



18 January 2012

Nick Wiley, Executive Director
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
620 South Meridian Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1600

Subject: Management of Invasive Aquatic Vegetation in Lake Apopka

Dear Mr. Wiley:

We are aware that the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (Commission) is soliciting public input on the future management of *Hydrilla* and other invasive aquatic plant species in Lake Apopka as a prelude to updating the 2012-2013 management plan for the lake. The Florida Native Plant Society (Society) is opposed to any modifications in aquatic plant management that would allow the coverage of *Hydrilla* to increase above current levels.

The Commission's responsibility to manage invasive aquatic vegetation in Florida waters represents a daunting challenge, and it is appropriate that your agency reappraise its management approach. However, the public has made a tremendous investment in the restoration of Lake Apopka. To date, nearly \$200 million have been expended on the restoration. Continuing improvements in water quality and the reestablishment of native aquatic plant species provide clear evidence that the restoration is proceeding successfully. Any reduction in efforts to limit the growth of invasive aquatic vegetation, particularly *Hydrilla*, would simply be counterproductive.

The Society recommends that the Commission continue to manage and treat *Hydrilla* in Lake Apopka aggressively, with the long-term goal of reducing its coverage to a level that is cost-efficient to maintain and consistent with the overarching restoration goals of the St. Johns River Water Management District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven W. Woodmansee".

Steven W. Woodmansee, President
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pc: Bill Caton, Section Leader, Invasive Plant Management, FFWCC

The purpose of the Florida Native Plant Society is to promote the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the native plants and native plant communities of Florida.