloo - Louisiana State University

9:20 am **Initial Concentration-Exposure Time Relationships for Vallisneria spiralis with Select Herbicides**
Jill Skidmore - Mississippi State University

9:40 am **Evaluation of Short-Duration Herbicide Combinations for East Indian Hygrophila Control**
Ian Talty - U.S. Army ERDC

10:00 am **Networking Break - Riverview B**

GENERAL SESSION V: Industry, Resource Management & Technology

Moderator: Matt Horton, Arkansas Game and Fish

10:20 am **Industry Updates - Platinum and Gold Sponsors**

10:40 am **Aquatic Vegetation Management in Texas Private Ponds: Challenges, Practices, and Knowledge Gaps**
Dr. Brittany Chesser - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

11:00 am **Automated Mapping of Non-Indigenous Aquatic Plant Species via UAS and Artificial Intelligence**
Daniel McCraine - Mississippi State University

11:20 am **Alabama Power Aquatic Plant Management Program**
Tim McLean - Alabama Power

11:40 am **Advancing Aquatic Invasive Plant Management: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Strategic Approach**
Kayla Kimmel - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

12:00 pm **Lunch on your own**

RESEARCH SESSION II: Aquatic Plant Management

Moderator: Dr. Brittany Chesser, Texas A&M University

1:20 pm **Submersed Herbicide Treatments: Achieving Success in a 4-Dimensional Environment**
Dr. Ben Sperry - U.S. Army ERDC

1:40 pm **Does Integrated Pest Management Improve Control of Cuban Bulrush?**
Dr. Chris Mudge - U.S. Army ERDC

2:00 pm **Increasing Efficacy of Restoration Projects in Coastal Louisiana via Kinetic Invasive Species Control**
David Curtiss - USDA APHIS Wildlife Services

WEDNESDAY - OCTOBER 28 - RIVERVIEW A

2:20 pm **Aquatic Use and Select Non-Aquatic Use Herbicide Efficacy on Vallisneria X pseudorosulata Grown in Mesocosms**
Dr. Gray Turnage - Mississippi State University

2:40 pm **Screening Ecotypes of Native Florida SAV Species under Common Nursery Conditions**
Dr. Lyn Gettys - University of Florida

3:00 pm **Networking Break - Riverview B**

GENERAL SESSION VI: Resource Management & Technology

Moderator: Wykle Green, The Orion Companies

3:20 pm **Mapping Ponds, Finding Fish: A Practical BioBase Workflow for Lake Managers**
Troy Goldsby - Aqua Services, a Jones Lake Management Partner

3:40 pm **Trending Issues in Urban Pond Management**
Ken Rust - Louisiana Pond Management

4:00 pm **Invasion Pathways and Integrated Management of Aquatic Weeds**
Dr. Lyn Gettys - University of Florida

4:20 pm **Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Aquatic Plant Management Update**
Kane Finkbeiner - Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

4:40 pm **Beyond Release: What Limits the Establishment of a Water Hyacinth Biological Control Agent in the Southeastern United States?**
Flaminia Mariani - Louisiana State University

EVENING EVENTS

5:30 pm-7:00 pm **Bayou Twilight Toast: Hosted Beer & Wine - Riverview Foyer**

7:00 pm-10:00 pm **Awards Dinner - Riverview A**

THURSDAY - OCTOBER 29 - PARAMOUNT ROOM

AQUATIC PLANT WORKSHOP & INTERACTIVE PLANT ID

Moderator: Adam Charlton, Aquatic Control Inc.

8:00 am **Introduction to Workshop**
Adam Charlton - Aquatic Control Inc.

8:05 am **Introduction to Aquatic Plant Control**
Daniel Hill - Alligare, LLC

8:30 am **From Plant ID to Public Buy-In: Communicating Aquatic Vegetation Management**
Dr. Brittany Chesser - Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

8:50 am **Louisiana's Crawfish Industry and Aquatic Plants**
Todd Fontenot - Louisiana State University

9:10 am **Giant Salvinia Biological Control: Mass Rearing of the Salvinia Weevil**
Dr. Samantha Prinsloo - Louisiana State University

9:30 am **Networking Break - Riverview B**

10:00 am-12:00 pm **Interactive Plant ID Course**
Dr. Gray Turnage - Mississippi State University; Dr. Chris Mudge - U.S. Army ERDC

12:00 pm **Closing Remarks & Adjourn**

MIDSOUTH AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT SOCIETY

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Session Abstracts

(In presentation order)

Tuesday, October 27, 2026

General Session I – Keynote Session

Looking Back to See Forward: A History of Aquatic Plant Management in Louisiana

Dr. Dearl Sanders, Retired LSU Extension

Modern aquatic weed problems in Louisiana and for many other regions began in 1885 at the New Orleans Cotton Exposition (fore runner to Worlds Fairs). Well meaning Exposition organizers gave away in ornate glass bowls a lavender flowered water plant to attendees. Within a month water hyacinth from Brazil was spread from coast to coast, and 141 years later remains one of the most common of our aquatic weeds in the state. When I started work for LSU in 1979 there was a well established aquatic weed control program primarily managed by Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries and the US Army Corps of Engineers. Looking back at that time the programs were well staffed, personnel was adequate but with limited herbicides. Between the two government agencies there were as many as eighty spray crews in operation in the state spraying mostly phenoxy herbicides on approximately one million acres. Over the decades policy and budget cuts reduced available man power at the same time new and better herbicides became available. A balance of manpower and chemistry has been difficult to achieve. We (myself included) overlooked several new species (giant salvinia and others) while they were in the colonization stage and have been required to divert resources to control plants once considered nonthreatening. Never overlook a new weed! The Seeing Forward part would have to include new technology. Inexpensive GPS equipment and software now shows where to spray and can record when and what was sprayed. Cell phones not just for instant communication but loaded with programs that can ID weeds with great accuracy while in the field. Numerous digital inventories of control methods, herbicide labels and application recommendations are on our phones and laptops in the field and on computers at our offices. Application of herbicides by drones is increasing rapidly. As drones become larger and battery technology increases, remote weed infested aquatic sites become readily available at a fraction of the cost of airboats and helicopter. Hopefully technology will bring the manpower and herbicide issues closer together to achieve our goals.

Aquatic Pesticide Applications: A Federal Perspective with a Historical Context

Carlton Layne, EPA Retired

The presentation will address the legal requirements for aquatic pesticide applications from a federal perspective in an historical context. Compliance with federal and state pesticide misuse statutes will be addressed. Along the way the presentation will include interpreting registered pesticide labeling, pesticide safety, and surviving pesticide inspections and investigations.

AERF: Integrating Restoration and Management Projects in the 21st Century

Jim Petta, AERF

Like many activities in today’s culture, aquatic plant and algae management has often become highly polarized to the interested parties. It is critical to the industry and the successful management of our diminishing water resources that plant management, fisheries management, drinking and irrigation water use, all work together for the long term good of our shared water resources. Aquatic plant managers/applicators and others play key roles in the public realm as the most visible to the general public and often on the front lines. AERF is here to play a key role in bringing together these various groups with often widely divergent views of management to answer questions, develop research programs, and provide technical and regulatory support as appropriate. We will discuss the various ways AERF supports the aquatics industry by successful collaborations and how everyone should support its mission and work.

EPA Updates Regarding the Endangered Species Act

Dr. Jay Ferrell, University of Florida

The integration of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) into pesticide regulation is reshaping how pesticides are evaluated, labeled, and used throughout the United States. For decades, pesticide regulation under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA). Recent litigation has concluded that increased emphasis on ESA is required by the EPA's pesticide registration process. In response, the EPA has developed a series of strategies designed to ensure pesticide registrations comply with ESA obligations while maintaining access to important pest management tools. One of the most significant developments is the EPA's Herbicide Strategy, which establishes mitigation measures intended to reduce potential impacts to federally listed species and their designated critical habitats. These measures include the use of runoff and erosion reduction practices, application restrictions, and geographic limitations identified through Pesticide Use Limitation Areas (PULAs). While many aquatic herbicide applications are exempt from several mitigation requirements because treatments occur directly within aquatic systems, applicators may still be subject to ESA-related restrictions implemented through location-specific PULAs. The EPA's Bulletins Live! Two platform serves as the primary mechanism for identifying these restrictions and determining compliance requirements before pesticide applications occur. Understanding how ESA requirements, PULAs, and Bulletins Live! Two interact is becoming increasingly important. This presentation will define these terms and help pesticide users better understand how to remain in compliance with state and federal guidelines.

Research Session I

Geographic and Genetic Patterns of Cuban Bulrush (Cyperus blepharoleptos) Morphology in the Invaded Range

Dr. Gray Turnage, Mississippi State University

Studies on population genetics are important tools for understanding the history and management of an invasive species. Cyperus blepharoleptos Steud. (Cyperaceae; Cuban bulrush) is an emerging invader in the freshwater ecosystems of the southeastern USA. This species exhibits two discrete forms (capitate and anthelate), and very little is known about its genetic diversity. In this study, genetic material was collected from 24 C. blepharoleptos populations across the southeastern USA to determine genetic and geographic patterns of morphology in the invaded range. From this material, sequences from the chloroplast (cpDNA) trnL intron and trnL-F spacer identified three haplotypes: CbA, CbB, and CbC. Haplotypes CbA and CbB were dispersed throughout the region, but CbC was exclusive to central and southern Florida. Haplotype CbA was more likely to express the anthelate form, CbB was more likely to express the capitate form, and CbC was exclusively anthelate. These findings suggest a potential effect of haplotype on form, which warrants further study. Additionally, studied populations were used in conjunction with herbarium records to reconstruct the known distribution of C. blepharoleptos in the USA. The reconstruction showed a major, unexplained, geographic gap including much of Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. While these findings were unable to completely explain the genetic and geographic causes that determine form in C. blepharoleptos, there were patterns that emerged that warrant further investigation.

Initial Concentration-Exposure Time Relationships for Vallisneria × pseudorosulata with Select Herbicides

Maxwell G. Gebhart, Mississippi State University

Vallisneria × pseudorosulata is an invasive plant in the southeastern U.S. and currently lacks robust herbicide management research. Therefore, assessing the rates and necessary exposure times for efficacious herbicides on V. × pseudorosulata is critical for the development of its management program. The assessed herbicides include: carfentrazone, flumioxazin, diquat, endothall, bispyribac-sodium, rimsulfuron, trifloxysulfuron, and sulfometuron-methyl. Testing was grouped by herbicide translocation ability (systemic vs. contact) and aquatic vs. non-aquatic labelling, resulting in three major testing groups (Aquatic Use Contacts, Aquatic Use Systemics, and Non-Aquatic Use). For each herbicide, three application rates and three exposure times were selected, resulting in 30 unique treatments, including references, for the Aquatic Use Contacts and Non-Aquatic Use groups, and 21 for the Aquatic Use Systemics. Each treatment was replicated five times and the entire trial repeated a week later for temporal replication. Twelve weeks after treatment (WAT), above and belowground biomass was harvested from half of the pots in each mesocosm; at 52 WAT, the remaining pots will be harvested. Overall, contact herbicides were initially effective, causing rapid chlorosis; however, at 12 WAT all treatments recovered, suggesting multiple applications may be necessary to achieve control.

Endothall was highly effective at all tested rates and exposure times providing >80% biomass reduction. Similarly, bispyribac-sodium reduced biomass at all tested rates and exposure times, though only achieved 40% aboveground biomass reduction, 52% belowground biomass reduction, and 40% ramet density reduction all at the maximum label rate (0.045 ppm), regardless of exposure time. Finally, the tested sulfonylurea herbicides reduced biomass 12 WAT at all tested rates and exposure times (>80% reduction). Further investigation should refine effective herbicide rates and exposure times for endothall and sulfonylurea herbicides due to their efficacy reducing V. × pseudorosulata biomass.

Can Planting Native SAV Suppress Hydrilla Regrowth after Herbicide Treatment?

Dr. Lyn Gettys, University of Florida

Hydrilla (Hydrilla verticillata), an invasive submersed plant, is one of the most intensively managed aquatic weeds in Florida and other areas where the species has been introduced. Herbicides are typically used to control hydrilla, but regrowth after treatment is common and ongoing applications are required to keep the species at levels that do not interfere with the use of impacted waters. This is at least partly due to the open niches left after hydrilla populations are treated with herbicides; these niches are then quickly filled by surviving hydrilla fragments or recruitment from the tuber and turion bank. In these greenhouse experiments, we aimed to determine whether planting herbicide-treated areas with native submersed aquatic vegetation (SAV) affected re-establishment of hydrilla in empty niches. Hydrilla plants were treated with the aquatic herbicide endothall, then unrooted cuttings of Illinois pondweed (Potamogeton illinoensis) were planted at different densities 2, 4, and 6 weeks after endothall application and maintained for a 16-week growout period before a destructive harvest was performed. Hydrilla regrowth biomass in treatments where pondweed was planted 2 or 4 weeks after endothall treatment was reduced by 70% to 99% compared to hydrilla regrowth in treatments without pondweed. These results are very promising and could be an important tool for resource managers that are tasked with aquatic habitat and ecosystem restoration and enhancement. Additional research, including field trials, is underway to confirm the findings of these greenhouse experiments.

Preliminary Results of Field Trials for Reduction of Invasive Vallisneria Taxa in Florida

Dr. Gray Turnage, Mississippi State University

Multiple Vallisneria (eelgrass) taxa have invaded Florida waterbodies and are a concern for aquatic resource managers in the state and elsewhere. Vallisneria spiralis has infested the Braden River which is used for recreation but is also an important irrigation and drinking water source for the Tampa metropolitan area. Similarly, the hybrid Vallisneria x pseudorosulata has invaded multiple water bodies in south Florida near West Palm Beach and is impacting recreational activities in Lakes Osborne and Wellington and is also impacting irrigation and flood control uses of associated drainage canals in the region. Small scale research identified endothall, carfentrazone-ethyl, and copper applied alone as potential control mechanisms for both eelgrass taxa; however, repeated treatments are likely needed for long-term reduction. The purpose of this work was to assess each herbicide as repeated treatments for control of eelgrass in each waterbody. Endothall was applied (3.0 ppm target rate) to sites in the Braden river. Endothall (5.0 ppm), carfentrazone-ethyl (200 ppb), and copper (1.0 ppm) were applied to field sites in South Florida. Onset of symptomology was rapid in each site (<3 days). Four weeks after initial treatment, V. spiralis aboveground biomass was reduced 92% in the Braden river; 6 weeks after final treatment V. spiralis could not be found in plots receiving multiple treatments. This project is ongoing but final results of this work will aid resource managers in Florida and other southeastern states that are managing eelgrass infested waterbodies.

Preliminary Phenological Trends of Vallisneria Grown in Mesocosms

Maxwell G. Gebhart, Mississippi State University

Vallisneria is a genus of submersed macrophytes in the Hydrocharitaceae family which several species are invasive in North America. Previous research on the genus has been confounded by numerous taxonomic changes, necessitating research into life history and phenological trends to improve management efforts. Vallisneria americana, V. neotropicalis, V. × pseudorosulata, V. spiralis, and V. australis are the most prevalent Vallisneria taxa in North America; the first two, native, and the latter, invasive. In this project, each taxon is being grown in separate mesocosms for two years. Environmental metrics (temperature and photoperiod) are being monitored for the duration of the project. Once a month, 30 samples are harvested per species, then separated into aboveground and belowground tissues, ramet number and flower density are recorded. Once dried, tissue weight is recorded and converted to g DW/m2. As expected, invasive Vallisneria

grow more quickly and produce more biomass and ramets than native Vallisneria, overall. As of April 2026, Vallisneria spiralis produced the most ramets (7,795 per m2; January 2026), though sharply declined after freezing temperatures occurred. Vallisneria × pseudorosulata produced 5,788 ramets per m2 in December and maintained this density after freezing temperatures, suggesting more tolerance to freezing conditions than V. spiralis. Vallisneria australis and V. americana achieved peak aboveground biomass, 461 and 57 g DW/m2 respectively, in September and October 2025 with gradual decline afterwards. Finally, V. neotropicalis reached peak aboveground biomass in December 2025 (35.8 g DW/m2), though continued growing and flowering throughout winter. Initial results suggest management for invasive Vallisneria may optimally occur in late spring before plants can begin rapid growth in the summer period, particularly V. × pseudorosulata which doubled its ramet density from 833 to 1,809 ramets per m2 from April to May 2025. This project is still ongoing and includes a starch analysis that may provide detail of internal energy storage, thus clarifying critical management periods.

General Session II

Boater Safety Basics

Corporal Hunter Pearson, Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries

A brief PowerPoint presentation will be given relating to boating safety equipment requirements. Safe vessel operation / best practices will also be discussed. A question and answer portion will follow.

Beyond the Label: ESA Compliance, Recordkeeping, and Telling Your Story

Kim Brown, Kim Brown Consulting

This presentation will discuss current changes that are impacting pesticide applicators across all industries. It will focus on the importance of recordkeeping in how to comply with pesticide label changes and ESA compliance challenges. In addition, this presentation will speak on how applicators can tell their story beyond just their business.

DOT Regulations and Common Violations: What Commercial Vehicle Operators Need to Know

Lieutenant Brady Johnson, Louisiana State Police - Transportation Safety Section
Commercial motor vehicle operators must navigate a range of state and federal regulations designed to promote roadway safety. This presentation will provide practical guidance on what drivers should expect during a Department of Transportation (DOT) inspection and how to prepare for a successful inspection. Topics will include common violations, hours-of-service requirements and logbook compliance, restrictions on mobile phone use, and strategies for preventing crashes. Attendees will gain a better understanding of regulatory requirements and best practices for maintaining compliance and operating commercial motor vehicles safely.

Tending What Matters: Finding Homeostasis in the Chaos

Anne Stuckey-Williams, Louisiana State University School of Social Work

Living systems are never truly stable. A wetland after a hurricane, a lake in a dry summer, a river in flood: each gets knocked off course, and each recovers. Our bodies work the same way. Homeostasis is less a resting point than a constant series of small corrections.

Most of us don’t think about our lives that way. We picture balance as something we should achieve and then maintain, so when a grant deadline collides with a sick kid or a project runs long, we decide we’ve failed. In 30 years as a clinical social worker, and in my work with physicians, engineers, and graduate students, I’ve watched talented, dedicated people wear themselves out chasing a definition of balance that doesn’t exist.

This talk approaches burnout differently. We’ll explore how to notice the early signs that you’re drifting from your own equilibrium, how to build recovery into your busiest stretches instead of saving it for “later,” and how to return to center when life knocks you off course. You’ll leave with practical strategies you can use the same day.

Aquatic Plants Management Activities of the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources

Mike Pursley, MS Dept. of Marine Resources

Overview of AIS management in Coastal Mississippi. Major species managed include giant salvinia, Cuban bulrush, water hyacinth, alligatorweed, exotic water primrose, phragmites and beach vitex. Management activities include aerial mapping, herbicide spot spraying, integrated pest management, mechanical vegetation removal and aerial herbicide application.

General Session III

A Field Demonstration of Dioecious Hydrilla (Hydrilla verticillata) Control in the Spring Creek Arm of Lake Seminole

Michael Durham, U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center

In December of 2025, simultaneous applications of dipotassium salt of endothall and imazamox at 5 ppm and 150 ppb, respectively, were applied as a metered drips to the Spring Creek arm of Lake Seminole to suppress an infestation of about 475 ha of dioecious hydrilla [Hydrilla verticillata (L.F.) Royle]. The application was made over four consecutive 12-hour days. Rhodamine water tracer (RWT) dye was applied in conjunction with the herbicide treatment to monitor in situ water exchange processes with both continuous monitoring by deployed sondes and discrete point sampling with a hand-held sonde. Twelve, 4-hectare plots were established to monitor treatment efficacy through collecting water column biovolume density with sonar equipment and species frequency and density by twist rake point intercept sampling. Temperature data was collected throughout the water column along transects to monitor for potential thermoclines. At the time of application, no surface mats of hydrilla were present, typical of winter-time growth in Southern Georgia. Results from this study are forthcoming and should provide insight into hydrilla management in flowing systems using novel herbicide combinations.

Less Is Best: Low Dose Copper Sulfate Treatments Can Improve Water Quality

Dr. Alan Wilson, Auburn

o Algal blooms continue to worsen water quality in waterbodies around the world. Numerous biological, physical, and chemical approaches have been evaluated to manage algal blooms. However, few have demonstrated consistent long-term improvements to water quality. As a result, copper sulfate pentahydrate remains one of the most widely used algaecides in recreational and aquaculture systems due to its rapid suppression of algal biomass. Despite its widespread use, copper sulfate is commonly applied at high concentrations based on ambient alkalinity, and treatment benefits are often short-lived. Repeated high-dose applications may promote increasingly copper-tolerant algal communities while negatively affecting important components of the aquatic food web, such as zooplankton and desirable phytoplankton taxa. Through a combination of replicated field experiments and quantitative syntheses (i.e., meta-analysis), we have shown that copper sulfate has likely been persistently overdosed for decades leading to reduced long-term treatment efficacy and increasing treatment demands. We provide new approaches to properly dose copper sulfate, which show that low dose copper sulfate treatments often produce the targeted results (i.e., less cyanobacteria) while supporting high quality phytoplankton taxa as well as beneficial zooplankton. Collectively, this work helps to provide practical guidance to improve the long-term sustainability and efficacy of copper-based algal bloom control strategies

Aquatic Vegetation Management in Mississippi: Successes, Failures, and Lessons Learned

Buford Lessley, MS WFP

Biologists across the state of Mississippi continue to spend enormous amounts of time managing aquatic vegetation. The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Fisheries Bureau is responsible for vegetation management on numerous public waterbodies and all state fishing lakes and state park lakes. In addition, biologists provide technical guidance to private landowners and government agencies that own waterbodies in the state. As new infestations of giant salvinia, water hyacinth, hydrilla, and eelgrass appear daily, we focus our efforts toward eradicating invasives, managing nuisance species, maintaining recreational access, educating the public, and promoting native species.

Interactive Study Applications as a Foundation for an AI Field-Support Agent in Applicator Training

Dr. Chris Taylor, Aqua Services, a Jones Lake Management Partner

We describe recent work at Jones Lake Management to develop digital training curricula for pesticide applicator certification and continuing education. This year, we used Claude AI to extract content from applicator core training manuals across seven states and built companion study applications to support applicator preparation. These applications provide an interactive, multifaceted approach to study that represents a significant departure from our previous methods. They will be unified within a single interface that offers self-grading and identifies each user's strongest and weakest areas of understanding. The programs have been well received to date and will also inform the development of a field-focused Microsoft Copilot agent. That effort is now underway, and we describe the process by which the agent will be developed and validated by users over the coming year.

Wednesday, October 28, 2026

General Session IV

Control of Vallisneria nana Grown in Mesocosms

Adrian Horstead, Mississippi State University

Vallisneria nana was recently identified at a plant nursery in Texas, prompting concern the species could become invasive, similar to other invasive Vallisneria taxa in the southeastern U.S. Invasive Vallisneria can inhibit waterbody use for drinking water intakes and hydroelectric power generation, therefore V. nana management strategies must be identified quickly. Previous research on V. nana is limited due to major taxonomic revisions for the Vallisneria genus. Thus, this research will describe the herbicide sensitivity of V. nana to four aquatic labelled herbicides: copper, diquat, endothall, and flumioxazin. In mesocosms, herbicides were applied as static applications at maximum and half-maximum label rates. Then, six weeks after treatment plants were harvested and separated into aboveground and belowground biomass, with ramet densities recorded. The collected data was assessed using an ANOVA at the $\alpha=0.05$ significance level. Results of this project will provide actionable information for resource managers should V. nana be detected in U.S. waterbodies.

Seasonal Efficacy of Herbicide Mixtures for Giant Salvinia Management in Mesocosms

Kori Paliwoda, Texas A&M University

Giant salvinia (Salvinia molesta) is an invasive floating macrophyte capable of forming dense surface mats in lentic systems throughout the southern United States. Although foliar herbicide applications are widely used for management, treatment efficacy may vary with seasonal photoperiod and temperature. Mesocosm trials were conducted to evaluate herbicide mixtures currently or historically used by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) under natural winter and summer photothermal regimes. Treatments were arranged in a completely randomized design with three replicates per treatment and applied following an establishment period. Treatment responses were evaluated for 8-12 weeks using visual estimates of total surface coverage and the percentage of chlorotic, necrotic, or dead plant tissue. At trial termination, plant material was harvested to determine final wet and dry biomass relative to pretreatment biomass. The winter trial consisted of an untreated reference and eight foliar treatments containing flumioxazin, diquat, or combinations of these active ingredients. All winter herbicide treatments produced complete foliar browning, although the persistence and buoyancy of necrotic biomass varied among treatments. Freezing conditions caused substantial biomass loss in untreated mesocosms; however, surviving plants subsequently produced new fronds and daughter ramets, indicating that freeze-induced foliar injury did not result in complete mortality. The summer trial consisted of an untreated reference and six foliar treatments containing flumioxazin, glyphosate, metsulfuron-methyl, or combinations of these active ingredients. Treatments were applied following an establishment period, and treatment responses are currently being evaluated. Surface coverage, plant injury, and final wet and dry biomass will be analyzed using one-way analysis of variance followed by Bonferroni-adjusted multiple comparisons at $\alpha = 0.05$. Both seasonal trials will be repeated to assess the reproducibility of treatment responses. Herbicide efficacy will also be evaluated relative to treatment cost. Results from these trials will inform TPWD in selecting seasonally appropriate and cost-effective herbicide mixtures that provide sustained biomass reduction and limit post-treatment recovery of giant salvinia.

Aquatic Use and Select Non-Aquatic Use Herbicide Efficacy on Vallisneria spiralis in Mesocosms

Abigail Pugh, Mississippi State University

Vallisneria is a genus of submersed macrophytes with several species that have become invasive in the U.S. potentially due to aquaria dumping. In Florida, V. spiralis is an introduced species of Vallisneria that has become problematic in large waterbodies such as the Braden River. Due to major taxonomic revisions, previous research on V. spiralis management is lacking, leading to the necessity of chemical management research. Mesocosm studies were used to assess the herbicide efficacy of 13 herbicides labelled for aquatic use and 14 herbicides with potential for a special local needs label. Plants were allowed to acclimate for two weeks in mesocosms then, pre-treatment specimens were collected, separated into aboveground and belowground tissue, and ramet densities were recorded. Plant tissues were then left to dry in a forced air-drying oven for 72 hours at 80º C, then biomass and ramet density was recorded and converted into a per square meter basis. Once treatments were dispensed, collections were done at 6 and 12 WAT and treated in a similar manner to the pre-treatment specimens. The collected biomasses and ramet densities were analyzed using a generalized linear model with a post-hoc Fisher's least sum of differences both at $\alpha = 0.05$. Overall, contact herbicides were found to be less effective at reducing target tissues with V. spiralis; however, systemic herbicides that utilize STPP and ALS inhibition reduce biomass dramatically at 12 WAT. These results suggest V. spiralis may need different considerations for management with effective chemistry to be studied further in a long-term concentration exposure time trials.

How Do Salvinia Weevils Respond to Herbicide Treated Giant Salvinia?

Dr. Samantha Prinsloo, Louisiana State University

Giant salvinia, Salvinia molesta, is considered one of the world's worst invasive floating aquatic weeds. Giant salvinia was spread through anthropogenic activities from South America and has invaded waterbodies throughout southeastern parts of the U.S. Giant salvinia infestations cause dense floating mats which negatively impact native environments and impede waterways, navigation, fishing, and other socio-economic activities. To combat giant salvinia, mechanical, physical, chemical, and biological control options have been developed. However, this species still remains problematic due to shortcomings of individual control options. Chemical control can be hindered by inaccessibility issues where dense tree stands or shallow waters prevent resource managers from successfully reaching plant populations with aquatic herbicides. Untreated areas serve as nurseries or refuge for plants that allow subsequent reinfestation. Biological control using the salvinia weevil, Cyrtobagous salviniae, is negatively impacted by the weevil's poor cold tolerance and low field population densities. To overcome these limitations, an integrated pest management (IPM) approach can be used to increase control of infestations. Previous research has shown that some herbicides are nontoxic to the salvinia weevils, which allows for the integration of insects and chemicals. However, weevil response to herbicide treated plants has yet to be investigated, and it was unknown if weevils will persist or move away from herbicide treated plants to healthy material. Therefore, an outdoor mesocosm experiment was conducted to Evaluate six herbicides including glyphosate, flumioxazin, glyphosate + flumioxazin, metsulfuron, and two rates of diquat for impact on weevils. Salvinia weevils were placed in mesocosms that contained 50% treated and 50% untreated plants and allowed to move between plant material. After seven days the plant material was collected and weevil presence on treated or untreated plants was determined. This study found that weevil presence was significantly greater on untreated plants for all herbicides with glyphosate + flumioxazin, glyphosate, flumioxazin, and diquat (high rate), exhibiting the highest weevil deterrence. Based on these findings, weevil behavior towards herbicide treated plants can be manipulated to overcome the shortcomings surrounding current management practices specifically the issue of inaccessibility. One example of this could be targeting weevil releases near areas of inaccessibility, followed by an herbicide application to force weevils to migrate to untreated healthy plants. Thus, this method could be a used to 'herd' weevils into inaccessible areas, allowing for plant control in previously uncontrolled areas.

Initial Concentration-Exposure Time Relationships for Vallisneria spiralis with Select Herbicides

Jill Skidmore, Mississippi State University

Vallisneria spiralis is an invasive plant in the southeastern U.S. and currently lacks robust herbicide management research. Therefore, assessing the rates and necessary exposure times for efficacious herbicides on V. spiralis is critical for the development of its management program. The assessed herbicides include: endothall, bispyribac-sodium, topramezone, bensulfuron, rimsulfuron, and trifloxysulfuron. Testing was grouped by aquatic vs. non-aquatic labelling, resulting in two major testing groups. For each herbicide, three

application rates and three exposure times were selected, resulting in 30 unique treatments, including references. Each treatment was replicated five times and the entire trial repeated a week later for temporal replication. Twelve weeks after treatment (WAT), above and belowground biomass was harvested from half of the pots in each mesocosm; at 52 WAT, the remaining pots will be harvested. At 12 WAT, no aquatic use herbicide at any rate or exposure time reduced V. spiralis tissues; though, significant differences between trials were found. Non-aquatic use herbicides reduced aboveground tissue regardless of rate and exposure time, belowground tissue was reduced by high treatment rates and exposure times, and rimsulfuron was the only herbicide to reduce ramet density. Further investigation should refine effective herbicide rates and exposure times for endothall and sulfonylurea herbicides due to their efficacy reducing V. × pseudorosulata biomass.

Evaluation of Short-Duration Herbicide Combinations for East Indian Hygrophila (Hygrophila Polysperma) Control

Ian Talty, United States Army Corp of Engineers ERDC

East Indian hygrophila (Hygrophila polysperma) is an invasive aquatic plant that forms dense infestations in natural and managed freshwater systems in Florida. Introduced through the aquarium trade, H. polysperma can reduce native plant diversity, obstruct water flow, and interfere with recreational and water-management activities. Vegetative fragments readily produce new plants, limiting the utility of mechanical control and facilitating dispersal. Chemical management is therefore an important management tool; however, hygrophila commonly invades canals, rivers, and other flowing-water environments where maintaining herbicide concentrations for extended exposure periods can be difficult. Previous research has demonstrated activity from several aquatic herbicides, including flumioxazin and florpyrauxifen-benzyl, but information regarding short-duration exposures and herbicide combinations remains limited. The objective of this research was to evaluate short-duration concentration-exposure treatments of combinations containing florpyrauxifen-benzyl, flumioxazin, diquat, and endothall for submersed H. polysperma control. Greenhouse mesocosm experiments evaluated five herbicide combinations following 12- and 24-h exposure periods. Visual control was assessed weekly, viable aboveground biomass was harvested at experiment termination, and water temperature and light intensity were continuously monitored during each experimental run. Herbicide efficacy differed significantly between experimental runs (treatment × run, $P = 0.0012$), with substantially greater biomass reductions observed during the warmer experimental run. Across experimental runs, flumioxazin + diquat provided the most consistent biomass reduction at both 12- and 24-h exposures, while flumioxazin + florpyrauxifen-benzyl also provided near-complete control during the warmer experimental run. Results demonstrate that short-duration exposure to herbicide combinations can provide effective H. polysperma control and suggest that seasonal environmental conditions, particularly water temperature, may strongly influence treatment performance. Flumioxazin + diquat warrants further evaluation under field conditions where short herbicide exposure periods are common.

General Session V

Aquatic Vegetation Management in Texas Private Ponds: Challenges, Practices, and Knowledge Gaps

Dr. Brittany Chesser, Texas A&M University

Private ponds are common and intensively managed aquatic systems, yet contemporary information on how pond owners perceive and manage aquatic vegetation problems is limited. A statewide survey of Texas private pond owners and managers was conducted to characterize pond management practices, identify common challenges, and assess educational needs. This analysis focused on aquatic vegetation issues, perceived vegetation coverage, control practices, and self-reported management knowledge among 152 completed responses. More than half of respondents (54.6%) considered identified with aquatic vegetation challenges was the most frequently identified primary pond-management issue, reported by 39.2% of respondents. Reported vegetation challenges varied in both extent and type, and respondents used a range of management approaches, including chemical, physical or mechanical, and biological control. Management responses also varied considerably, with some respondents employing multiple control strategies while others reported taking no action. Differences were also observed in self-reported pond-management knowledge and in how respondents approached aquatic vegetation management. These results provide a contemporary look at how private pond owners and managers perceive and respond to aquatic vegetation challenges in Texas. Understanding the factors associated with vegetation problem recognition and management decisions can

help identify opportunities for more targeted education and outreach.

Automated Mapping of Non-Indigenous Aquatic Plant Species via Unoccupied Aerial Systems and Artificial Intelligence

Daniel McCraine, Mississippi State University

Non-Indigenous Aquatic Plant Species (NIAPS) pose significant threats to aquatic ecosystems by altering habitat structure, reducing native biodiversity, and impairing ecosystem services. Effective detection and monitoring of these invasive species are essential for supporting timely management and mitigation efforts. Recent advances in remote sensing technologies and detection methods, particularly the use of unoccupied aerial vehicles (UAVs), have provided new opportunities for rapid, high-resolution assessment of aquatic vegetation across large and difficult-to-access areas. This research explores the integration of UAV-based multispectral and true-color imaging with artificial intelligence (AI) classification models housed in the ArcGIS Pro environment for the identification and mapping of select non-indigenous aquatic plant species. This full cycle approach provides resource managers with the tools they need to classify, target, and create treatment plans to mitigate troublesome species in their waterways.

Alabama Power Aquatic Plant Management Program

Tim McLean, Alabama Power

This will be a general update and overview of our program and what APC’s aquatic plant management team has been up to for the 2026 season. We will discuss our invasive management efforts as well as looking at new technologies to help us with survey efforts

Advancing Aquatic Invasive Plant Management: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Strategic Approach

Kayla Kimmel, USFWS

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program (FAC) in the southeast region has shifted efforts to focus on effectively mitigating the impacts of aquatic invasive plants through strategic coordination and collaboration with federal, state, and tribal partners. Our goal is to cultivate a unified strategy that protects aquatic ecosystems, enhances biodiversity, and encourages sustainable management practices - ultimately benefiting both the environment and the communities that rely on these resources. This presentation provides a regional overview of initial efforts and seeks insights on partner needs.

Research Session II

Submersed Herbicide Treatments: Achieving Success in a 4-Dimensional Environment

Dr. Ben Sperry, US Army, Aquatic Plant Managemnt Team, ERDC, Gainsville

Managing aquatic invasive vegetation presents unique operational challenges that extend well beyond the physical boundaries of a waterbody. Effective aquatic plant management requires operating within a complex “4-dimensional” environment, where 3 dimensional spatial parameters (length, width, and depth) must be meticulously integrated with the critical fourth dimension: time. This presentation provides field staff with a comprehensive, applied framework for planning and executing successful submersed herbicide treatments. The session will explore the foundational components of strategic treatment planning, emphasizing the importance of optimal application timing and precise rate determination. Central to this discussion is an in-depth look at Concentration-Exposure Time (CET) relationships and their fundamental role in achieving target plant control. Because aquatic environments are highly dynamic, we will examine how bulk water exchange processes such as flow, wave action, and tidal influence can rapidly alter herbicide dissipation, directly impacting CET and treatment efficacy. Furthermore, the presentation will evaluate modern application methods designed to optimize herbicide delivery and mitigate the effects of environmental variables. By addressing common operational issues and concerns encountered in the field, this session aims to equip practitioners with the practical knowledge necessary to navigate complex aquatic conditions, maximize herbicide efficacy, and ensure operational success.

Does Integrated Pest Management Improve Control of Cuban Bulrush?

Dr. Chris Mudge, U.S. Army ERDC

The monocephalous (capitate) and polycephalous (anthelate) forms of the invasive emergent aquatic epiphyte Cuban bulrush (Cyperus blepharoleptos) have spread throughout the U.S. during the past decade. Herbicides are the primary control technology used to manage this plant, but mechanical control using shredding is a non-chemical option that has been used where established mats (tussocks) dominate the aquatic system. In addition, an integrated pest management (IPM) approach using shredding and herbicides requires further evaluation since both tools have limitations. Therefore, two mesocosm experiments were conducted in Baton Rouge, LA, during 2025 to evaluate the influence of water depth following shredding and shredding followed by foliar herbicide applications to remove remnant plants. In the first experiment, mono- and polycephalous forms were shredded and weighted to the bottom of containers with 15, 30, or 60 cm of water and remained for 6 weeks prior to harvest. In the second experiment, both forms were shredded and placed on floating frames, acclimated for 4 weeks, and treated with foliar applications of 2,4-D, diquat, flumioxazin, glyphosate, florpyrauxifen-benzyl, or triclopyr. At 6 weeks after treatment (WAT), plants were harvested. Both experiments included controls which consisted of individual plants placed on a floating frame without being subjected to herbicides or water depth. In the initial shredding trial, all mono- and polycehpalous plants were controlled 100% regardless of water depth. However, in the repeated trial, water depth had less impact, but submerging mono- and polycephalous plants 15 to 60 cm below the water's surface resulted in 80 to 84% and 77 to 83% control, respectively. Experiment timing likely contributed to the increased level of control in the first trial. The water temperature was much warmer and algae blocked light, whereas the repeated trial was conducted under cooler conditions and clearer water. In the shredding followed by herbicide trial, all treatments provided 100% control of monocephalous plants, and all treatments except florpyrauxifen-benzyl (43% control) provided 92 to 100% control of the polycephalous plants. This data indicates that an IPM approach of shredding in conjunction with water depth or follow up herbicide applications can be effective at managing Cuban bulrush

Increasing Efficacy of Restoration Projects in Coastal Louisiana via Kinetic Invasive Species Control

David Curtiss, USDA - APHIS

Every year millions of dollars are spent on coastal restoration on Louisiana's coast. These projects restore marsh and island habitats and require thousands of young plants and trees to be transplanted. Unfortunately, young plants and disturbed soils present feeding opportunities for invasive feral hogs (Sus scrofa) and nutria (Myocaster coypus). These mammals can quickly destroy a variety of habitats, but coastal environs are particularly vulnerable. Feral hogs root up soils looking for plant and animal material to consume. Nutria, on the other hand, only feed on the tender young shoots and stems of marsh vegetation but leave the majority of the plant to rot and destroy marsh with their burrowing. Regardless of the species, the results are decimated marshes, eroding dunes, and a coast less resilient and able to resist storms and sea level rise. Historically, USDA Wildlife Services has provided assistance to farmers to reduce damage from destructive wildlife, in Louisiana however we have the added mission of protecting our coastline as well. Using a variety of techniques, USDA removes thousands of hogs and nutria from coastal habitats across the state. These efforts successfully protect millions of acres from additional damage and are increasingly protecting restoration sites.

Aquatic Use and Select Non-Aquatic Use Herbicide Efficacy on Vallisneria × pseudorosulata Grown in Mesocosms

Dr. Gray Turnage, Mississippi State University

Submersed macrophytes such as Vallisneria fulfill critical roles in their native ecosystems and provide important forage and shelter for a variety of organisms. However, Vallisneria × pseudorosulata is a recent, aggressive invader of waterbodies in the southeast U.S., with little known about the management of this eelgrass hybrid. Therefore, mesocosm studies were conducted to assess the herbicide efficacy of 13 herbicides labelled for aquatic use and 14 herbicides not labelled for aquatic use. Plant biomass and ramet density were collected at 6 and 12 weeks after treatment (WAT). Data were analyzed using a generalized linear model with a post-hoc Tukey's Honest sum of differences test at the $\alpha = 0.05$ significance level. Of the 27 tested herbicides, PPO, STPP, and ALS inhibiting herbicides effectively reduced above and belowground biomass and ramet density at 12 WAT. These results suggest several effective chemistries for use in V. × pseudorosulata

management and their efficacy will be studied further in long-term concentration exposure time trials; however, some will require 24c labelling prior to availability for operational use.

General Session VI

Mapping Ponds, Finding Fish: A Practical BioBase Workflow for Lake Managers

Troy Goldsby, Aqua Services, a Jones Lake Management Partner

Lake managers make decisions about vegetation, fisheries, aeration, and habitat improvements, often with limited information about conditions below the surface. Over the past year, Aqua Services staff mapped 41 waterbodies with BioBase, most of them private ponds. I will share how my team turns those surveys into useful information for managing ponds and advising their owners.

BioBase processes sonar recordings into maps of depth, aquatic vegetation, and bottom hardness, along with water-volume estimates. Its EcoFish layer adds the locations and depths of detected fish and schools and shows where detections are concentrated. Together, these layers help me and my team investigate questions that matter to pond owners: Are fish using deep-water habitat? Are detections occurring near artificial structures? Where might clients find promising places to fish? Selected projects will show how the answers can guide field checks, management plans, and conversations with clients.

I will also share the repeatable field-to-map workflow his team developed while mapping these ponds. For managers considering BioBase, I will explain how to prepare for a survey, collect usable sonar data, review the resulting maps, and put those maps to work. These practical tips will cover choices that affect data quality and common problems a new user can avoid.

The presentation will distinguish what a sonar map shows from what requires other field methods. Fish detections represent the conditions observed during a survey; they do not identify species, provide a complete population count, or guarantee fish will remain in one location. Paired with field observations and fisheries surveys, BioBase helps us get a fuller view of each pond and make more informed management decisions.

Trending Issues in Urban Pond Management

Ken Rust, Lousisiana Pond Management

Urban pond and lake management have a unique set of issues that need to be handled by field biologists. Access, erosion, wildlife, and humans are some of the issues we will visit during this talk.

Invasion Pathways and Integrated Management of Aquatic Weeds

Dr. Lyn Gettys, University of Florida

IPM (integrated pest management) is the strategy of using “all the tools in the toolbox” for control of invasive species. Dr. Gettys will outline the philosophy of IPM and discuss the four main types of management strategies that can be used in IPM programs in aquatics. She will also cover case studies that highlight the benefits of using an integrated approach and will provide examples of how IPM is being used for control of a number of invasive plant species.

Beyond Release: What Limits the Establishment of a Water Hyacinth Biological Control Agent in the Southeastern United States?

Flaminia Mariani, Louisiana State University

The water hyacinth moth, Niphograpta albiguttalis, was introduced from Argentina to several parts of the United States in the 1970s for the biological control of water hyacinth (Pontederia crassipes). The insect established in southeastern states but failed to persist in other regions, including California. However, its distribution remains patchy across the southeastern United States. Understanding the conditions associated with this variation could improve monitoring and guide future releases. We surveyed 22 sites with water hyacinth across Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Texas, and Florida, spanning eight degrees of latitude. We examined three groups of factors that could influence insect occurrence and density: water conditions, host-plant traits, and interactions with other herbivores. At each site, we measured water physicochemical properties; plant traits including petiole toughness, tissue nitrogen, C:N ratio, growth form, and position within the mat; and feeding damage by two other biological control agents of water hyacinth, Neochetina weevils and Orthogalumna mites. Niphograpta albiguttalis was detected at only six sites (27%). Plants at sites where the insect was present had softer petioles and higher tissue nitrogen than plants at sites where it was absent. Models of insect occurrence and density identified cooler water and higher nitrate concentrations as

consistent predictors. Insect populations were also associated with less feeding damage by co-occurring herbivores. Occurrence increased with latitude, while density was greater on plants with softer petioles and at more interior positions within water hyacinth mats. Our findings suggest that water conditions, plant quality, and co-occurring herbivores may jointly influence where insect populations persist. They can guide the selection of monitoring sites and help identify suitable places and times for future releases. Rather than relying on one-time releases and waiting for populations to establish, water hyacinth management could use mass rearing to support repeated, strategically timed augmentative releases. These releases could be coordinated with existing herbicide programs as part of an integrated approach to long-term control.

Thursday, October 29, 2026

Workshop

From Plant ID to Public Buy-In: Communicating Aquatic Vegetation Management

Dr. Brittany Chesser, TX A&M

Aquatic plant professionals generate valuable research, field observations, and management experience, but their significance is not always clear to people outside the profession. A pond owner wants to know what a plant means for their pond. An applicator needs information they can use in the field. A student may understand a study’s results but struggle to explain why they matter. Finding the “so what?” is a skill that can help all of us communicate more effectively and advance the aquatic plant management industry. This presentation will draw on examples from AquaExtension and an applied aquatic plant management class to show how technical information can become useful outreach. We will consider how photographs, hands-on identification, graphical abstracts, and short social media explanations can connect a finding to a decision someone needs to make. One example is the brief survey requested when authors submit to the Journal of Aquatic Plant Management, which helps turn research findings into short, accessible snippets. Attendees will be challenged to identify one finding, field lesson, or question from their own work and answer: Who needs this information, why should they care, and what can they do with it? Researchers, applicators, educators, and students each have a role in making the value of aquatic plant management more visible and easier to put into practice.

Midsouth Aquatic Plant Management Society



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Speaker Biographies

(In Alphabetical Order by Last Name)

Brown, Kim

Kim Brown is a pesticide safety and regulation expert with 15 years of experience as an extension specialist across Alabama, Louisiana, and Tennessee. Through Kim Brown Consulting, she works with the Oklahoma Agricultural Aviation Association (OAAA) and the Louisiana Agricultural Aviation Association (LAAA) as executive director. She also works with pilots and applicators on pesticide certification and recertification. She also conducts pattern testing for aerial applicators, helping operators fine-tune their equipment for accurate, efficient applications. Kim has spent the last couple of years focusing on ESA changes.

Chesser, Brittany

Brittany Chesser earned her B.S. in Natural Resources from Delaware State University and her M.S. in Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture from Mississippi State University. She joined the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in 2019 and earned her Ph.D. from the Department of Rangeland, Wildlife, and Fisheries Management at Texas A&M University in May 2026. She currently serves as an Assistant Professor and Extension Aquatic Vegetation Specialist. Her primary responsibilities include providing technical expertise in aquatic vegetation management through plant identification, research-based management recommendations, educational presentations, outreach materials, and maintenance of AquaPlant.tamu.edu. Brittany also serves as the laboratory specialist for the Texas A&M Aquatic Diagnostics Laboratory, where she conducts routine water-quality analyses and other diagnostic services, prepares client reports, and recommends appropriate water-quality amendments. Her professional service includes serving as president of the Texas Aquatic Plant Management Society in 2022 and as a member of the national Aquatic Plant Management Society Board of Directors from 2023 to 2026.

Curtiss, David

David Curtiss is a wildlife biologist with USDA APHIS Wildlife Services and supervisor of the SE Louisiana District. He received his BS in Wildlife Biology from Unity College in 2007 and his MS in Marine and Environmental Biology from Nicholls State University in 2013. His work currently focuses on resolving human/wildlife conflicts in urban/industrial environments as well as invasive species control

Durham, Michael

Mike Durham is a Research Biologist for the U.S. Army Engineer Research & Development Center (ERDC) and stationed in Gainesville, FL. His current research responsibilities include the development and evaluation of novel approaches to the management of aquatic vegetation. He received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Florida in botany and weed science, respectively. Prior to his current position, he worked as a Biological Scientist at the University of Florida. For most of his time at UF, his research focused on weed control in agronomic crops, natural areas and industrial sites.

Ferrell, Jay

Dr. Ferrell joined the University of Florida as an Assistant Professor in 2004 with responsibilities in weed management and herbicide stewardship. In the time since, he has attained the rank of Associate Professor (2009) and Professor (2014). Dr. Ferrell became the Director of the UF'/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants in 2017 where he helps coordinate and promote invasive plant research and extension activities throughout the state. In 2019 to 2024, he served as Director of the UF/IFAS Pesticide Information Office which directs pesticide licensing/testing and extension outreach activities for pesticide safety and compliance. In 2024, he was named Chair of the Agronomy Department and provides direction to 36 faculty programs located across 8 statewide units.

Finkbeiner, Kane

Kane has worked in the Aquatic Plant Control section of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries for seventeen years, and is currently serving as the Aquatic Plant Control biologist manager for the north Louisiana region based out of Monroe, LA. He has assisted with the administration of invasive aquatic weeds throughout the state, with his primary focus being management of floating and emergent nuisance species.

Fontenot, Todd

Todd Fontenot has nearly 20 years of experience with the LSU AgCenter, where he has worked since 2006. He transitioned into agricultural and natural resource extension in 2015, serving as an agronomic crops agent for multiple Louisiana parishes before being appointed Area Crawfish Extension Agent in 2023.

In his current role, Fontenot serves as a statewide resource for Louisiana's commercial crawfish industry, working with producers and university researchers on crawfish production, rice-crawfish farming systems, pond water quality, aquatic invasive species, and best management practices. His responsibilities include evaluating production challenges and communicating research-based management recommendations to industry professionals.

His extensive extension experience, specialized knowledge of crawfish pond ecosystems, and direct involvement with aquatic resource management provide relevant professional qualifications to present on Louisiana's crawfish industry and its relationship with aquatic vegetation.

Gebhart, Maxwell G.

Maxwell is an invasive plant biologist interested in aquatic plants typically associated with wetland environments. He earned his master’s degree in biological sciences at Minnesota State University, Mankato and is pursuing a doctorate degree in weed science at Mississippi State University. His research focuses on the biological and ecological traits of invasive plants, such as Vallisneria × pseudorosulata and Butomus umbellatus; but has recently started focusing on management strategies for invasive plant species.

Gettys, Lyn

Dr. Lyn Gettys is an Associate Professor of Agronomy (Aquatic and Wetland Plant Science) and has been based at the University of Florida IFAS Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center in Davie since 2012. Prior to that, she spent more than four years working with Dr. Bill Haller as a post-doctoral researcher and a Research Assistant Scientist at the UF/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants in Gainesville. She holds a bachelor’s degree in horticulture from the University of Florida, a master’s degree in plant breeding from North Carolina State University and a Ph.D. in plant genetics from the University of Florida. Dr. Gettys’ research is focused on the biology and ecology of native and introduced aquatic and wetland plants and evaluation of control methods for managing invasive species. She coordinates the UF/IFAS Aquatic Weed Control Short Course, which draws around 500 attendees annually. She also has statewide Extension responsibilities for aquatic weed control.

Goldsby, Troy

Troy Goldsby is a veteran in aquatic ecosystem management with more than 25 years of experience working on lakes, reservoirs, and fisheries across the United States—especially in the Southeast. Growing up in the field through his family’s company, Aqua Services, he helped expand the business into one of the region’s leading full service lake management firms. In 2023, the company partnered with Jones Lake Management, allowing Troy to focus more deeply on complex projects and a small, select group of private clients.

His work centers on trophy largemouth bass development, aquatic vegetation, water quality, habitat design, and long term ecosystem restoration. Troy’s philosophy emphasizes treating a lake as an interconnected system—using biological data, forage dynamics, habitat, vegetation, and water quality analysis to build sustainable, high performance fisheries rather than chasing short term gains. His experience spans private

trophy bass lakes, large government projects, invasive species management, cyanobacteria control, and collaborations with agencies, researchers, and utilities.

Troy has held numerous leadership roles in professional organizations and contributed to major initiatives such as Tennessee's Bill Dance Signature Lakes program. He frequently speaks at industry conferences and co hosts the educational podcast Sitting Dockside. Today, he works only with a small number of private clients, serving as a long term advisor who coordinates all aspects of lake and fisheries management. His goal is to help create exceptional, enduring aquatic systems that provide outstanding recreation for owners and future generations.

Hill, Daniel

Daniel is Southern Aquatics Sales Representative for Alligare. He brings over 13 years of experience in aquatic plant management, with a strong background in resource management and large-scale program coordination. His career includes serving as a Biologist Supervisor with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in Southwestern Louisiana, followed by a statewide role managing nuisance aquatic vegetation. Most recently, he supported aquatic plant control efforts in the Atchafalaya Basin.

Horstead, Adrian

Adrian is a senior at Mississippi State University majoring in Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture and is active in undergraduate research endeavors at the university. He recently completed an internship with the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation in Washington D.C. where he was the Fisheries Policy Intern. After graduation, he plans to pursue career opportunities in conservation management that will allow him to transition research findings to day-to-day management activities for conservation stakeholders.

Johnson, Brady

Lieutenant Brady Johnson has served with the Louisiana State Police for 12 years and currently serves in the Transportation Safety Section (TSS), which is responsible for commercial motor vehicle safety inspections and regulatory compliance. As Lieutenant of the Compliance Review and Training Division, he oversees investigations into commercial motor vehicle operators' compliance with applicable regulations. He also serves as the Training Lieutenant for TSS, providing specialized instruction in North American Standard Part A, which trains inspectors nationwide to identify and enforce hours-of-service and logbook violations.

Kimmel, Kayla

Kayla Kimmel is a Fisheries Biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, contributing nearly twenty years of experience to the Fish and Aquatic Conservation Program at the Baton Rouge Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office. In her role, she represents the Southeast Region's FAC program, which collaborates with state agencies, tribal governments, and local communities to conserve, restore, and manage freshwater ecosystems, native fish populations, and their habitats. Through strategic partnerships and science-driven initiatives, FAC advances efforts to protect biodiversity and promote sustainable aquatic resource management across the region.

Layne, Carlton

BA Biology Clarion University, Clarion, PA
MS Criminal Justice Rollins College, Winter Park, FL
5 years USDA - Inspector, Agricultural Marketing Service
30 Years EPA, Region 4, Pesticides and Toxic Substances Branch - Investigator, Chief of Pesticides Section, and National Pesticide Expert
22 years Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration Foundation - Executive Director
Currently - Make me an offer.

Lessley, Buford

Buford Lessley is a regional fisheries biologist for the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks (MDWFP). He serves as the Central Region Project Manager and oversees the busiest region in the state that includes several oxbow lakes along the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers, Ross Barnett Reservoir, and numerous state fishing and state park lakes. In addition to managing fisheries, he is a certified aquatic applicator and conducts vegetation surveys and treatments throughout the region and state. He received a bachelor's degree wildlife and fisheries from Mississippi State University in 2014 and a master’s in biology from the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley in 2016.

McCraine, Daniel

Daniel has 9 years of research experience in digital image analysis and feature extraction. He earned his BS and MS in Electrical and Computer Engineering at Mississippi State University in 2018 and 2020, respectively. Following graduation, he started working full time with the Geosystems Research Institute as a Research Engineer. His research focus is in UAS mounted LiDAR, true-color imagery, hyperspectral imagery, multispectral imagery, bathymetric data collection, processing, classification and feature extraction for various applied research goals

McLean, Tim

Tim has been with Alabama Power’s aquatic plant management team since 2017. He graduated from Auburn University in 2005 with a degree in fisheries science

Mudge, Chris

Dr. Mudge is a Research Biologist for the U.S. Army Engineer Research & Development Center (ERDC) and is stationed in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His current research responsibilities include the evaluation and development of use patterns for recently registered and experimental herbicides for selective management of invasive aquatic plants that hinder our Nation’s waterways, as well as screening experimental and non-aquatic herbicides against target species for future registration. Dr. Mudge has a B.S. and M.S. from Louisiana State University (LSU) in Agronomic Crops and Rice Weed Management, respectively, as well as a Ph.D. in Aquatic Weed Science from the University of Florida. In addition to his role with the Corps, he is an Adjunct Professor in the LSU School of Plant, Environmental and Soil Sciences and serves as an advisor to M.S. and Ph.D. graduate students

Paliwoda, Kori

Kori Paliwoda is a junior undergraduate student majoring in Rangeland, Wildlife, and Fisheries Management at Texas A&M University. She currently works as a student technician for the Texas A&M AgriLife Aquatic Diagnostics Laboratory where she has processed more than 1,000 water quality samples for pond owners across 18 states assisting them with pond and aquatic vegetation management issues. She is also extremely active in undergraduate research projects through the Aquatic Diagnostic Laboratory assisting with giant salvinia herbicide trials, red drum genetic selection studies, and is spearheading her own line of research trials examining beneficial bacterial products and determining the best species of bacteria for muck digestion and nutrient cycling. Kori has already authored two peer-reviewed AquaExtension fact sheets through the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to assist pond owners with selection of beneficial bacterial products and nutrient management and sequestration to prevent algal blooms and excess aquatic vegetation growth. Kori is an active member of the Texas A&M University Student Chapter of The Wildlife Society and Texas A&M AquaExtension. She has recently received scholarships from the Waller County Master Gardener Association and Joseph L. Schuster Scholarship for her academic efforts, contributions to science, and assistance to natural resource managers.

Pearson, Hunter

Corporal L. Hunter Pearson - Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries - Law Enforcement Division. 12+ years of marine law enforcement experience enforcing boating safety laws, investigating boating accidents, and educating the public on boating safety regulations.

Petta, Jim

Jim is the current AERF executive director and a past president of both AERF and APMS.

Prinsloo, Samantha

Dr. Samantha Prinsloo is a postdoctoral researcher at Louisiana State University working with giant salvinia and water hyacinth integrated pest management. Samantha is originally from South Africa where she completed her undergraduate and Masters' degrees specializing in entomology at Rhodes University. Samantha obtained her PhD in weed science at LSU in August 2026. Her PhD research focused on the integration of chemical and biological control to improve the management of giant salvinia, an invasive floating aquatic plant that has been troublesome in Louisiana and neighboring states since the late 1990's

Pugh, Abigail

Abigail Pugh is a senior in Biological Sciences at Mississippi State University, intending to pursue a master's degree. She has been an undergraduate student at the Geosystems Research Institute for the past year. Her interests include wildlife conservation, genetics, and wetland ecology. Her current research focuses on alligatorweed haplotype response to herbicides common to managing the species.

Pursley, Mike

Mike serves as the Invasive Species Program Manager for the Mississippi Department of Marine Resources. He is the Coastal MS representative for the Gulf and South Atlantic Regional Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species and is a founding member of the Mississippi Aquatic Invasive Species Council. He is a graduate of the University of Arkansas and Louisiana State University

Rust, Ken

Ken received an M.S. in Fisheries and Aquaculture from Louisiana State University. He has 35 years of national and international experience in pond management, aquatic plant culture, water features, filtration systems, fisheries enhancement, and aeration design/installation. Ken serves on the board of the Louisiana Aquatic Vegetation Management Association (LAVMA), helping provide training and recertification for aquatic herbicide applicators statewide.

Sanders, Dearl

I was not "Born On The Bayou" as the song says but close. Born in Baton Rouge in 1952 at a hospital on the Mississippi. BS degree from Northwestern State University 1973. MS degree from LSU in 1976 and PhD from LSU in 1979. Employed in 1979 by LSU AgCenter as extension weed specialist with outreach responsibility in crops and research and outreach in non-crop and aquatic weed management. Served as Executive Secretary of the Louisiana Vegetation Management Association from 1979-1998. LVMA is the umbrella organization responsible for training and EPA certification of all commercial non-crop and aquatic applicators in Louisiana. In 1999 I was appointed Resident Director of the Idlewild Research Station in Clinton, LA. Relieved of crop outreach activities my research and outreach activities in non-crop and aquatic activities increased until my retirement in 2015. I still serve on a number of advisory committees as a Professor Emeritus. In addition, I operated a consulting agricultural enterprise in Puerto Rico from 1993 until 2022.

Skidmore, Jill

Jill is an undergraduate student and is currently on track to earn her B.S. in Wildlife, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Sciences at Mississippi State University. Jill is pursuing a career as a biologist, with a focus on fisheries and aquaculture. Her research has mainly focused on off bottom oyster harvesting and bioinformatics on alligator gar and juvenile fish out of the Pascagoula Watershed. Jill has worked for Mississippi State's Aquatic Plant research lab for four years and has conducted research projects on both Vallisneria x pseudorosulata and Equisetum hyemale.

Sperry, Ben

Dr. Benjamin P. Sperry is a Senior Research Biologist and Leader of the Aquatic Plant Management Team at the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) Environmental Laboratory. Stationed in Gainesville, Florida, Dr. Sperry and his team conduct applied, multi-scaled research to provide practical management solutions and guidance for aquatic plant control operations across the nation. His research specializes in aquatic and invasive species management with a specific focus on optimizing existing technologies and developing new aquatic pesticide use-patterns for key invasive species in the U.S. His work also investigates vital areas of environmental stewardship including herbicide application technology, off-target movement, herbicide environmental fate, and integrated pest management strategies. Dr. Sperry holds a Bachelor's degree in Plant Science and Master's degree in Weed Science, both from the University of Florida's College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. He subsequently earned his Ph.D. in Weed Science from Mississippi State University. In addition to his primary mission at ERDC, Dr. Sperry serves as a Courtesy Assistant Professor at the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants. Through his extension program, he is dedicated to providing aquatic and invasive plant management throughout the country with the most up-to-date information regarding modern management technologies and methodologies.

Stuckey-Williams, Anne

Anne Stuckey-Williams is an Assistant Professor of Professional Practice at Louisiana State University's School of Social Work, a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and owner of Goodwood Counseling in Baton Rouge. With nearly 15 years of experience at LSU, she specializes in helping individuals navigate the challenges of demanding careers, workplace stress, and burnout. Her experience includes developing behavioral health programs for medical residents, supporting engineering students in building sustainable habits, and providing counseling to adults managing anxiety, ADHD, and depression. Her work focuses on helping professionals maintain their well-being, establish healthy boundaries, and achieve career success without sacrificing their personal lives.

Talty, Ian

Ian Talty is an Environmental Laboratory ORISE participant with the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center in Gainesville, Florida. He recently completed an M.S. in Agronomy at the University of Florida, where his research focused on cogongrass management, including chemical control, hydrologic influences on survival, and climatic influences on herbicide treatment timing. His current work involves exploring research opportunities related to invasive plant management, aquatic and wetland systems, and the environmental factors that influence management outcomes.

Taylor, Chris

Chris Taylor has worked as an applicator, administrative biologist, and systems analyst at Aqua Services in Guntersville Alabama since June 6, 2023. He has a bachelor's degree in Biomedical Sciences from Auburn University and masters and PhD in Biology from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Before joining Aqua Services, his work focused on aquaculture, the behavior of aquatic vertebrates and invertebrates, and logistics technologies. He also worked as an educator for 10 years with classes ranging from preschool to collegiate level.

Turnage, Gray

Dr. Turnage is an aquatic ecologist and weed scientist employed as an Associate Research/Extension Professor at Mississippi State University. His Research and Extension program focuses on management of aquatic and wetland resources. He has been involved with several projects across the U.S. refining control efforts and management protocols for invasive aquatic and wetland plants and other water resources. He has authored or co-authored 41 peer review journal articles, 341 professional presentations, 2 books, 1 book chapter, and 47 technical reports. He regularly serves as a consultant for federal and state resource management agencies in the U.S. regarding management issues they encounter. He also serves as an Associate Editor for the Journal of Aquatic Plant Management. He is a member of the Aquatic Plant Management Society (APMS), the MidSouth APMS chapter, the Weed Science Society of America, and the Mississippi Aquatic Invasive Species Council.

Wilson, Alan

Alan has been on faculty at Auburn University since 2007 and his lab conducts water quality research primarily focused on the causes, consequences, and controls of freshwater algal blooms. Learn more at https://www.wilsonlab.com/

