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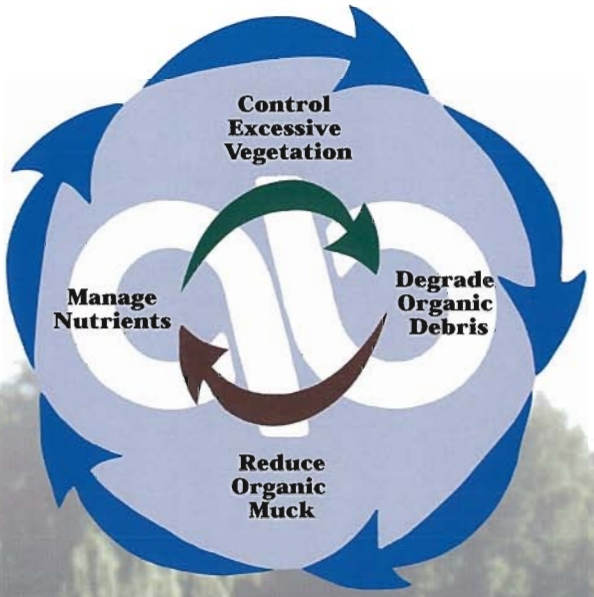

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Editorial

An Overview of the Impact of the Governor's Budget Plan on Florida's Aquatic and Upland Invasive Plant Control Effort

Paul C."P.J."Myers Jr.
General Manager – Applied Aquatic Management, Inc. Bartow, FL
President – Florida Aquatic Plant Management Society
February 8, 2003

Florida harbors a plethora of nonindigenious species that have devastating environmental and economic impacts. Statewide, there are approximately 120 exotic plant species that are invading and disrupting the natural environment some much more harmful than others. Without consistent and coordinated management efforts, these species overwhelm native plants, altering natural water flows, sunlight and displace natural vegetation and wildlife. In a matter of one or two growing seasons, nonnative plants can out compete native species forming monocultures consisting solely of nonnative plants.

Significant Invasive Aquatic Plants
Hydrilla
Water Hyacinth
Water Lettuce

Significant Invasive Upland Plants
Melaleuca, Brazilian Pepper, Australian Pine, Cogan Grass, Chinese Tallow, and Old World Climbing Fern

Continued on page 21

FAPMS Website:
www.fapms.org

A field of blooming Golden Club (Orontium aquaticum) greets spring in a tributary of the Appalachicola River.

Photo by Judy Ludlow

Aquatics
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Contents

AQUATICS (ISSN 1054-1799): Published quarterly as the official publication of the Florida Aquatic Plant Management Society Registration No. 1,579,647. This publication is intended to keep all interested parties informed on matters as they relate to aquatic plant management particularly in Florida. To become a member of FAPMS and receive the Society newsletter and Aquatics magazine, send $20.00 plus your mailing address to the Treasurer.
EDITORIAL: Address all correspondence regarding editorial matter to Judy Ludlow Aquatics Magazine.
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A Secret Life: Freshwater Jellyfish

by
Robert Korth
University of Wisconsin

Editors Note: While not about aquatic plant management, this article is published here for us to become familiar with an obscure and fascinating animal that could be part of the lake you manage and protect. In fact, if you see this critter, the Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) wants to know. You can report your finding at http://nsm1.nsm.iup.edu/tpeard/jellyfish.html "Have you seen freshwater jellyfish."

I did a double take... there in the cold clear water of Redgranite Quarry in central Wisconsin was a transparent phantom. I was acquainted with his larger saltwater cousins: I had observed them in almost every ocean. But, here, undulating through the water column, going about its timeless business, was a jellyfish- the freshwater kind. Upon further investigation, I found hundreds. Feeding on zooplankton, they rose to the surface, then descended through the water swimming actively up, down and sideways, moving to an ancient rhythm.

I noticed the creatures in depths of up to 30 feet where water temperatures were about 68 degrees F. Deeper than that, where water temperatures were 57 degrees, the jellyfish were absent. Their size ranged from that of a dime to larger than a quarter. Taken to the marine lab at Lawrence University, the little beast was positively identified as *Craspedacusta sowerbi*, a true jellyfish and the only known freshwater species in North America. Hardly anyone knows they exist, and they are rarely observed even by professional limnologists. And no wonder! An on again, off again creature with a peculiar life cycle, *Craspedacusta* may show up in a lake once and never be seen there again. Or it may reappear only after many years. Asking around revealed seven records of the occurrence of freshwater jellyfish in Wisconsin lakes since 1973. The lakes included Mendota, Half Moon, Leesome, Devils, White sand and Pine.

The textbooks don't have a lot to say about the natural history of freshwater jellyfish. The jellyfish form is the mature medusa stage of *Craspedacusta's* life cycle. It is shaped like an umbrella or an upside down soup dish. Reproduction is both sexual and asexual. Many freshwater jellyfish populations are either all male or all female. Adults can release sperm and eggs into the water, where fertilization occurs. At Redgranite Quarry both males and females were present.

When the fertilized egg falls to the bottom, it develops into a polyp or hydroid. The hydroid sends out branches, sometimes like the runners of a strawberry plant, and develops into a colony of between two and ten individuals. These often break off and start new colonies. Hydroids also sprout buds, which drop off and grow into new individuals. Budding can produce the jellyfish or medusa form, which is almost microscopic in size when dropped from the parent.

For many years the hydroid was thought to be a separate species called *Microhydra ryderi*. Because they're tiny, covered with debris, and live on the bottom, they are hardly ever found. It was not until 1924 that scientists learned that the hydroid was a stage in the development of the freshwater jellyfish. *Craspedacusta* itself was first discovered in England in 1880 and in the U.S. in 1908.

Craspedacusta has been reported in nearly all states east of the Mississippi but not in New England. There are related species in China, Africa, India and Trinidad.

There is still much to learn about the secret lives of the curious and wonderful creatures that live in our freshwaters. The next time you have an opportunity take a closer look, the secret may be right in front of you.

An underwater photo of Craspedacusta sowerbi (jellyfish) from Redgranite Quarry, Wisconsin — a rare occurence in Wisconsin waters. Photo by Robert Korth

Robert Korth is an Extension Lake Management Specialist at the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, where he develops educational programs, audio-visual materials, and contributes to the publications of the Wisconsin Lakes Partnership. Previously, he owned and operated a small business specializing in water-related adult education and marine research. Korth has traveled extensively in both terrestrial and aquatic environments, visiting the Middle East, Africa, Asia, South America and the South Pacific, and logging over 6,000 hours underwater. His articles and photographs have appeared in numerous publications, including ***National Wildlife*** *and* ***Wisconsin Natural Resources.***

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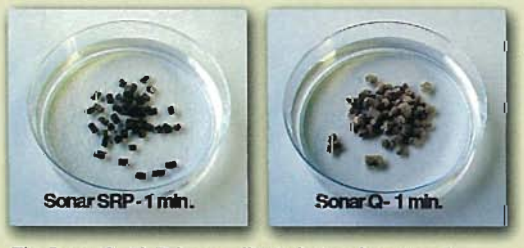

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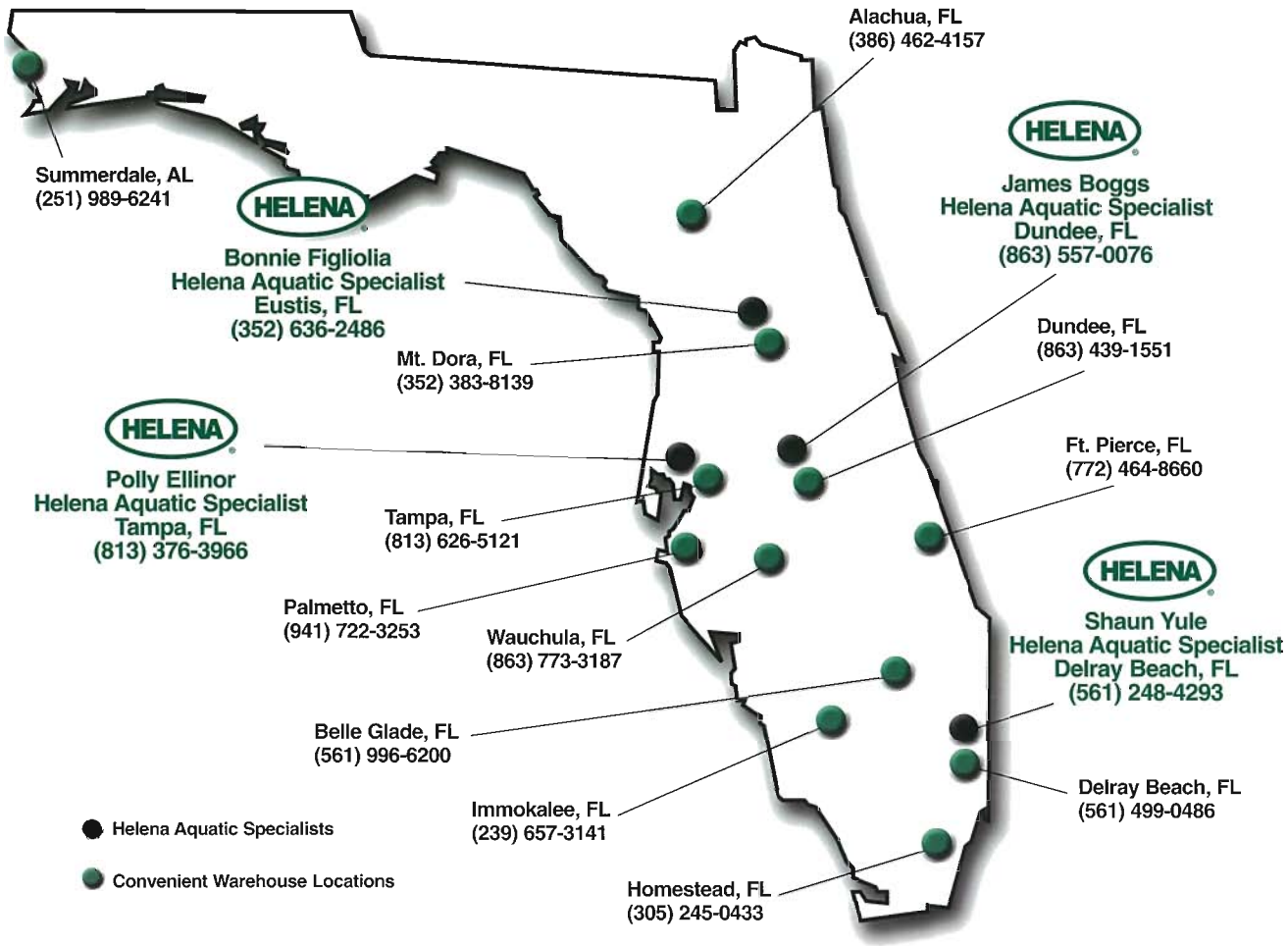

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Aquatic Plant Scholarship Grant

The South Carolina Aquatic Plant Management Society, Inc. is seeking applications for its annual scholarship grant. The Society intends to award a **$2,000 grant** to the successful applicant in the **Fall of 2003.**

Eligible applicants must be enrolled as full time undergraduate or graduate students in an accredited college or university in the United Sates. Course work or research in an area related to the biology, ecology or management of aquatic plants in the Southeast is also required.

Applications must be received no later than **May 1, 2003**, and are available in the internet at http://water.dnr.state.sc.us/water/envaff/aquatic/scapms.html. Other factors being equal, preference will be given to applicants enrolled in Southeastern and South Carolina academic institutions. The successful applicant may be requested to present an oral report at the annual meeting of the Society.

For additional information, contact Danny Johnson
SC Department of Natural Resources
2221 Devine Street, Suite 222, Columbia, SC 29205
803-734-9099, or e-mail, johnsond@water.dnr.state.sc.us

Imagine Florida without Aquatic Plant Management

by
Tyler J. Koschnick

Editors note: *The FAPMS provides a scholarship every two years to a graduate student studying aquatic plants at one of Florida's Universities. Tyler was the recipient of the 2002 FAPMS graduate scholarship, is a graduate student at the University of Florida, and submitted this essay with his application.*

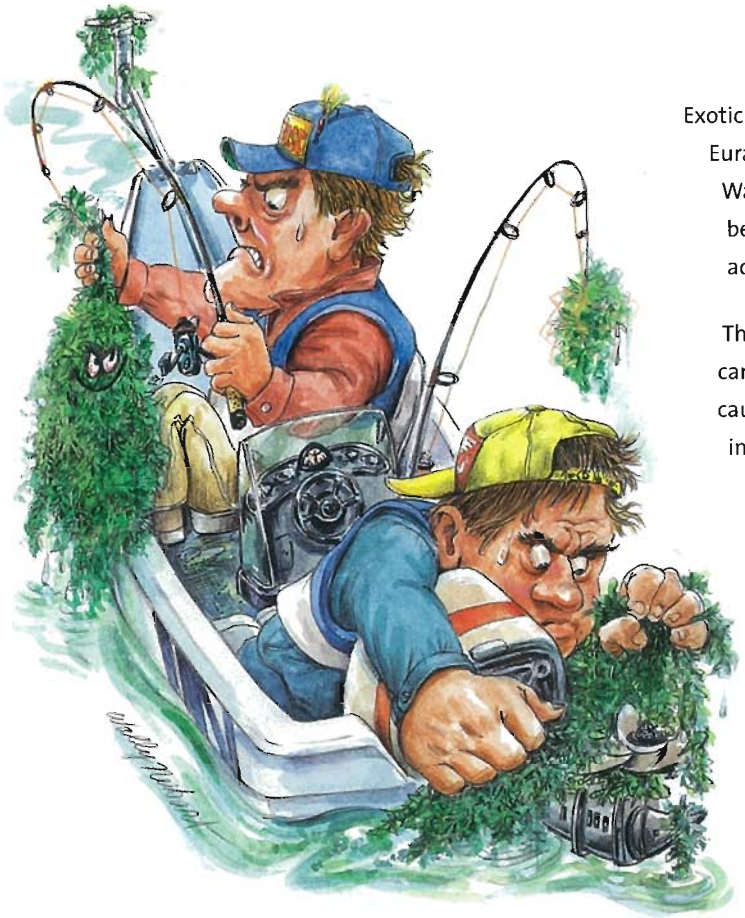
Highlands County crews conducting maintenance control of water hyacinth. Photo courtesy of Bureau of Invasive Plant Management.

Management of Florida's aquatic resources became paramount with the introduction of invasive non-native species and due to the expanding human population in the state. Without management in today's environment the landscape of Florida's freshwater resource would be altered forever. With the introduction of non-native invasive species and the demands placed on water by the public, management is no longer the exception, but the norm and a necessity. For example, imagining Florida without aquatic plant management is like imagining Florida without mosquito control or Disney World...just not realistic. Mosquito control is required allowing people to live comfortably in the state of Florida, and without it there are areas that would be uninhabitable. Disney World and Florida are recognized as one, an icon of visitors to the state. Likewise, water resources in the state are invaluable and without aquatic plant management many of the waterways would become unusable, flooding would become a major problem, water delivery for irrigation impeded, and biodiversity and public health threatened.

Managing Florida's aquatic resources is a challenging endeavor. Balancing the uses of the water between flood control, fishing, boating and other forms of recreation, and managing plant populations is difficult. Managers have to balance uses of the lake with what their thoughts on how the lake environment should be. In a way, non-native plants have made this challenge clearer and a little more focused. The objective usually is selective removal of the non-native plants while minimizing impact on the environment and native flora. In cropping systems farmers try to control all weeds without injury to the crop. In aquatic systems, many times the goal is selectively removing one or two weeds while trying to minimize impact on all other vegetation. However, recreationists, fisherman, environmentalists, and others who do not always realize the intentions of management scrutinize this objective. There always seems to be a battle over managing aquatic plants and the public who are often doubtful of manager's motives. This is due to the fact that the state has a successful program that maintains and controls invasive plants. Often the public does not realize how bad or the impact some of these species can have on a water resource because

Chassahowitzka River. Photo Courtesy of Bureau of Invasive Plant Management.

Too Many Weeds Spoil the Fishing



Exotic invasive aquatic plants such as Hydrilla, Eurasian Watermilfoil, Curlyleaf Pondweed, Water Chestnut and Water Hyacinth can be detrimental to a healthy fishery in lakes across the country.

These invasive plants when left unmanaged can alter the ecosystem of lakes and reservoirs, causing a decline in the fishery, as well as interfering with other valued uses of waterbodies.

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control and management operations are successful. The criticism from the public is likely the result of a program that cannot afford to let certain species get out of control.

The introduction of invasive plants has threatened to take over many Florida aquatic resources. These plants can render a lake almost useless due to mat-forming capabilities and aggressive growth patterns. The state spends approximately $20 million a year controlling these pests, and management programs maintain open water, prevent total domination by these species, and maintain native plant diversity using every tool possible. Without management these species would flourish in the shallow, naturally rich, eutrophic lakes restricting water access, and devastating Florida's multimillion-dollar sport fishery. Fishermen often complain that too much vegetation is being controlled and do not realize or often forget how bad the problem could become without management. Complaints normally come from people who know little about the risks associated with management techniques. The public must continuously be educated as to why aquatic vegetation is controlled and that in Florida's environment these species must be managed or lake access would soon become impossible.

Flood control and drainage is a key aspect when considering aquatic plant management particularly in southern Florida. Many of the plant species present have the potential to impede a waterway making water delivery and flood control impossible. With the expanding population into areas more prone to flooding this objective has become more important. Flooding events due to normal rain showers would be devastating and more frequent without the control of invasive plants. Many native plants can also have a detrimental effect due to inputs by humans and therefore have the potential to create similar situations. Managing lakes in Florida is also a public health issue. Mats and canopies of plants serve as breeding

St. Marks Wildlife Refuge. Photo by Jess Van Dyke.

grounds for mosquitoes. With the concern about West Nile virus and encephalitis, mosquito control has become more of a public concern and minimizing mats of vegetation reduce breeding grounds. For example, one of the species of mosquitoes that carries malaria breeds in floating vegetation. Many people do not recognize the relationship between mosquitoes and some of the mat forming vegetation that exists in Florida lakes.

Finally, managing our current crop of invasive plants is important in maintaining Florida's biodiversity and natural habitat. Picture Lake Okeechobee covered in water hyacinth or the Kissimmee chain of lakes full of hydrilla. This thought seems unrealistic today because of ongoing management activities, but with new plant introductions, herbicide resistance, local pressures from activist and environmental issues with herbicides, management goals are threatened. These plants often displace native flora and have changed the landscape of Florida's freshwater resources as well as goals of management activities. Many critics of aquatic plant management are the result of a successful management program in Florida where people forget about the possible impacts these species can create. Research and education into the methods of management and impacts of these species must continue to pave the path to continued management in the future so the unimaginable does not become reality.

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Aquatic Plant Management Society Announces Annual Student Paper Contest for Upcoming July 2003 Meeting in Portland, Maine

The Aquatic Plant Management Society is soliciting student papers for their upcoming annual meeting to be held July 20-23, 2003, at the Holiday Inn By the Bay, in Portland, Maine. Presentations of original research on the biology or ecology of aquatic or wetland plants, control methods (biological, chemical, mechanical, cultural) for invasive or nuisance native plants, and restoration projects involving wetland or aquatic plants are solicited. Papers that emphasize nuisance algae control or ecology, the impact of aquatic plant management on fisheries, and the relationship between aquatic plant management and water quality are also highly encouraged.

The Society encourages students that have conducted original research on aquatic plants to present their findings, and gain a valuable perspective on aquatic plant problems and various management applications throughout the US. The meeting locale in Portland, Maine provides an excellent opportunity for students from the Northeastern US to attend and present research on aquatic plants in this region.

The APMS has a strong ethic of student support and all qualified attendees will be provided free room accommodations (based on double occupancy), waiver of registration fees, banquet meals, and social functions. In addition, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place prize money will be awarded. This meeting presents an opportunity for students to develop their presentation skills, learn about the field of aquatic plant management, meet with key Government, University, and Industry representatives, and peers with similar educational or professional interests.

Please log on to www.apms.org to learn more about the Aquatic Plant Management Society. For more information on the contest please contact by mail, phone, or e-mail.

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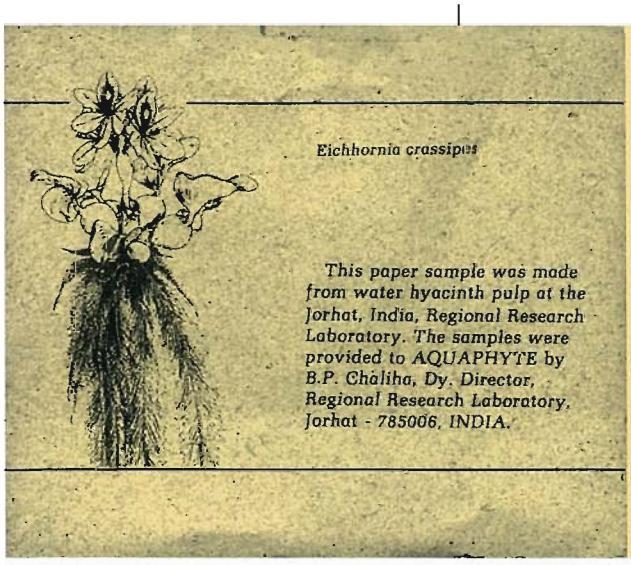

This sample of water hyacinth paper was provided by Greg Jubinsky. He received it in the early 1970's during a time when alternative uses of water hyacinth were being explored. For more on alternative uses of water hyacinth try searching the web for "water hyacinth furniture" you'll be surprised!

Scholarships Available !

The Florida Aquatic Plant Management Society Scholarship and Research Foundation Inc. announces the availability of the following scholarship.

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3. The applicant being a high school senior entering college the next academic year, attending junior college or be a college undergraduate.
4. An evaluation of the quality of the application and required essay by the Scholarship Selection Committee composed of three FAPMS members and four FAPMS Scholarship and Research Foundation members.
5. Submission of a completed application by June 1, 2003.

For further information or to request an application to apply for the scholarship, please contact Don Doggett, Lee County Hyacinth Control District, PO Box 60005, Ft. Myers, Florida, 33906. 803-734-9099, or e-mail, johnsond@water.dnr.state.sc.us

Florida's Invasive Species Working Group (ISWG)

by
Don Schmitz

About the ISWG

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection undertook the responsibility of organizing and facilitating a July 10, 2001 meeting, at the request of the Governor, to determine the most effective way of developing a comprehensive statewide plan that unifies and coordinates the responsibilities of government agencies to prevent and manage all biological invasions in Florida. The representatives from the state and federal agencies that attended the July 10 meeting recognized a working group comprising all of the state agencies having jurisdictional responsibilities for invasive nonindigenous species needed to be formed to carry out the Governor's request of developing a statewide invasive species management plan. In subsequent meetings, the Invasive Species Working Group (ISWG) was formed. Representatives from a total of 9 state agencies and one university comprise the ISWG.

Executive Summary

Most of Florida has a climate similar to that of the Neotropics with an absence of yearly hard freezes and exhibits a disturbed and diverse patchwork of agricultural, environmental, and urban habitats. The southern third of Florida is a peninsula and a habitat island, bounded on three sides by water and the fourth by frost, and it is typified, as oceanic islands, by an impoverished native flora and fauna that makes it particularly prone to nonindigenous species invasions. Florida also has many lakes, streams, and rivers that can facilitate the easy spread of invasive species throughout the state. During the past 400 years, Florida has been invaded with periodic influxes of mostly tropical and subtropical nonindigenous plants and animals. These influxes of introductions increased during the twentieth century with the rise of the ornamental plant and pet industries and through the unintentional contaminants of imported commodities. Today, the Port of Miami receives 85% of the live nonindigenous plant shipments that arrive each year in the United States.

Fortunately, few of the thousands of species that have been introduced into Florida have become invasive. And not all nonindigenous species are harmful to agriculture and the environment and they are essential to many Florida industries and provide positive economic benefits. But even a few invasive species can have a large negative economic impact in Florida. Two Mediterranean fruit fly infestations in Florida cost federal and state taxpayers nearly $50 million to eradicate. Equine prioplasmosis, a parasitic disease transmitted by ticks, along with Heartwater and other lesser-known animal and plant maladies, have already cost the taxpayers more than $400 million to address. In south Florida alone, state and federal agricultural agencies are conducting a multi-year (more than $300 million already spent) effort to stop reintroduced Asian citrus canker from spreading to central Florida by cutting thousands of citrus trees on private property. In the natural environment, more than $240 million has been spent in Florida by state, federal, and local agencies since 1980 to control invasive nonindigenous aquatic, wetland, and upland plants on publicly owned waterways and conservation lands. In fiscal year 1999-2000, a total of $90.8 million was spent by nine Florida state agencies. The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services spent the most ($45.9 million) for prevention, monitoring, eradication, control, and restoration efforts.

Florida is at high risk for the introduction of new invasive nonindigenous species because of the state's strategic southeastern-most

Invasive Weeds

spread to an estimated 4,000 acres each day on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Forest Service.

– Bureau of Land Management Environmental Education Homepage, www.blm.gov/education/weed/intro.html

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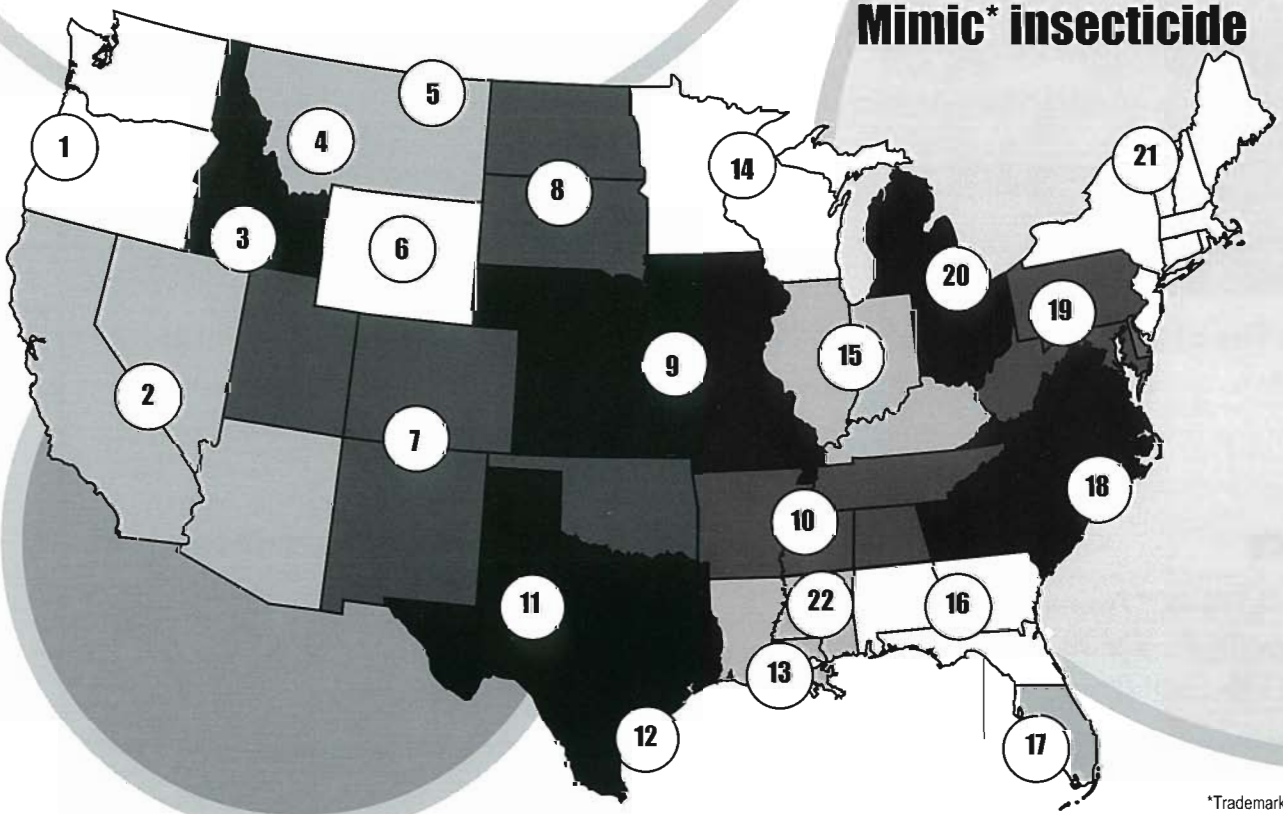

1. Robert Stewart
2. Tim Baldwin
3. Dean Gaiser
4. Steve Saunders
5. Lee Ohlinger
6. Abe Smith
7. Lee Frudden
8. Sam Law
9. Jack Noble
10. David Rich
11. Rich Hendler
12. Ken Frankum
13. Ron Neal
14. Louanne Brooks
15. David Jay
16. Jimmie Cobb
17. Brad Cochran
18. Darrell Russell
    Tom Wharton
19. Sam Quattrocchi
20. Carl Pryor
21. Bill Sherksnas
22. Jay Golz

location and is expected to act as one of the nation's sentinels against these invasive species. Yet, federal and state systems in place to intercept, eradicate, or contain these invaders have not kept pace with the influx of non-native agricultural pests (including diseases) along with environmental invaders arriving each year in Florida. The costs associated with harmful invasive species are expected to grow with increasing world trade and the introduction of new invasive species.

Any effective statewide strategy for preventing and managing invasive species must first consider that these invading species are not limited by legislative and professional boundaries, geography, or even individual programs. A growing number of scientists, resource managers, and agricultural officials recognize that a statewide invasive species strategic plan could provide a framework for coordinating state agency prevention and management efforts in Florida while facilitating cooperation with local and federal agencies. In order to develop and implement a Statewide Invasive Species Strategic Plan for Florida, the Invasive Species Working Group (ISWG) was formed in 2001. The ISWG is comprised of representatives from nine state agencies and one university. The ISWG also recognizes that the successful implementation of this plan necessitates the involvement of individuals, organizations, and businesses involved with direct though sometimes conflicting interests in nonindigenous species.

The Statewide Invasive Species Strategic Plan for Florida recommends at total of eighteen general action items that improve statewide coordination and cooperation, prevention of new biological invasions, surveillance, rapid response, control and management, and public education about invasive species. In addition, individual state agencies and one university nonindigenous species efforts are described within this plan along with specific findings for each of their existing programs. The strategic plan also recognizes the need to help private landowners in preventing, controlling, and managing invasive species. The following are critical actions planned:

- The Invasive Species Working Group (ISWG) will develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for presentation to state agencies involved in invasive species prevention, eradication, research, and control.
- The ISWG will provide recommendations to agencies to implement a coordinated public awareness campaign about the impact of invasive nonindigenous species on Florida's agriculture and environment and disseminate information on statutes and rules pertaining to these species.
- Each state agency that is a party to the MOU and a member of

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Renovate was designed to be effective on both **submersed** and **floating emergent** plants—a feature that allows Renovate to restore wetlands, marshes and shorelines as well as lakes, ponds and canals. With its highly effective systemic mode of action, Renovate provides selective control to help restore aquatic habitats knotted with nuisance and exotic plants including Eurasian Watermilfoil, Purple Loosestrife, Water Hyacinth, and Alligator Weed among others.

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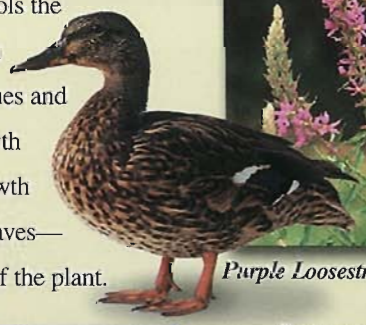
Renovate is a systemic herbicide which controls the entire plant. Renovate rapidly enters plants through leaf and stem uptake, moving throughout plant tissues and downward into the roots disrupting the plant's growth metabolism. Renovate stimulates uncontrolled growth that results in bending and twisting of stems and leaves—"epinasty"—and ultimately results in the collapse of the plant.



Renovate was developed for aquatic use to control submersed, floating and emergent plants such as:

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Alligator Weed

Purple Loosestrife

Water Hyacinth

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Eurasian Watermilfoil treated with Renovate (1 ppm), shows the eventual collapse of the plant structure below the surface of the water.

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the ISWG will conduct an evaluation of its current statutes and rules relevant to invasive nonindigenous species.

- The ISWG will review and evaluate the status of invasive species reporting.
- Each member of the ISWG will work with its own agency information technology staff to provide links among existing invasive species websites and databases.
- State agencies will encourage federal agencies to cooperate in the development and implementation of Pest Risk Management Committee partnerships at all significant ports of entry in Florida.
- The ISWG will identify known invasive specie problems in Florida and recommend management actions to federal, state, and local governments, private landowners and others.
- State agencies will identify information, staff, research, and budget needs to improve invasive species management in Florida.
- ISWG will evaluate current surveillance programs and make recommendations to improve prevention and detection efforts.
- The ISWG will recommend rapid response procedures appropriate for new discoveries of invasive nonindigenous species. Coordination with federal and local agencies and non-governmental organizations will be implemented where appropriate.
- State agencies will develop or revise invasive species management plans to achieve cost-effective management efforts of invasive species.
- The ISWG will evaluate potential incentive programs or assistance for private landowners and make recommendations to the Florida Legislature to establish incentive programs or assistance to private landowners for the control of invasive nonindigenous species on private lands.
- ISWG will review and make recommendations regarding an inter-agency information support network and database for invasive species.
- The ISWG will review established procedures for fair and feasible multiple levels of risk assessments for evaluating first time introduced nonindigenous species.
- The ISWG will review agency invasive species procedures and make recommendations, where appropriate, to coordinate species management plans across agencies.

My Favorite Airboat "Story"

Editor's note: *If you have a favorite airboat adventure you'd like to share please contact Judy Ludlow, Aquatics Editor. Airboats are an integral tool of our trade, and demand respect. Many of us have "favorite" stories that, if shared, may educate and enlighten others so that they may avoid the situation you were in, or learn new tricks to get out of a jam!*

While surveying a central Florida lake, an intrepid DEP biologist decided to investigate an inflowing creek. Navigating up the ever narrowing, slowly disappearing creek, the biologist desperately looked for a place to spin around and head back to the lake. A place was found, but the all-important momentum was lost as the airboat spun around, dug in, and became, as they say, "royally" stuck. After trying all the usual maneuvers, the dedicated, and now very hungry biologist came up with a clever idea. Having no shovel, passengers to help, or winch, the biologist used what tools he had available: his hands and the trickle of water left in the creek. Using his hands he uprooted clods of sedges and, with beaver-like precision, dammed up enough of the inflowing creek to float the airboat! Eagerly jumping back in the boat, the biologist cranked it up and powered out with ease. Dinner never tasted so good!

"The Midwest Aquatic Plant Management Society (MAPMS)

Our mission:

- to promote sound and appropriate technologies for the management of aquatic vegetation
- to provide opportunities for the educational advancement of its members
- to encourage relevant scientific research
- to promote the exchange of information among members
- to expand and develop public interest in the discipline

"MAPMS provides information and assistance required by those who work with the unique ecological, sociological economic and regulatory concerns associated with managing aquatic plants in lake systems affected by exotic species, nutrient pollution, use conflicts and intense recreational demands."

"Love your Lake"
Cost-share Program Application

The Florida Lake Management Society (FLMS) would like to work with you to help create areas along Florida's lakes that illustrate proper shoreline management techniques for lakefront owners. FLMS, along with the Free Family Foundation, will match up to **$20,000** for the successful applicant(s) developing a project that will benefit their lake and serve as an educational tool for other lakefront owners in the state. The successful applicant(s) can match funds in the form of labor and/or monetary contributions. A selection committee organized by FLMS will review and select the project that meets the majority of criteria. The following are examples of the criteria we will be looking for:

Criteria

1. Monetary or labor match- Community involvement strongly recommended
2. Location- Project must be readily accessible to the public
3. Removal of invasive plants- establishment of beneficial native plants
4. Educational signage to explain project
5. Water quality enhancements (may include the following)
   - Xeriscaping
   - Irrigation pumping from the lake
   - Use of Environmental swale system
   - Erosion control methods used

The application should describe the proposed project in 4 pages or less. It must include: a maintenance plan, address of project, a budget for the project, a drawing of proposed enhancements (including plants used), and photo(s) of project area before construction. Please include a contact name, mailing address, email address if possible and telephone number. **Deadline for submittal of projects for the upcoming fiscal year is postmark date of May 1. Project must be completed no later than April of the following year.** A permit may be required from the Department of Environmental Protection and/or the Water Management District as well as one from your local municipality. The applicant is responsible for obtaining all permits required before starting the project. Please submit pictures and updates as the project progresses and is completed. Award recipient(s) will be asked to give a brief description of their project at a following FLMS Annual conference. If you have any questions, please send an email to flmshome@aol.com. Please send application to:

Shoreline Cost-Share Application Review Committee
P. O. Box 950701
Lake Mary, FL
32795-0701

This type of project will benefit many members of your community by showing them how they can keep their shorelines environmentally friendly. By enlisting the help of volunteers, your shoreline demonstration project will solidify ongoing efforts to teach others how to preserve native Florida habitats!

Editorial

Continued from page 3

Over the past several years, the Florida Legislature has stabilized the statewide effort to manage invasive exotic plants by establishing targeted transfers of state revenue sources to the Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund. The purpose of establishing these dedicated transfers was to provide a sufficient level of recurring funds necessary to maintain effective aquatic and upland invasive plant control programs.

The Governor's budget plan for Invasive Plant Control eliminates **dedicated funding sources** that provide stable funding levels and **reduces funding** for Invasive Plant Control efforts by $9.33 million. The Governor's Plan reduces Invasive Plant Control funding from $37 million to about $28 million, and redirects funding currently dedicated for the Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund into General Revenue forcing this recurring environmental problem to annually compete for funding required to implement control efforts.

Acceptance of the Governor's proposals for Invasive Plant Control by the Legislature would significantly destabilize multi-year control efforts and undermine the continuity of funding required to fight aquatic and upland invasive plant infestations on an annual basis. More importantly, the Governor's budget recommendations would not provide the funding to address the identified need and would prevent adequate management of areas already under maintenance control. If areas that are currently under control are not maintained, the funding previously used to treat those areas will have been wasted. Without dedicated funding for management, many waterways would become unusable, flooding would become a major problem, water delivery for irrigation impeded, biodiversity and public health threatened, and the >$1 billion sport fish/water recreation industry threatened due to excessive plant growth.

In order to maintain Florida's effort to control invasive plants, the 2003 Legislature must:

- Maintain the dedicated funding sources to provide the necessary level of funding on a recurring basis;
- Maintain existing funding levels that are needed to maintain a comprehensive invasive plant control effort.

Background

Florida's Department of Environmental Protection has the primary responsibility for managing invasive plants and leads a multi-agency effort to document infestations and manage a coordinated control effort on a statewide basis. In 1999, the Florida House of Representatives Committee on Environmental Protection conducted a study of Invasive Plant Management Programs and concluded – **"Overall, DEP's Bureau of Invasive Plant Management Program is administered efficiently and is currently being used by other states and countries as a model program."**

For detailed information on Invasive Plant Control in Florida go to the following website: http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/invaspec/AR00_Introduction.pdf

Statewide Need Is Based on Annual Documented Surveys of Infestations

- Based on previous funding requests and documented reviews, the estimated expenditure level for Invasive Plant Control within the Florida Department of Environmental Protection is projected annually to be around $37.5 million. This is the level of funding identified to maintain control efforts within the upland and aquatic plant control programs.

How Are Funds Used?

In FY 2003, Invasive Plant Control Funds are being used as follows:

- $25.7 million is allocated on approved lake treatments for 126,000 acres of aquatic plant infestations in 39 counties.
- $7.67 million will be used on Upland plant infestations.
- $2.1 million in appropriated funds are flow-through transfers to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, and the Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services Division of Forestry.
- Approximately $1.7 is allocated for program expenses, salaries, and administrative costs.

Invasive Plant Control Funding Sources Are User Related

- Dedicated State-level funding sources:
  1. Recreational Boat Registration ($2 per pleasure boat — approximately $1,284,306 annually)
  2. Commercial Boat Registration (40% commercial boat — approximately $351,000 annually)
  3. Gas Tax Transfer ($6.3 million annually)
  4. Documentary Stamp Tax

Proceeds (2.28% of collections — approximately $27 million — 80% dedicated to aquatic and 20% dedicated to upland invasive plant control programs)

Justification for Dedicated Revenue Sources to Invasive Plant Control Trust Fund:

- Boat Registration Fees are justified as a dedicated funding source because aquatic plant infestations threaten the use and enjoyment of water bodies by boaters throughout the State of Florida.
- Gas Tax Revenues are justified based on the amount of gas taxes paid by individuals purchasing fuel to use their boats in Florida waters. Estimated boat-related gas tax revenues at marina pumps only is $35 million. This does not include collections from boater-related gas purchases by boats on trailers.
- Documentary Stamp Tax Revenues are appropriate because a portion of the revenues collected on land sales in the State of Florida should be used on land management, including the control of invasive plants that threaten these lands.

What Needs To Be Done

- Contact your local legislator to express concern regarding the Governors proposals for Invasive Plant Control and request that the current funding levels and dedicated sources for Invasive Plant Programs be maintained.
- Contact your Water Management District to convey your concerns.
- Contact the Governor's Office to express concern about the impact of his recommendations on the invasive plant control efforts.

Addendum:

At Press Time, The Current Status of Invasive Plant Control Funding was:

- **The Florida House is proposing to REDUCE Invasive Plant Control by $20,000,000.00 and eliminate the dedicated funding source!**
- **The Florida Senate is proposing continuation funding levels for Invasive Plant Control!**

If adopted, the House proposal will:

- undermine the multi-year continuity required to fight aquatic plant infestations;
- be inadequate to conduct control efforts and planned treatments in over 125,000 acres of infested waters bodies throughout Florida; and,
- will render the millions in control funds previously spent to bring areas previously treated a waste of taxpayer funds!

Key senators and house members need to be called!!

Message to Florida Senate:

The Senate Has Taken Responsible Position That Protects the Environment from Invasive Plants — The House Position is Devastating — Hold Senate Position

Message To House of Representatives:

The House Position will have devastating impacts on Florida's Lakes and Rivers — Encourage the House members to concede to the Senate Position on Invasive Plant Control

Note: P.J. Myers holds a B.S. in Agronomy from the University of Florida and is the General Manager of Applied Aquatic Management - an invasive plant control company based in Bartow, Florida. Polk County has some of the most serious invasive plant problems in the State of Florida. Myers is also serving as the President of the Florida Aquatic Plant Management Society, a statewide association of over 500 public and private sector interests committed to effective management of aquatic and upland invasive plants in the State of Florida.

FAPMS Board Meeting- all are invited!

April 16, 2003, Adam's Mark Hotel, Jacksonville, Angie Huebner, angie.l.huebner@usace.army.mil

Aquatic Weed Control Short Course 2003, May 19-22, 2003, Fort Lauderdale, Marriott North. CEU's for Aquatic, Right of Way, General Standards (CORE), Aerial, and Ornamental and Turf will be available. Contact Maryann Edge 352-392-5930 or medge@mail.ifas.ufl.edu for more information.

North American Lake Management Society, 12th Annual Southeastern Lakes Management Conference, Hosted by the Florida Lake Management Society, "Integrating Science and Technology into Successful Lake Management," June 2-5, 2003, Orlando, FL. Contact Shailesh Patel, spatel@dmces.com or 386-304-6505 for more information.

Florida Aquatic Plant Management Society Annual Conference, October 13-16, 2003 Adam's Mark Hotel, Daytona Beach, FL. Contact Bill Torres, 850-245-2809 or Willia m.torres@dep.state.fl.us for more information.

North American Lake Management Society 2003 Annual Conference: "Protecting Our Lakes' Legacy," November 5-8, 2003 Mashantucket, Connecticut. Contact Terry Thiessen, 608-233-2836, thiessen@nalms.org for more information.

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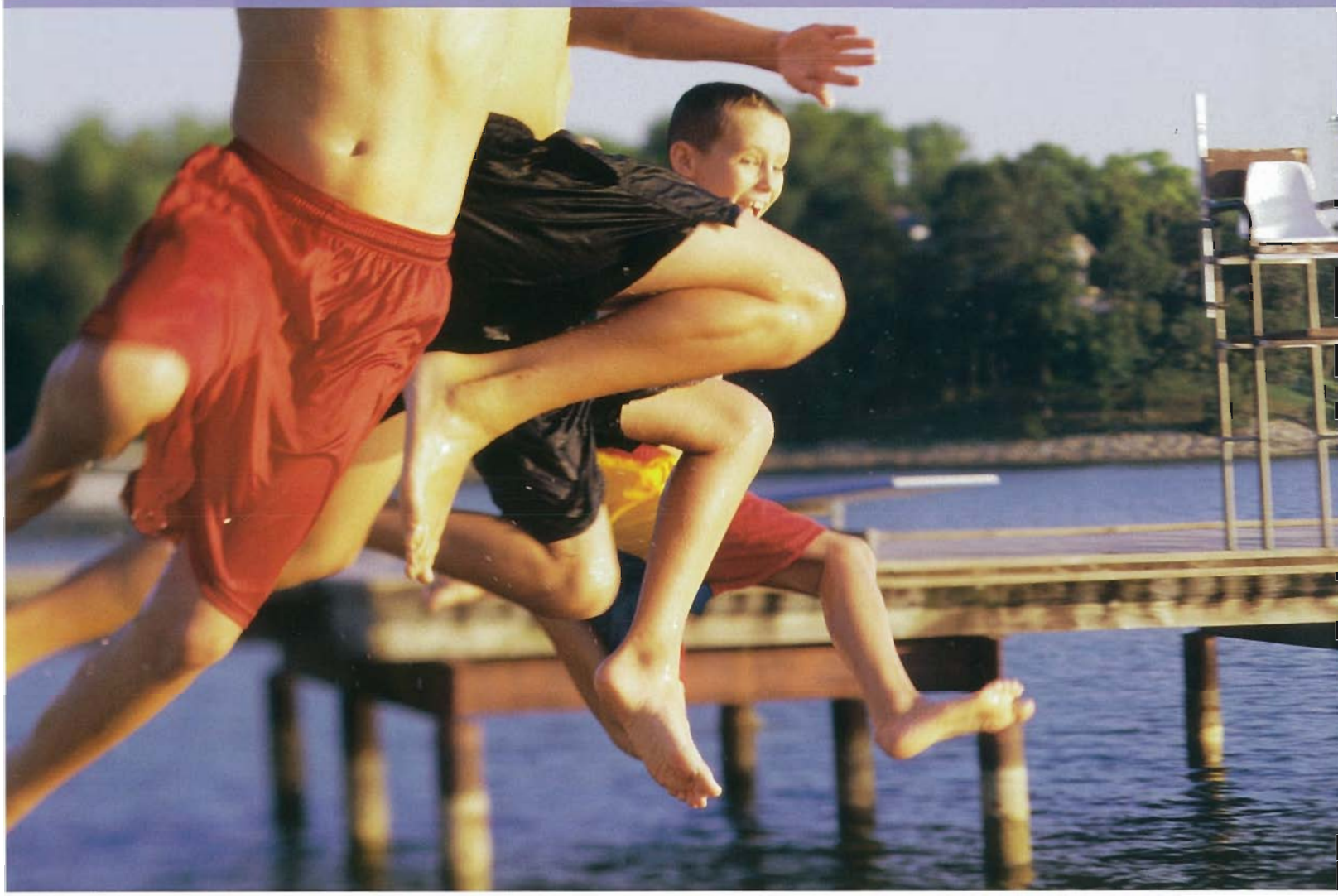

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