



LAKE CONROE UPDATE

By: Lake Conroe Division Staff



STATUS OF VEGETATION IN LAKE CONROE:

In a Stakeholder Meeting with the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) on October 28, 2015, TPWD presented a summary of aquatic vegetation currently found in Lake Conroe. In terms of "invasive" aquatic vegetation, the combined efforts of TPWD, the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA), and nature itself have helped maintain a very clean and healthy Lake Conroe. Reported vegetation numbers were as follows:

- Giant Salvinia.....349 acres
- Water Hyacinth314 acres
- Alligator Weed.....196 acres
- Hydrilla0.01 acres

While 0.01 acres of Hydrilla would appear to be a very positive result, Hydrilla tubers are still resting in Lake Conroe's floor and must be closely monitored. It is presumed that as Hydrilla tubers start to sprout in today's lake bed, the 5,000-plus White Amur Grass Carp that are estimated to still be alive are eating any new Hydrilla before it can spread. All of the Stakeholders pay close attention to Hydrilla quantities in Lake Conroe and regularly discuss if, and when, additional grass carp may be added to Lake Conroe. At this date,

Date	Ft/MSL Lake Level Average	Inches			°F	
		Rainfall	Evaporation	Total Release	High Temp Average	Low Temp Average
Jan-15	201.10	4.30	2.20	16.74	56	52
Feb-15	201.03	0.90	2.27	0.55	61	43
Mar-15	201.20	6.51	3.44	45.06	68	54
Apr-15	201.14	3.94	5.88	31.14	75	66
May-15	201.45	16.48	6.81	131.33	83	70
Jun-15	201.12	4.96	7.80	29.11	90	75
Jul-15	200.77	0.14	9.45	0.52	95	78
Aug-15	200.09	2.39	8.79	0	95	77
Sep-15	199.65	1.36	6.19	0	90	74
Oct-15	199.30	7.38	5.80	0	84	67
Nov-15	200.03	4.44	3.09	0	71	57
Dec-15	201.08	6.57	2.64	26.05	70	52
Total:		59.37	64.36	280.50		

The table above totals water released from the Lake Conroe dam equivalent to 280.50 inches during the twelve month period from January, 2015 ending December, 2015.....or approximately twenty-three feet of water across Lake Conroe's surface. Of course, we will not always have years like this and, undoubtedly, we will endure drought again. Continuing to explore ALL options for alternative water sources and maximizing conservation will be extremely important for our future.

there are no planned purchases of additional grass carp. As to floating invasive vegetation such as Giant Salvinia and Water Hyacinth, SJRA continues an aggressive spraying program to keep any further growth in check.



Native plants being planted in an effort to re-establish native vegetation.

As to native aquatic vegetation, you may recall that the White Amur Grass Carp introduced into Lake Conroe in 2005/2007 to control Hydrilla elected to move on to eat our native vegetation once they couldn't find any more Hydrilla. Through the dedicated efforts of many Stakeholder organizations, an active planting program was implemented to re-establish valuable native vegetation. Prior to 2005, Lake Conroe had an estimated 2,000 acres of native vegetation. By 2010, native vegetation had been reduced below 200 acres. We are



Installing artificial fish habitat, aka Spider Blocks, in Lake Conroe

pleased to report that TPW estimates a total of 1,215 acres of native vegetation today. The primary plants comprising native vegetation in Lake Conroe today include Black Willow, Sesbania, Panicum, and Water Willow.

LAKE CONROE ELEVATION, RAINFALL, AND EVAPORATION DATA:

The first treated water from Lake Conroe was delivered in September, 2015. It is estimated that during the years 2016–2026, one inch of water will be removed from Lake Conroe per month (or a total of twelve inches per year) for use at the plant. From October through December, approximately 1.98 inches of water was delivered through the system.

As you might imagine, evaporation fluctuates year to year based on not only temperature but also variations between drought and wet years. From 1973 (completion of Lake Conroe construction) to 2014, evaporation for Lake Conroe has averaged 53.22 inches. For that period, the highest evaporation was 81.31 inches in 2011 and the lowest was 42.07 inches in 1973.

For a glimpse at our rainy fall season and the continued "full pool" we have enjoyed on Lake Conroe, rainfall totals were 7.38 inches for October, 4.44 inches for November, and 6.57 inches for December, 2015. ♦

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