

Media Release

For Immediate Release

18 October 2018

Board Declares Giant Salvinia Emergency

Action Plan Includes Total Boating Ban in Pelahatchie Bay

Acting on the advice of aquatic vegetation experts, the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District on Thursday declared an emergency related to the outbreak of the invasive plant giant salvinia, which has the capability of taking over parts or all of Barnett Reservoir in a very short time period.

“We’ve been advised that we have an opportunity to eliminate giant salvinia in Barnett Reservoir, but only if we take actions now to contain the plant to the Pelahatchie Bay area,” Barnett Reservoir general manager John Sigman said. “To do that, we have developed an action plan that we know will not be popular with all our users and residents, but we feel is necessary to control and possibly eradicate giant salvinia.”

The action plan includes a temporary ban of all boating on Pelahatchie Bay, continued extensive herbicide treatment, and lowering the lake level during the winter months to expose the plant to its one environmental weakness, cold weather.

Effective Friday (Oct. 19), all boat ramps, public and private in the Pelahatchie Bay area, will be closed to prevent the spread of the plant by boat. Giant salvinia has been shown to be viable for a week out of the water, even longer in a field of moisture like in a boat’s bilge or on the carpeted bunk board on a trailer.



BARNETT RESERVOIR

PEARL RIVER VALLEY WATER SUPPLY DISTRICT

Also effective that same day, passage between the main lake and Pelahatchie Bay under the bridge of Northshore Parkway will be blocked with temporary obstructions. The booms are designed to block the plant from riding wind or current from the Bay to the main lake, as well as on boats or their attachments.

The boating ban includes all types of watercraft, including fishing boats, pleasure craft, canoes, kayaks, personal watercraft and sailboats. Only vessels owned by governmental agencies and PRVWSD-approved contractors will be allowed on Pelahatchie Bay during the closure.

Residents that have waterfront leases with boats docked or in boathouses will be given until Nov. 5 to remove their boats, if desired, at Pelahatchie Shore Park boat ramp.

A critical part of the plan involves drawing down the lake during the winter months to aid in the eradication of giant salvinia. The plant has little tolerance for cold temperature.

“A cold winter, combined with low water levels, intensive herbicide application, and containment gives us an opportunity to eradicate giant salvinia this winter,” Sigman said

It is anticipated that this closure will remain in effect for six months.

PRVWSD and MDWFP will be constantly monitoring giant salvinia.

Comments can be sent to PRVWSD by email to comments@therez.ms.



Giant Salvinia at Caddo Lake



**Aerial shot of giant salvinia on
Toledo Bend reservoir**



**Giant salvinia clinging to a
boat trailer**