



# WATERLINE

December 2003

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## Herbicide use update in Washington

By Kathy Hamel, Washington State Department of Ecology, Water Quality Program and Michael Murphy, King County Water & Land Resources, Lake Stewardship Program

Aquatic weeds continue to threaten lakes across Washington state. There are many effective methods that can be used to control aquatic weeds. The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) Web site is an excellent source for information about weed control: [www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/links/plants.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/links/plants.html). One commonly used method is herbicide treatment. Unfortunately keeping up with the latest regulations, and which herbicides are approved for use can be difficult. Here is the latest information:

### Triclopyr

- Attacks broadleaf plants
- Systemic herbicide
- Absorbed through foliage and stems
- Has been registered by EPA
- Ecology has a completed risk assessment and is gathering information for the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) review

### Imazapyr

- For use on shoreline plants, but not submersed plants;
- Attacks broad- and narrow-leafed plants;
- Systemic herbicide;
- Often mixed with glyphosate;
- Absorbed through foliage and roots;
- Has been registered by EPA;
- Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) has a risk assessment for imazapyr; and
- WSDA is taking the lead on the SEPA work.

Both chemicals may be approved for use in controlling submersed or shoreline weeds by Ecology by the 2004 treatment season.

For further information, contact Kathy Hamel, 360-407-6562 or [kham461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:kham461@ecy.wa.gov).

## Lake Focus on Lake Samish

Lake Samish is 6.5 miles southeast of Bellingham. It has two basins which are connected by a narrow strait. The west arm is a small deep bay (up to 140 feet) and the east arm is a larger shallow bay (up to 75 feet). The shoreline length of the east arm is 6.3 miles while the west arm is 1.8 miles.

There are several small creeks that

flow into the lake. Fish in the lake include kokanee, largemouth bass and cutthroat.

Samish Park is a 39-acre Whatcom County park. It offers swimming, fishing, boating (boat rentals), cabin rentals and more. [SamishPark@co.whatcom.wa.us](mailto:SamishPark@co.whatcom.wa.us).

# Facts on nuisance waterfowl



*The first in a series of articles addressing major concerns of our state's lake residents based on the WALPA survey. Information adapted by Isabel Ragland, WALPA board member, Pierce County. Resource: King County Lake Monitoring Program, <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/waterres/smlakes/facts.htm>.*

Canada geese and other waterfowl love to feed on the succulent grasses of well-kept lawns and other landscaped areas. Although most people enjoy seeing the birds and feeding them is a favorite family activity, waterfowl have become a nuisance for many lakeside residents. Nuisance waterfowl create problems for lake users when flocks of them congregate along the shores of lakes and other waterbodies year-round.

Canada geese are big birds that eat a lot and defecate copiously. They denude grassy landscaped areas located near waterbodies, erode shorelines, and trample vegetation by frequently entering and exiting the water. Excessive goose droppings have led to the closing of some swimming beaches due to high bacterial counts. Their droppings also contribute to nutrient enrichment problems in lakes and ponds by stimulating algal growth.

Canada geese can be aggressive and may harass humans in defense of their nests.

Geese attracted to the mowed grassy areas at airports present a more serious problem. Airplanes taking off and landing are faced with the threat of collisions which can damage and even disable a plane. Most resident geese live in areas with relatively stable breeding conditions and low numbers of predators. Canada geese live a long time. Resident geese tend to reproduce more rapidly than migratory populations, leading to larger flocks.

The abundance of food and shelter in many areas has encouraged geese and other waterfowl populations to remain year-round. In the Puget Sound area, the native migratory populations of Canada geese were in

decline. In hopes of providing more game birds for hunters the US Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with state wildlife agencies, introduced the resident population of geese we have today. Imported Canada goose eggs were placed in incubators until they hatched, and then reared by humans until they were old enough to survive on their own. These young transplanted geese lacked parental goose guidance and did not learn to migrate. This subspecies, Common Canada Goose, remains in the Puget Sound area year-round.

There are several non-lethal methods available to deal with nuisance waterfowl including landscape modifications and repellants. Geese prefer to rest and feed on open, grassy areas that allow them easy access to the water and clear sight lines to spot approaching predators. Maintaining grass height at 10 inches rather than two inches is one way to discourage these birds. Geese prefer not to walk through tall grass and this vegetative buffer has the additional water quality advantage of filtering runoff before it enters the waterbody. Replacing lawns with more environmentally-friendly wildflowers is another solution, or areas of native groundcover can be used to break up the expanse of lawn.

There are several commercially available chemical repellants (e.g., ReJeXIT or Goose Chase) derived from grapes that are effective at keeping geese away from large expanses of grassy areas by making the grass unpalatable to geese. The use of border collies to drive geese away has had some success at parks.

Individuals can also make areas inhospitable to geese by stringing low wires or fishing line (firmly secured to avoid entanglement) in areas frequented by the birds; or use mylar tape or flags that flash and make a noise in the wind.

All of these non-lethal methods are most effective if consistently applied, and should be installed in early spring before the geese establish grazing areas.

# Knocking out Hydrilla

*Reprinted with permission, Lake Steward, King County lake program.*

King County has one infestation of the tenacious, nasty aquatic weed hydrilla on Pipe and Lucerne Lakes, which straddle the cities of Maple Valley and Covington in King County. Hydrilla is a hard weed to beat because it has several ways of reproducing. Like milfoil, hydrilla can reproduce by fragmentation, but the plant can also propagate through stolons (an above-ground trailing shoot), turions, and tubers. The major obstacle in the King County infestation is the tubers that can lie dormant in the sediment for three to four years before sprouting and are unaffected by herbicide until they sprout.

Over the years, two major methods of control have been used, herbicide and hand pulling. These activities have decreased the amount of hydrilla, but it has not been completely eradicated. A new approach was taken this year, modeled after successful eradication projects in California. Sonar PR®, a slow release herbicide with the active ingredient Fluridone, was applied this year with the intent to maintain a very low level of herbicide in the lake during the growing season that would kill the hydrilla as it sprouted. To monitor the effectiveness of this new method, frequent snorkel and SCUBA surveys were performed and when possible, plants were removed through hand pulling.

Initial results of the new treatment method have been positive. The hydrilla that has been located during the surveys all show signs of herbicide damage. There are SCUBA and snorkel surveys scheduled through the fall and if the hydrilla continues to respond positively, eradication may be complete in the near future.

Washington has only one infestation and we want to eradicate it before it spreads. Other states are not so fortunate; places such as Florida spend over \$11 million a year, just to keep waterways open and navigable. King County and Ecology are working hard to get hydrilla out of the state.

# WALPA conference is April 1 and 2 in Bellingham

By Barry Moore, president-elect, WALPA

WALPA's 2004 annual conference will emphasize practical solutions for lake problems. Come learn about how other lake residents and users have found ways to protect water quality and resolve user conflicts. The conference will provide information for everyone who loves and enjoys lakes and streams, and is designed to provide real-world ideas on how to protect these treasured resources.

The conference will be held at the Lakeway Inn in scenic Bellingham. Registration and an informal social gathering is Wednesday evening, March 31, 2004, with conference presentations and activities on Thursday, April 1 and Friday, April 2. There will be an aquatic weed identification workshop on Friday afternoon. Presentations include:

- Waterfowl and water quality — landscaping and practical options for living with wildlife and lakefront properties;
- Fish and water quality;
- Organizing special purpose districts for funding lake management;
- Controlling Eurasian watermilfoil and other invasive aquatic weeds;
- Watershed management and volunteer monitoring programs;
- Stream restoration and threatened and endangered species issues;
- Resolving user conflicts and community organization;
- Special session on management and restoration of Lake Whatcom; and
- Case studies in successful water quality restoration of lakes throughout Washington state.

Bellingham offers a great variety of recreational opportunities, with easy access to the mountains, ocean, and, of course, and abundance of nearby lakes and streams. Join your friends and neighbors from across the state; we hope you come to learn and stay to play!

For information, contact Barry Moore, 509-335-4006 or [bcmoore@mail.wsu.edu](mailto:bcmoore@mail.wsu.edu)

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Send your ideas for articles to *Waterline* Editor Paula Lowe, pmrlowe@comcast.net or call 360-491-0109.

Include the topic, suggested writer, contact person with phone number and e-mail address.

### Lake Focus writer

We need a volunteer to write the Lake Focus stories for each issue. For details, e-mail pmrlowe@comcast.net.

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