

**September 2021**

## **Giant Salvinia: None found, restrictions remain**

PRVWSD's Giant Salvinia task group and its partners are closing in on its three-year goal — eradication of the invasive vegetation that has plagued the Pelahatchie Bay area of Barnett Reservoir since June 2018, when it was first found along the north shore.

No new colonies of the plant have been found in 2021 through mid-August, an encouraging sign since it marks the halfway point of the peak growing period. The key to eradication is to make it through the peak growing period without new growth, a goal the task group nearly achieved a year ago.

The last discovery of live Giant Salvinia in the Bay was August 2020 when three small separate colonies were found within the original Giant Salvinia Management Area. Those colonies were treated immediately and eliminated and have shown no sign of life in 2021.

In February, Mother Nature provided a huge assistance by delivering a severe freeze that iced over the Management Zone. A tropical plant, Giant Salvinia has zero tolerance for freezing weather, and with the lake lowered to 296 feet above mean sea level, the range was fully exposed to the deep freeze.

On the advice of the Task Group and its partners from the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries, and Parks and Mississippi State University, the PRVWSD Board of Directors voted in March to keep the Management Zone closed to all boating and fishing. Those restrictions remain in place. All areas behind containment boom and/or signs remain closed to all boating.

“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 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.”

MDWFP continues to monitor the Bay and other areas, not just for Giant Salvinia, but also for other invasive species.