

**Department of the Army
Wilmington District, Corps of Engineers
69 Darlington Avenue
Wilmington, North Carolina 28403**

CESAW-OP-LK

**PUBLIC NOTICE
AND
NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)
AQUATIC VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
JOHN H. KERR RESERVOIR
BOYDTON, VIRGINIA
APRIL 2013**

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: An environmental assessment (EA) has been prepared, which discusses the environmental impacts of the Aquatic Vegetation Management Program (AVMP) at the John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir Project (Kerr Reservoir). The intent of the AVMP is to reduce and avoid adverse impacts associated with uncontrolled growth of hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) in the Reservoir. Kerr Reservoir is under the stewardship of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Wilmington District and is located along the Roanoke River in Halifax, Mecklenburg, and Charlotte Counties, Virginia and Granville, Vance, and Warren Counties, North Carolina. The Kerr Reservoir project includes approximately 48,900 acres of water surrounded by approximately 55,000 acres of public land.

Management of public lands and waters at Kerr Reservoir is accomplished in cooperation and collaboration with state and local entities including the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation (NCDPR), the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (VDCR). The VDGIF and NCWRC take the lead on management and monitoring of fish populations and regulation of sport fishing in Kerr Reservoir.

The USACE Invasive Species Policy was developed to ensure agency compliance with *Executive Order 13112 Invasive Species*. The policy requires operating projects to include strategies for invasive species management in their project operations and maintenance responsibilities and that these strategies be coordinated with other Federal, State, and local agencies. *Executive Order 13112 Invasive Species* defines

an invasive species as a species not native (exotic) to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health. The order defines control of invasive species to mean as appropriate, eradicating, suppressing, reducing, or managing invasive species populations, preventing spread of invasive species from areas where they are present, and taking steps such as restoration of native species and habitats to reduce the effects of invasive species and to prevent further invasions. Under *16 USC Chapter 67 Aquatic Nuisance Prevention And Control Act*, an aquatic nuisance species means a non-indigenous species that threatens the diversity or abundance of native species or the ecological stability of infested waters, or commercial, agricultural, aquacultural or recreational activities dependent on such waters.

Hydrilla was designated as a federal noxious weed by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) in 1983 and is regulated under the Federal Noxious Weed Act of 1974. The Act directs federal agencies to use an integrated management system for the planning and implementation of a program, using an interdisciplinary approach, to select a method for containing or controlling an undesirable plant species or group of species. The Act calls for using all available methods, including education; preventive measures; physical or mechanical methods; biological agents; herbicide methods; cultural methods; and general land management practices.

Aquatic vegetation management is needed to ensure maintenance of a healthy and sustainable native aquatic vegetation population and to address recent increases in occurrence of invasive aquatic vegetation, primarily hydrilla. The purpose of the AVMP would be to serve as a planning tool ensuring that management actions for control of aquatic vegetation are undertaken after consideration of available information and in coordination with stakeholders. Several aquatic vegetation control methods were broadly considered for the AVMP including chemical control; mechanical controls including reservoir drawdown, mechanized harvest, and hand removal; biological control agents including open release of triploid grass carp, confined release of triploid grass carp, and insects; and planting/promotion of native vegetation.

Four methods were eliminated from further consideration: reservoir drawdown, mechanical harvest, confined release of triploid grass carp, and insects as a biological control agent. Four methods were identified for further evaluation as part of the proposed alternative being considered in this EA; chemical control, open release of triploid grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella -triploid*), hand removal, and native vegetation planting.

The extent of hydrilla infestation identified in Kerr Reservoir in 2012 (888 acres in 48,900 surface acres) is a relatively small portion of the lake surface area in comparison to other reported infestations; however, and as stated previously, implementation of management actions while the infestation is at a relatively low level is intended to reduce and avoid adverse impacts associated with uncontrolled growth of hydrilla.

This public notice is being distributed to notify all known interested persons of the availability of the EA for review. To access a copy of the EA, you may use the following link: <http://www.saw.usace.army.mil/Locations/DistrictLakesandDams/JohnHKerr/NaturalResources/AquaticVegetationManagement.aspx>. The review period will end 30 days after receipt of this notice. A Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) pursuant to NEPA will be completed by the USACE if comments received during the review period indicate that a FONSI is appropriate for this project. Comments on the

EA should include sufficient detail to support statements in favor of or opposed to the proposed action. All correspondence should refer to the title and date of this public notice.

Written comments may be submitted no later than 30 days after receipt of this notice to Mr. Robert Dennis, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1930 Mays Chapel Road, Boydton, Virginia 23917. Comments or questions can be emailed to Mr. Dennis at JHKerr@usace.army.mil or you may call him at (434) 738-6101, extension 160.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Daniel" and last name "Brown" clearly distinguishable.

Daniel Brown
Chief, Lakes Branch

Wilmington District

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers