

AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL

Americans Can Enjoy More Open Water

(NAPSA)—A few smart steps may be able to save many American waterways from a deadly menace: aquatic weeds. They've invaded millions of acres of America's lakes, rivers and streams. The invaders not only pose a danger for boaters and skiers—the weeds are also wiping out habitat for fish, waterfowl and native plants.

Scientists estimate that exotic species have contributed to the extinction of 40 percent of native plant and animal varieties in the United States, according to a study by Cornell University.

Invaders such as hydrilla, Eurasian milfoil and water hyacinth can also entangle swimmers, clog boat motors and hide treacherous obstacles from skiers.

The battle to eliminate aquatic weeds is expensive. Altogether, America spends an estimated \$500 million annually to control these invasive species, according to the Cornell University study.

Still, the cost of doing nothing would be even higher. Aquatic weeds spread quickly and without treatment can cover even the largest expanses of open water.

Fortunately, scientists and vegetation management professionals have made major strides in developing effective treatments. They have discovered that the best approach is often an integrated one—meaning manual removal of the plants combined with chemical control methods.

Today's highly selective herbicides can target specific species with minimum impact on the surrounding ecosystem—a critical advantage for reclaiming sensitive aquatic areas.

For example, Clearcast® herbicide from BASF is a new herbicide



QVM Certified Applicator Bart Alexander of Chem-Air, Inc., shows invasive water hyacinth overtaking a waterway at the Trinity River National Wildlife Refuge near Liberty, Texas. With Chem-Air's help, the refuge is fighting troublesome water weeds and restoring open water for the birds and wildlife that depend on it.

that is generally considered practically nontoxic to birds, fish, algae and aquatic invertebrates. The herbicide is absorbed through the leaves, stems and roots of the weeds, where it binds with an enzyme found only in plants—not in humans, mammals, birds, fish or insects.

Private lake owners and lake associations that are ready to tackle troublesome weeds should remember that any vegetation management plan needs to be directed by knowledgeable professionals who can tailor the treatment to the specific problem at hand.

Herbicide application should be done by a certified professional adhering to a core set of principles and practices that create and sustain healthy habitats. Always read and follow label directions.

To find a Quality Vegetation Management Certified Applicator nearby, visit www.vmanswers.com/qvm.