

Lake Wateree Invasive/Nuisance Vegetation Treatment *Temporary Irrigation and Drinking Water Restrictions for Lake Water*

To help control invasive plant species, the S.C. Department of Environmental Services (SCDES) will conduct herbicide treatments in impacted areas of the Taylors Creek cove from **S Waters Edge Dr** to **State Park Rd** (see map on reverse side of document) on **Tuesday, Sept. 22** or **Wednesday, Sept. 23**, weather permitting.

Why is herbicide treatment necessary?

Giant salvinia was first detected in Lake Wateree in October 2025 and currently presents a serious threat to the native ecological community. Giant salvinia is an invasive, rapidly-growing floating fern capable of doubling its coverage in less than a week. It forms dense mats which outgrow and replace the native plants that provide food and habitat for waterfowl and other animals. Mats can create navigation issues and disrupt fishing and recreation. The plant can also clog drinking water intakes and reduce water quality.

The SCDES Aquatic Nuisance Plants Program has been working to control this invasive species, completing 8 small treatments on Lake Wateree ranging from 0.25 to 5 acres in size in the last year. We recently observed more giant salvinia growing around and under other vegetation, mainly alligatorweed and water primrose. Alligatorweed and water primrose are also invasive species which will need to be controlled to treat the giant salvinia.



*Left: Giant salvinia (the small floating plants) pictured mixed with cutgrass (larger, blade-shaped leaves). Photo courtesy of Duke Energy.
Right: A mature giant salvinia plant with a salvinia weevil is pictured. Photo courtesy of Santee Cooper.*

Typically, the most effective method for the management of specific high-weed areas of a lake is the use of aquatic herbicides that are regulated by the U.S. EPA. These herbicides are applied in a targeted manner, following the label guidelines, and in the smallest amounts needed. Herbicide treatments are commonly used along with non-chemical methods — such as biological controls (like sterile grass carp) and lake drawdowns to manage problematic vegetation and improve navigation in lakes. The mechanical removal of invasive vegetation is rarely used because it's expensive and often causes additional problems, such as spreading the vegetation via fragmentation and removing invertebrates and small fish that support the local food chain.

What should I know about these herbicides?

Licensed applicators will apply these EPA- and state-approved herbicides to impacted areas: ***AquaNeat, PondKlear, and methylated seed oil*** (an adjuvant that helps the herbicide stay on the plants). These herbicides will be applied directly to the target plants by spray gun.

We ask that you complete the survey at des.sc.gov/LakeWatereePrivateWaterIntakes to report any intakes drawing water from the cove and/or to request to be notified of herbicide applications and associated water-use restrictions. **Do not irrigate yards, gardens or ornamental plants using lake water from the treated area and turn off any intakes used for drinking water from Sept. 22 through Sept. 25.**

Do not enter the area while treatment is in progress. The water is safe to enter once application is completed but avoid ingesting lake water. There are **no other swimming, fishing or recreational water use restrictions** for these products at the rates they will be applied.

AquaNeat, PondKlear, and methylated seed oil are registered by the U.S. EPA and Clemson University Department of Pesticide Regulation for safe use in the aquatic environment. The approval process for these herbicides requires stringent testing over many years and strict regulation for proper use.

Anyone with questions should contact SCDES's Aquatic Nuisance Plants Program

Email: invasiveweeds@des.sc.gov | Phone: 803-898-0033 | Submit a sighting report at des.sc.gov/anp

