

??Questions??

Revised: 01/07/23

Answers to property owner inquiries about noxious weed control
efforts on


Lake Gaston

Answers provided by members of the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council
(lgwcc.net)

Hydrilla Status on Lake Gaston

December 2022

- * The Lake Gaston Weed Control Council is now in a monitoring process with Hydrilla. Over the past several years we have been below 300 acres of Hydrilla per our annual full lake survey. It was the goal of the Lake Gaston Stakeholders to establish a goal of 300 acres being accepted as under control. At this time, we are requesting residents to treat their own areas if they see Hydrilla with the applicator listed on the lgwcc website (lgwcc.org). The Lgwcc will monitor Hydrilla for an unexpected large breakout.
- * Our resources are limited, and we are treating Lyngbya which is much more expensive and difficult to get under control. All the questions listed here are still applicable to Hydrilla. They may be dated but they did happen and were resolved. You can also go to the website for NCSU and report Hydrilla or Lyngbya. (aquaticplants@ncsu.edu)



Who makes the decision on
which area is treated?

June 2009

The final approval for the annual plan is made by the Lake Gaston Weed Council board of voting directors of which there are 3 for each of the 5 counties. The plan begins with a review of the annual survey by the Technical Advisory Group (TAG). It then moves to the Stake Holders group for their final input and approval. The plan allows for changes made by the appointed applicator for that year along with input from SeaPro the provider of the chemicals to be used in certain areas. This plan this is presented to the council for approval normally in March of each year.


Our area was treated 2 years ago. When will we be treated again?.....
June 2011

The Lake Gaston Weed Control Council does not treat each area on a regular schedule. The decision to treat a specific area depends on several factors: The results of the annual full lake survey, bio sonics survey, degree of infestation, water depth and water flow. These are all critical to the use of the time-release chemical Sonar. It is very important that if you do receive public treatment that you follow up in subsequent years with private treatment. Hydrilla can only be controlled by **continuous and contiguous treatment** by both public and private applications. Grass carp are used in waters that are too deep and water flow too strong for chemical treatment. Attempts are made to treat new areas each year, but the mission of the council is to make the most effective use of the funds available.

If I contract for private treatment will that eliminate me from public treatment?


January 2012

All contractors currently on the lake (1) honor a contract if it moves to public treatment. They will normally offer to roll the contract for a year or return your money. As a note, it is illegal for any contractor to double treat an area. This will have negative effects on plants and animal life in the water. You as the contracting person should also assure you have written documentation that your applicator has notified Dominion Power of the treatment areas and with what chemical.




Mats of Hydrilla are blocking my
boat dock and I cannot get my boat
out for fishing....
December 2012

There is not an agency on the lake that has a charter to remove floating mats of Hydrilla. These break loose when the weed dies on the surface breaks loose and then by the water flow is carried along. We encourage property owners to notify us of their locations and do your best to remove them from the water. These mats carry the seed pods (turions) and will re seed wherever it drops those seed pods.



How do I know what areas
were selected for treatment?
May 2010

There are several places to attain this information. The LGWCC website (lgwcc.net) is the primary site. Also, you will find it on the selected applicators web page. It will also be published in the LGA bulletin and the various local newspapers around the lake. Most important if you can attend the council meetings you will see firsthand all the steps to the process. These are posted on the web sites of the weed council and the LGA. Also, notices are placed on the boat docks of the treatment areas notifying owners when the 3 treatments will take place.



Why is there not more grass
carp used on the lake for
control?

August, 2010

This is a great question.....there have been many suggestions made by property owners to increase the number of fish that are put into the lake. Simply put too much of a good thing could become a bad thing. The approach on the lake with input from North Carolina State University and others is one of balance of not just fish but chemicals with the end vision of re vegetation in many parts of the lake with native plants. The current level of grass carp is 19 fish per infected acre. This is a number that has been agreed to by both N.C. and Va. wildlife agencies. This does vary from year to year based upon how many infected acres of Hydrilla and tubers is reported each year. Recently we have increased the locations that Grass Carp are inserted.

I have heard so many things
about grass carp. How do we
know what they do?


May 2009

It is certainly understandable why anyone would be somewhat confused. The weed council was also. In the past 3 years we have had Virginia Tech do a study on grass carp. We wanted to know how far they traveled after being released, what is the mortality rate and if in fact they are eating Hydrilla. They inserted GPS type sensors in the fish prior to being released and each fish transponder had a different code and sent out signals several times a minute. We found they traveled as far as 4 to 6 miles, but the norm was about 1 to 2 miles from release. Thus, the determination to increase our release points. A mortality rate was determined. Sensors were found on land after predator birds captured the fish and ate them. This mortality rate caused NC State to adjust the planned mortality rate to a higher one. We also conducted a survey of bow hunting grass carp with clubs on the lake and took a key part of the fish (otolith) to determine the age of the fish in reference to its size. This assured us they were eating Hydrilla.

How is the LGWCC funded?


June 2009

The LGWCC is the only entity on the lake that can receive funds for public use. The sources for funds come from several locations. The five (5) counties are the largest contributors at about \$116,000 per county. However, in the last few years we have seen some counties lower their contribution dramatically. The City of Virginia Beach contributes on the average about \$300,000 per year this amount is increased each year. Other funds are infrequent from the states of North Carolina and Virginia. During the years of 2021 and 2022 the state of Virginia contributed \$800,000.00 via Brunswick County for the fight on Lyngbya. Dominion Power is a partner and typically will pay for the cost of the grass carp or re vegetation efforts. The total funds collected in any given year is about \$800,000. This amount is down from previous years due to the cut back from some counties. This makes it difficult to treat all the areas that the council would like to. **GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR COUNTY GOVERNMENT.....**



What are all the wire
cages we see in parts of
the lake? 2014

These are cages that enclose new native plants. They are monitored to see how well they reproduce and survive the weather and animals. Some cages in the future will be opened to see the effect of fish, turtles and other animals have on the crop. This is an ongoing effort with North Carolina Wildlife, the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council and the Lake Gaston Association. We are careful not to put certain plants close to any property owners' locations. These sites will be enlarged, or additional ones added in coming years. If a private owner wishes to have some of these plants, they can request it thru the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council. We have an annual event each June to repair existing structures or build new ones. We also replant those that may have been breached. You can volunteer by email to: wasay1943@gmail.com



I have Water Willow on
my shoreline, can I
remove it? 2015

The answer is yes and no. Clarification: Water Willow is a protected species on the lake by Dominion Power. Therefore, you need their permission to remove it. You should review the Shoreline Protection Plan on Dominions website for further information. Without their permission the answer is “no”.

Lyngbya

- * What is Lyngbya?
- * December 2021

- * Filamentous, Cyanobacteria (Blue/Green Alga) • Native • But, Behaving like an Invasive • Colder Winter Months – Benthic • Warmer Summer Months – Surface • Problematic throughout the Southeast
- * Total Survey Sites: 5,368 2020 Survey Results Lyngbya: 1,158 22% of all survey sites 30% of vegetated site. For updated information search annual lake survey on website for current year.
- * Lyngbya grows on the bottom and grows into thick mats of algae. It is very difficult to kill because of its structure of a hairy like covering.
- * For the last 5 years we have had 7 historical sites that have been treated and monitored for results. The results have varied. A new application process is being implemented in 2021 by Aqua Services, Inc. Will be increasing to 376 acres for treatment from 90 acres.

Lyngbya

July 2022, Will my area be treated for Lyngbya?

The Lake Gaston Weed Control Council has limited resources to treat the entire 1,300+ infested acres of the lake. Based upon the results of the annual full lake survey in the months of Sept/Oct and the biomass survey areas. Currently 376 acres are identified for treatment. This is not likely to increase till all counties contribute their full amount of \$116,000. (with full funding we could potentially increase the acreage to 496). The state of Virginia contributed \$800,00.00 to the Lgwcc via Brunswick County, Va. The Lyngbya issue will not be resolved by the Lgwcc alone. Residents will have to provide private treatment in their areas not in current public treatment areas. We are trying to spread the public treatments around the various counties as much as possible. Homeowners are encouraged to contact one of the applicators. (see lgwcc webpage) Aqua Services, PLM.



Lyngbya

This is an image of Lyngbya. It is green/black algae. It grows on the bottom in mats. In the heat of the summer when water is hot it expels columns upwards that form unsightly mats and smelly odors. Normally found in the coves on the lake is less than 10 feet of water.

How can you help!

- * The Lake Gaston Weed Control Council with its partners: Lake Gaston Association, NCSU, NCWildlife, Virginia Wildlife and Dominion Power sponsor three primary activities on the lake each year.
- * Full Lake Survey: Involves volunteers to help survey the entire lake. Aug/Sept/Oct. We ask for a minimum of 4 hours for a site. Check the LGA website and various newspapers for sign up dates.
- * Revegetation Program: Involves volunteers to build, repair enclosure cages to protect planted native plants. It takes place each June for a week. There are areas across the entire lake. Volunteers can be anyone. Students who need community hours are welcome. Look for notices in the newspapers or go to the LGA webpage to volunteer.

New efforts by the Lake Gaston Weed Control Council to improve fishing opportunities

Fish Attractors

The Lgwcc is supporting a new program created by NCSU and NCWildlife. They have created “fish attractors” that can be inserted into the water with a built in structure to protect small fish from predators. The first 3 were put in the lake in 2021 and 2 will be put in during 2022.



How are decisions made for treatments on the lake.

- * The process follows one that was created decades ago, and some changes made in subsequent years.
- * The Lake Gaston Weed Control Council (lgwcc) is the entity that collects funds, distributes funds and approves the plan for treatment each year.
- * NCSU with Lake Manager Jessica Baumann shares the survey results with the TAG. (technical advisory group). They determine the best plan for the next year. (January of each year)
- * NCSU presents the plan to the Stakeholders Organization which is chaired by Pete Deschenes. Stakeholders are made up of representatives from each county, business leaders, LGA, HOA organizations and others. The plan is approved as is or with changes to be presented to the Lgwcc. (February each year)
- * The Lake Gaston Weed Control Council receives the plan and approves as is or with changes. (March of each year).
- * Plan given to NCSU Lake Manager Jessica Baumann for implementation.