



The Pearl River Valley Water Supply District

Giant Salvinia Update

Plant and its range reduced 90 percent in the Bay

Officials from the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District and the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks, say 90 percent of giant salvinia has been killed and its range greatly reduced in the Pelahatchie Bay area of Barnett Reservoir.

Both agencies are pleased with the results of containment and eradication efforts on the Bay's north shore, but say that now is not the time to slow the battle against the invasive plant.

"Despite not getting a sustained hard freeze we needed this winter, we are happy to report that about 90 percent of the area where salvinia had spread last fall is now clear," said John Sigman, PRVWSD's general manager. "Our goal obviously is 100 percent eradication, and we might still get there, so now is not the time to relax in our efforts. We will continue to spray and attempt to burn the areas when we can, and assess the plant. We will consider another aerial spraying. Nothing is off the table; we are not slowing down."

Continuous herbicide spraying throughout the range has been effective, and the containment booms have kept the plant from spreading to other areas of the Bay. One failing aspect of the battle was out of the agency's control - the mild winter. It was hoped that by dropping the level of the lake, and exposing most of the salvinia, the cold would kill it.

Yet, the salvinia that had spread through most of the undeveloped north shore area known as Sections M&N is now located only in a few patches in smaller areas east of the Windward Oaks subdivision and a channel between Windward Oaks and Northshore Village subdivision. That encouraged aquatic vegetation experts who toured the area prior to a Feb. 13 meeting where future plans were discussed, including the basic parameters related to reopening the bay to boating.

"I was worried about what we'd find with the mild winter and the high water that came through in early January, but I was pleased to see it has been reduced as much as it has," said Gray Turnage, a specialist in invasive aquatic vegetation at Mississippi State University. "I think the MDWFP has done a very good job at containing it, but now is not the time to be taking the foot off the throat of the giant salvinia."



These images compiled by the MDWFP show the range of giant salvinia in October (in green, top) and the current range (orange, bottom). The two subdivisions in upper left corner are Northshore Village to the left and Windward Oaks on the right.



News Around the REZ

Scheduled events at The Rez

3/28/19	Concert Series	LSP	Live music in park
3/30/19	Food Truck Mash-up	LSP	Community event
4/13/19	Racin' for the Seed	LSP	5K
4/25/19	Concert Series	LSP	Live music in park
5/4/19	Century Ride	OTP	Bike Race
5/10/19	Pepsi Pops	OTP	Symphony in park
5/30/19	Concert Series	LSP	Live music at park

OTP- Old Trace Park / LSP - Lakeshore Park / PSP – Pelahatchie Shore Park

SP - Spillway Road / FL - Fannin Landing / ML - Madison Landing / RR - Rankin County Boat Ramp

Upcoming BRF events: Busy calendar

The Barnett Reservoir Foundation's schedule is filling quickly with events that bring music, food and fun to The Rez community.

* Year 3 of the **Sunset Concert Series** begins March 28 at Lakeshore Park off Northshore Parkway. The series will include concerts on the last Thursday of each month from March to July. Admission is minimal: \$5 per carload (free if the vehicle displays a "Rez Tag") and \$1 for walk-ins or bikers. The Foundation will have grilled burgers and hot dogs, plus beverage (beer, sodas, and water). Please no outside food or beverages. The lineup includes: March 28, Phil & Trace; April 25, Travelin' Jane duo; May 30, Keys vs. Strings; June 27, Lisa Mills; July 25, TBA.

* The **Food Truck Mash-Up**, produced by USA TODAY Network and co-sponsored by the Barnett Reservoir Foundation, is scheduled for March 30 at Lakeshore Park. In its second year, this event is moving from Trustmark Park in Pearl to The Rez, and will feature about 30 food trucks - 26 already signed up - representing at least three states in competition. Along with food and beverages, the event will include kids events and music.

* The 6th annual **Independence Celebration and Brain Injury Dash and Splash**, June 29 helps us kickoff our national Independence Day Holiday with our dual fireworks show at Old Trace Park and Lakeshore Park. The day starts with the morning fun run that benefits the Brain Injury Association of Mississippi, which starts and ends at Old Trace Park, with a unique - and wet - cool-down period. For more information on the Independence Celebration, visit barnettreservoirfoundation.org. For more information on the Dash and Splash, visit msbraininjury.org.

* The Foundation's 6th annual **Smokin' on The Rez BBQ and Music Festival**, featuring the 2nd annual **Shaggy's Kids Fishing Fest**, will be Aug. 24-25 at Lakeshore Park. The two-day BBQ contest, sanctioned by the Kansas City BBQ Society, will feature teams representing most southeastern states and Jackson's longtime party band **The Chill** will headline the Music Fest. The Shaggy's Kids Fishing Fest will include a fishing rodeo for children in an area stocked with catfish by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks Fishing Rodeo Program.

Spillway Road improvement: Short-term pain, long-term relief

Rankin County Supervisor Daniel Cross said work is scheduled to begin in March on a project that should improve traffic long-term at the busy intersection where Spillway Road meets with Northshore Parkway/Old Fannin Road.

"This is a \$1.8 million project that will be a total makeover of the intersection and Spillway Road up to Hugh Ward," Cross said. "The intersection is extremely busy with traffic counts indicating 30,000 vehicles using it a day. Lane improvements, new striping to make lanes more identifiable and redoing the entrances to the Parkway are all part of the plan.

"The contract has been awarded to Hemphill Construction and, since this is a Mississippi Department of Transportation project, it must wind its way through their process. I do think it should roll through that process within the next 30 days. The work should end by late summer."

Cross said Hemphill has been asked that work not start each day until after the 7-8 a.m. rush hour has passed.

"However, without question there will be some delays," Cross said. "We ask that people plan their driving accordingly. The long-term benefit will be worth it."

The following is a verbatim description of the project provided by Rankin County:

"The Northshore/Spillway Road project will include adding a second west-bound lane along Spillway Road from Hugh Ward Blvd to Pelahatchie Shore Drive and making improvements to the traffic signal at Hugh Ward Blvd and Spillway Road. The project will also include the reconstruction of Northshore Blvd. from Spillway Road to Lakeshore Drive, which will include new curb and gutter, new paving, new drainage inlets and pipes and the extension of the south-bound turn lane from the Bank Plus entrance to Spillway Road. The traffic signal at Northshore and Spillway Road will be replaced with a new radar actuated traffic signal."

Giant Salvinia Update: What's Next?

March's "green-up" key to when Bay will reopen to boating

Barnett Reservoir officials have begun discussions about removing the boating ban - at least partially - in Pelahatchie Bay, but are taking a very conservative approach.

"We have invested a lot of money, a lot of time and have asked a lot of our leaseholders and lake users since we declared an emergency last October with this salvinia, way too much to risk by jumping the gun," said Kenny Latham, a member of the PRVWSD Board of Directors and chairman of the Parks Policy Committee. "I wouldn't feel comfortable about moving too quickly and risking another outbreak where we'd be starting over."

It is unlikely that a reopening would take place prior to April 1, nor that a full reopening will be a first step. It is unlikely that boat traffic will be allowed to immediately resume under the Northshore Causeway bridge.

PRVWSD has led two meetings with its aquatic vegetation control partners to discuss a reopening plan, but discussions beyond the basic parameters were tabled until a meeting on March 13, which will coincide with the early stages of the green-up when officials can better ascertain how much of the salvinia survived the winter.

"It's 90 percent gone and the 10 percent that remains is either dead or dormant," said MDWFP's Ryan Jones, who led that agency's salvinia program on the Bay. "We still see a few green plants, like a leaf here or a leaf there, but most all of it is brown. We will not know with a 100-percent certainty if it is dead or if it has spread to other areas until the spring green-up. Salvinia will then tell us where it is and what it's doing."

And it will tell reservoir officials when it will be safe to resume boating in Pelahatchie Bay.

One problem in locating the plant is it hides in and under other vegetation, which is why controlled burning is now part of the battle plan.

"The main objective of the burn is to eliminate the thick cover from other vegetation, most of which is dead," Jones said. "With all that gone, we can find the salvinia easier and have better access to it where we can directly spray right on it."

PRVWSD has ordered a boat cleaning station that will be placed at Pelahatchie Shore Park before public access is allowed. The waterless station is designed to help boaters with the prescribed "Clean, Drain and Dry" process to remove any vegetation carried from the lake. The station is scheduled for delivery around March 25. Two more units are being purchased with assistance through a grant from the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality and should be available later this year.

"The goal is to keep the Salvinia from being spread to other areas of Barnett Reservoir and to other lakes in Mississippi," said PRVWSD general manager John Sigman, who added that the plant probably arrived here on a boat. "We need our lake users to help us by being vigilant against the spread of salvinia. If it spreads to the rest of the reservoir or to other lakes in Mississippi, the results can be catastrophic both from financial and recreational aspects."

"We realize the hardship we've placed on our residents and some of our commercial leaseholders, and it is our goal to get people back on the water for fishing and other forms of recreation as soon as possible."



Giant salvinia is so thick in this lake in Louisiana that it can support a 48-quart cooler.



The cove at this boat ramp on the Gainesville Pool of the Tenn-Tom Waterway in Alabama is 8-10 feet deep, yet looks more like a green field. It is completely locked in with giant salvinia.



Healthy giant salvinia will share habitat with native vegetation such as lotus (lily pads) until it becomes so dominant it simply wipes it out.



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Officers enforce new trash receptacle law at the Spillway

Officers of the Pearl River Valley Water Supply District's Reservoir Police Department have been enforcing - both with education and with citations - the new trash receptacle law that involves bank fishing at Barnett Reservoir and especially the Spillway Recreation Area.

It is a move that has been noticed and appreciated by the core group of anglers who have worked to keep the area cleaner and open to use.

"I believe it is having a good effect," said Todd Macko, a reservoir resident who helped form the Facebook page, Ross Barnett Reservoir and Spillway Fishing Group that has nearly 11,000 members. "Some of us felt the law could have been stronger but I still see it having a positive effect. It is sure better than the law the police had to work with before.

"For one thing, because people must at least have a receptacle for trash, it is making more of them think about what they are doing with their trash. For another, just knowing that the next person coming over the rocks could be an officer with a ticket book is a good positive reinforcement of the message we've been saying for two years."

The new rule, which went into effect Jan. 1, requires that any fishermen on the shore or bank of any PRVWSD area must have in his or her possession a designated container (labeled "Trash") while fishing.



Reservoir Police officer Chase Foster explains the new trash receptacle rule that went into effect Jan. 1 to two fishermen at the Spillway Recreation Area.

Find PRVWSD regulations online or through Rez App

For computer users, visit the PRVWSD's website at TheRez.ms, and scroll down the left-hand side of the page until you see the tab "Rules and Regulations." Smart phone and tablet users can find the same information on the free App "The Rez" available at most app providers for Apple, Google or Android products. Once the App is loaded, open it and on the home page tap the "Menu" key at the bottom. When it opens, hit the "Admin" icon and then hit the prompt for "Regulations."