

Lake Okeechobee Aquatic Plant Management Interagency Task Force Meeting



Policy Guidelines 1986

2. The Corps of Engineers shall chair, and actively solicit participation in, the Lake Okeechobee Aquatic Plant Management Interagency Task Force. The Task Force members will represent State of Florida agencies (including the South Florida Water Management District), State Universities, the Corps of Engineers, and other Federal agencies. The Task Force will serve in an advisory capacity, providing multi-disciplinary technical and scientific data from which the Corps' aquatic plant management strategy, methodology, and research planning and operational efforts will evolve. The focus of the aquatic plant effort will be to benefit the overall ecological health of Lake Okeechobee.



ROLL CALL

FLIGHT DATES

June- 6/11/21

July- 7/1/21

August- 8/5/21

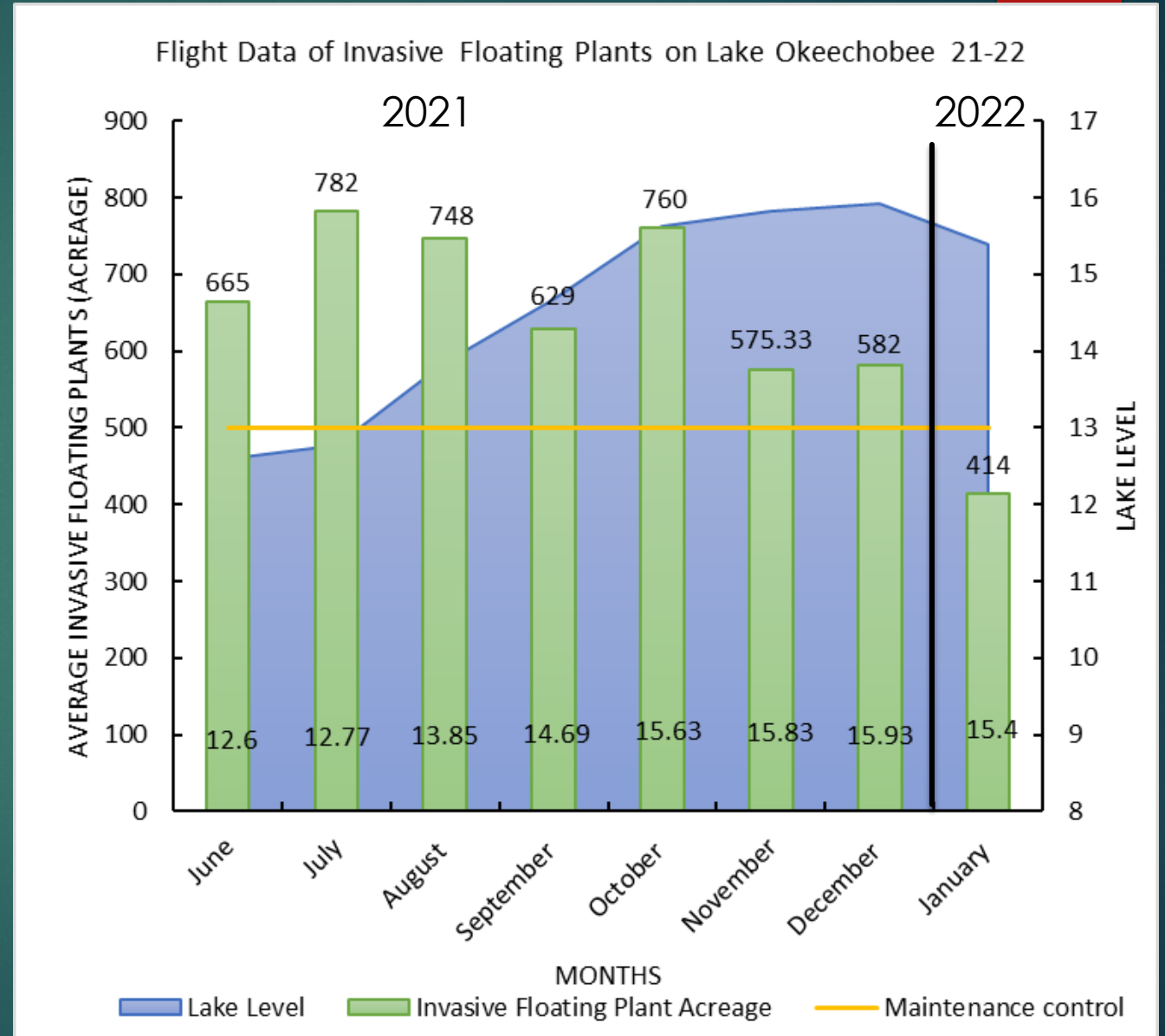
September 9/2/21

October- 10/7/21

November- 11-4-21

December- 12/5/21

January – 1/6/22



FWC (IPM)

- ▶ Update IPM
- ▶ Nutrient Reduction Project

FWC (AHRE)

- ▶ Cattail management
- ▶ Torpedograss management
- ▶ Upcoming burns

SFWMD



- ▶ Prescribed burns on lake Okeechobee
- ▶ Melaleuca treatments

USACE

- ▶ Treatments
- ▶ Penoxsulam treatment testing site

USACE AOR

► Treatments since last meeting:

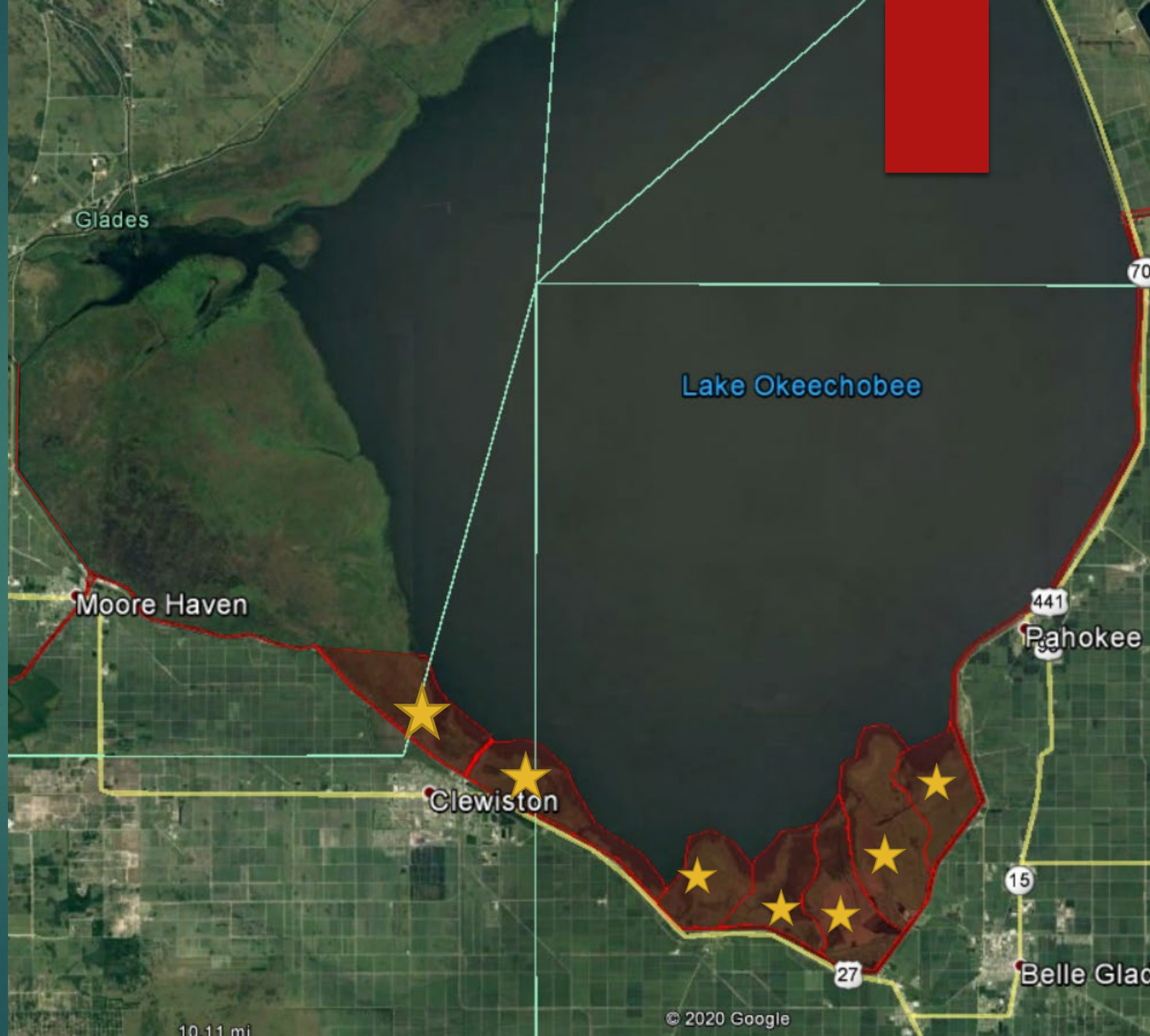
► Total acres treated- ~640* does not include January numbers

► Areas treated- rim canal, east wall, west wall, south end including south bay, Halifax, rim canal, kreamer island

► Current treatment- in south end including pelican bay, kreamer island, ritta island

USACE Applicators from Palatka- treated west and east wall

Acres treated- ~80



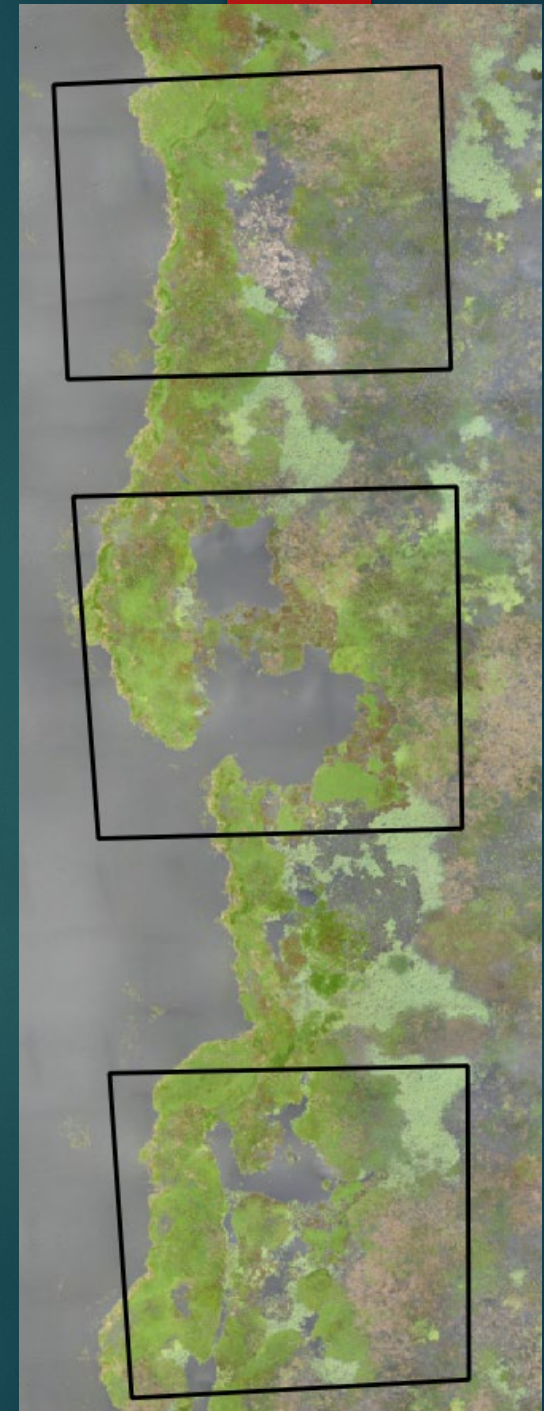
Penoxsulam Treatment

2,4-D

4_{oz}

5.6_{oz}

Surfactant- Anchor





Pre treatment



Post 1-month treatment



Post 2-month treatment

2,4-D control site





Pre treatment



Post 1-month treatment



Post 2-month treatment

4oz Per acre





Pre treatment



Post 1-month treatment



Post 2-month treatment

5.6oz Per acre



Interagency Flyer

► Point of contacts

February 2021 LAKE OKEECHOBEE INTERAGENCY FLYER

Lake Level: 15.49ft

What's Goin' on Around Lake O?

Did you know water hyacinth has its own biological control? Biological control, also known as biocontrol, is the planned use of one organism (i.e. an insect) to control or suppress the growth of another organism, like a weedy plant species. These organisms must be a specialist (an organism that will only eat a specific food source) and go through at least 10 years of testing to be released in our environment. Water hyacinth has five registered bio-controls: two weevil species, a moth species, a plant hopper, and a mite. These little insects work together to help reduce flowering, seed production, and help the plant become more susceptible to herbicide so we can use less to treat high levels of infestations.

Agency Updates

USACE (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Invasive Sp. Branch)
Conducting interagency surveys via airboat, monitoring for floating aquatic plants throughout the lake. If you spot a navigational way that is blocked, please notify either Jessica Fair, Ian Markovich, or Brandon Hession (FWC). The Corps will be conducting aquatic plant management treatment via *oyster* on Lake Okeechobee to maintain navigation and flood control structures around the south end of the lake. Area of responsibility will include the rim canal from Port Mayaca to Old Sportman's canal and in lake from Pelican Bay to Uncle Joes Cut. Current plant management work will take place from west of Cleveland to Uncle Joes cut.

FWC IPM (Invasive Plant Management)
Invasive floating plant management will continue in the western and north western marsh. A new infestation of invasive *Azolla pinnata* has been found near the Indian Prairie canal and is being planned for treatment. This species was last treated in 2018 in the south end of the lake.

FWC AHRE (Aquatic Habitat Restoration/ Enhancement)
Shredding of vegetation around the six nutrient marsh islands will occur early February to create fire lines around each island. This will help prevent fire from getting onto the planted wildlife islands when lake levels are low. Staff are also preparing for spring prescribed fires in cattail management areas. With high lake levels, fires are anticipated to be no earlier than March.

FWC Freshwater Fisheries Management
FWC is continuing to develop its Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat Management Plan for Lake Okeechobee. This winter, a stakeholder survey was conducted to measure public opinion on topics and situations that may be included in the plan. To learn more about this effort, please visit <http://myfwc.com/conservation/management-plan/lake/okeechobee/>.

SEWMD (South Florida Water Management District)
SEWMD, FWC, and USACE are scheduled to conduct their monthly invasive plant management survey around Lake Okeechobee by helicopter on Feb. 4th. Environmental conditions are being monitored for opportunities to implement prescribed fire. At predicted water level recession rates, SEWMD may get the opportunity to resume prescribed burns within the seasonally dry portions of the lake in early summer.

Friend or Foe?

Please note: All projects are subject to change based on water levels, weather, funding, or any other means.

Sailfin Catfish (*Hypostomus Plecostomus*)

Also known as "plecos", are native to South America. This fish can be found throughout Florida's freshwater and some brackish waters. Plecos create burrows along the shoreline which is causing major erosion issues. They can also tolerate low oxygen environments by breathing air.



Channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctatus*)

Is a native fish found throughout Florida. They can be easily identified by their barbels that are like sensory whiskers and their forked tail. Catfish are bottom feeders and feed primarily on insects, crayfish, and other fish.



PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

- ▶ 30-minute comment period
- ▶ EACH speaker has a max of 2 minutes to speak*
 - ▶ This will make sure everyone that would like to speak will have enough time.
 - ▶ A timer will go off once your time is up.