

January 3, 2022

Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Program (AIPCP) Q & A

Requested by: Program Development Subcommittee of the California Boating and Waterways Commission

Question: Where did invasive species come from originally and how?

Answer: Many of our invasive plants that we treat came from the aquarium trade. Water hyacinth is likely to have originated from the garden trade, and South American spongeplant through the aquarium and garden trade. Uruguay waterprimrose is usually sold as an aquarium or pond ornamental. Since these plants have invasive characteristics such as being able to outcompete surrounding plants, they were used in aquariums as a hearty option to oxygenate or decorate their tanks. Unfortunately, when people decide to get rid of these aquariums they will often dump them into surrounding waterbodies, unaware of the issue that this may cause. Another vector of spread are boaters who will collect plant fragments on their boat or trailer and unknowingly release them into the next water body when they launch again. There are other methods of spread. Anything that goes from point A to point B, such as water flow and wildlife migration, can spread plant fragments or seeds along the way.

Question: Why did the Division of Boating and Waterways (DBW) become responsible for administering and paying for this program?

Answer: In 1983, lawmakers designated the California Department of Parks and Recreation Division of Boating and Waterways as the lead agency for controlling water hyacinth in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta through SB1344.

Question: How much does DBW contribute? How much is supplied by other agencies?

Answer: Currently DBW contributes the full budget for the Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Program. DBW does have a contract with DWR to support their Fish Restoration Program which provides roughly \$3M annually in reimbursement for work conducted. This contract ends in June 2023.

Question: What direction is the program heading in?

Answer: The objective of the Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Program is to control the growth and spread of aquatic invasive plants in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, Suisun Marsh, and southern tributaries– the Tuolumne River and Merced River in support of the environment, economy, and public health. AIPCP is talking to other local, state and federal agencies who work in our near the Delta on potential resource sharing.

Question: Why should DBW continue to lead this program moving forward?

Answer: DBW should continue to lead this program because we have gained a very specific set of knowledge with the past 38 years of operation. Regulation and permit processes are very stringent especially in California and having one department lead allows more focus and specialization on understanding and following these complicated laws and processes.