

Update: Giant Salvinia under control, but restrictions remain

PRVWSD's giant Salvinia task group and its partners finally got Mother Nature's assistance they've been seeking for three years. February's big freeze tightened the grip on the invasive species in Pelahatchie Bay.

The group recommended to the PRVWSD Board that current boating and fishing restrictions remain in place through another growing season. The Board voted unanimously at its March 18 meeting to keep the protective barriers in place at the bridge under North Shore Parkway and to keep restricting boating and fishing access along parts of the Bay's north shoreline in the areas marked by yellow boom and signs.

"Eradication of giant Salvinia has always been the goal of this task group, and while we're confident we will accomplish that goal we are not comfortable with saying we have reached that point," said group coordinator Bobby Cleveland. "The biologists and aquatic vegetation specialists from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks and from Mississippi State University say we need to make it through a full peak growing season without finding Salvinia before we can claim final victory. We have not succeeded in that respect.

"The 2020 growing season produced three small separate colonies in August, but, fortunately, those areas were within the boom barriers and were treated and killed immediately. We understand the frustration of leaseholders with the boom materials close to many homes, and we get that fishermen are tired of not being able to fish some of the Bay's most productive waters. We want this to be over, too, and hopefully, with a little more time, we can claim a total victory."

After the growing season ended in September, PRVWSD added an aerial application of the Salvinia's full range in the Bay, as well as spraying an additional 420 acres combined of the Bay and upper river areas to attack other invasive vegetation. No spring aerial applications are expected in 2021 anywhere on the lake.