

Planning Considerations the Treatment of Aquatic Invasives Species

SC NRCS EQIP Program Rules allows us to plan an herbicide treatment on 100 % of the acres where the resource concern of invasive aquatic species has been identified. We have the added advantage of planning 2 additional treatments on subsequent years if the site requires additional treatment. We can then plan to treat 100% of those same acres in the second year and third year of a contract.

Much like the treatment of terrestrial invasive species, many of the aquatic invasive species here in South Carolina will require multiple herbicide treatments, in order to get them under control.

According to the SC DNR Aquatic Nuisance Species biologist, there are two types of treatment herbicides that have been shown to be effective for treating invasive aquatic species. These are Systemic herbicides and Contact herbicides. Systemic treatment is applied to the surface of the pond and the herbicide is taken into the vascular system of the plants, and the plants begin to die. Contact herbicides are applied to the surface of the plants, absorbed through the cells of the plants, killing the plants.

Under most planning scenarios that NRCS planners encounter herein SC, the treatment for listed aquatic invasive species will require the application of a Systemic herbicide to control the target species. The first step in planning for the treatment of any invasive species is to make a positive identification of the plant before recommending any treatment.

Species identification information and specific treatment options can be found at the SC DNR Invasive Weeds website link posted here: <http://www.dnr.sc.gov/invasiveweeds/illegal1.html>

The recommended treatment prescription for the application of a Systemic herbicide would follow something along the lines of treating 1/3rd of the surface acreage during each treatment application, spaced over a 6 – 9 week period. After this multi-week period the assumption is that the entire surface acreage of the impoundment would be treated. What that means for a participant of an NRCS C/S program is that they would have to be aware that the practice could only be certified as applied after the final 1/3rd treatment. They would need to understand that only then, could they have their payment processed.

For general planning of the application of a treatment, typically the treatment of any aquatic invasive species needs to be applied while the plant is actively growing. In South Carolina, this would typically mean treatment could be applied at the earliest in mid – April through October/November, depending on the variable conditions of each year. There are specific plants that start growing earlier in the season, so there is some variation to this, based on the species.

For planning assistance contact any NRCS biologist.