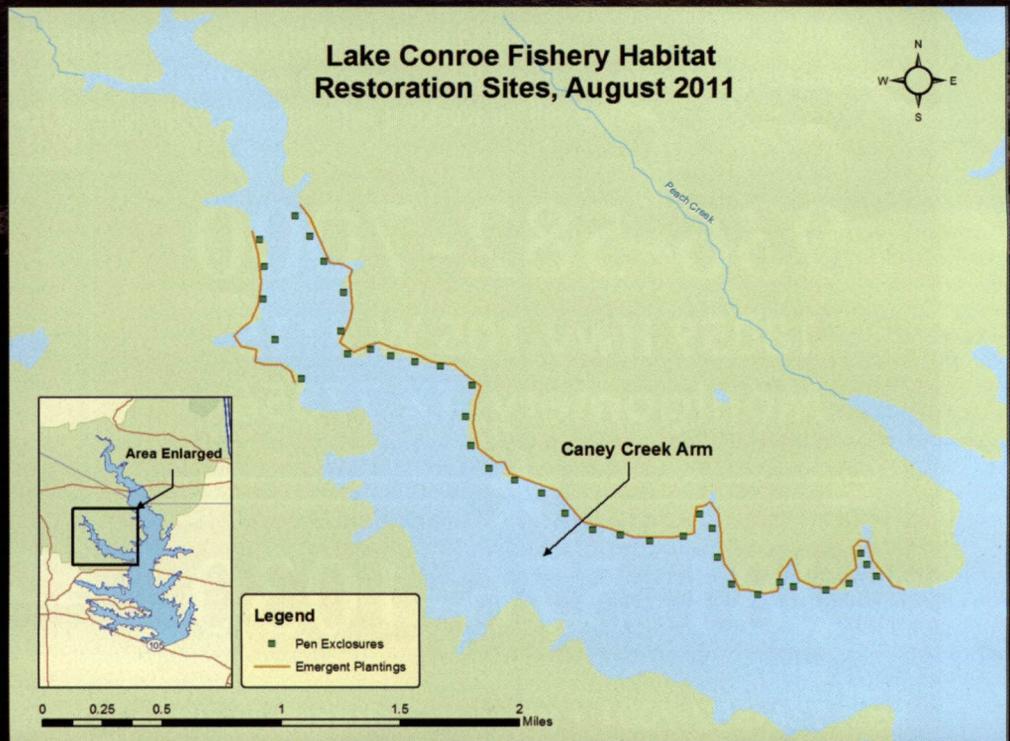




Year in Review: Lake Conroe Native Vegetation Rehabilitation Project

By: Blake Kellum, Lake Conroe Division Manager

Lake Conroe has had a long history with aquatic vegetation, starting soon after the reservoir filled in 1973. It was not long after the reservoir filled that it was infested with Hydrilla, and by the early 1980's, approximately 9,000 of the lake's 21,000 surface acres was covered with Hydrilla. The first step taken back then to control Hydrilla, was the use of EPA-approved aquatic herbicides, which eventually failed to keep up with the fast-spreading plant. The eventual solution was to stock large numbers of Chinese Grass Carp (White Amur). Not only did the carp control the Hydrilla, they eliminated most of the other aquatic vegetation species in Lake Conroe. As a result of this, a Native Vegetation Rehabilitation Project



(Courtesy of Lynde Dodd, LAERF)

EYE CARE *for the*
WHOLE FAMILY



Dr. David Boeckman, Dr. Reagan O'Rear, Dr. David Awalt

**OPTOMETRIC GLAUCOMA SPECIALISTS
LASIK AND CATARACT CO-MANAGEMENT
MULTIFOCAL CONTACT LENS SPECIALISTS**

CONROE'S LARGEST SELECTION OF DESIGNER EYEWEAR
Complete Pair of Glasses from \$69

10,000 CONTACT LENSES IN STOCK

SPECIALS

50% Off Kids' Eyewear (Frames + Lenses)

\$50 Off Progressive Lenses

30-50% Off Frames with purchase of Complete Pair (Frames + Lenses)

50% Off Selected Designer Sunglasses

including: Dana Buchman, Jhane Barnes, Vera Wang and Kensie

*See optician for details. Specials not available with insurance or any other discounts.

Specials may not be combined. Expires 2/15/2013

Maui Jim Sunglasses Now in Stock!

Eye

Land

M-F 9-5:30 • SAT 9-1:00

1422 N. LOOP 336 WEST (ACADEMY CENTER)

CALL TODAY FOR APPOINTMENT

936-539-2020

CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR CURRENT SPECIALS

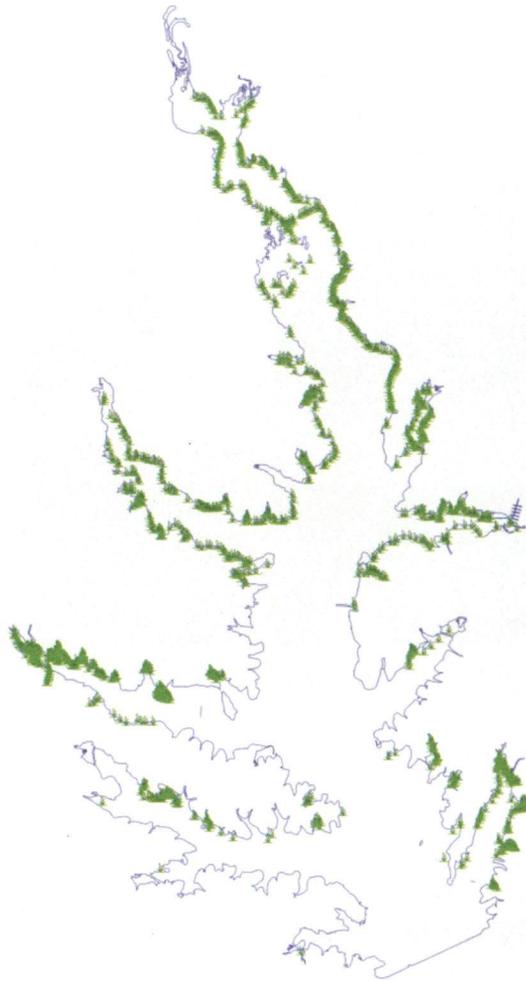
WWW.EYELANDTX.COM

was started involving the San Jacinto River Authority (SJRA), Texas Park and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Lewisville Aquatic Ecosystem Research Facility (LAERF), and other local stakeholders. By the mid- to late-1980s, native vegetation had begun to make a strong comeback under this stewardship.

Almost 15 years later, to the day, another outbreak of Hydrilla got underway on Lake Conroe. The SJRA and TPWD were able to fend off the invasion for several years with herbicide applications, but as before, Grass Carp eventually had to be reintroduced into the lake. The results were the same – an almost total loss of desirable native vegetation.

Continued on page 18 ⇨

Lake Conroe, Texas Native Vegetation - 2012

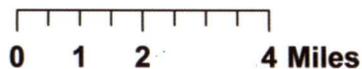


Dominant Plant Species:

1. Panic grasses
2. Rattlepod
3. Smartweeds
4. Water Hyssop
5. Sedges

Legend

-  Lake Conroe
-  Native Vegetation



Native Vegetation Acreage: 1,835 ac

sive aquatic plants. Currently, we feel that we are getting closer to that delicate balance of invasive management and native vegetation re-establishment.

In 2011, there were 39 cages and six miles of shoreline planted with a combination of submersed and floating-leaved species of native plants. The selected species were chosen due to the fact that they were low on the Grass Carp's list of desired forage. A survey conducted in early April of 2012, showed that all pens built were supporting plants. Waterwillow began establishing on the shoreline between most of the pens in 12" to 18" of water. Fragrant Waterlily, Water Stargrass, and American Pondweed were the most successful species even though water levels dropped significantly after the August 2011 plantings.

The SJRA, LAERF, and TPWD conducted a replanting effort in May of 2012. This planting involved 650 emergent plants introduced every 40 ft of shoreline as well as 300 submersed plants planted in pens that were now in two feet of water. These submersed plants included Wild Celery, Illinois Pondweed, American Pondweed, Water Stargrass, American Lotus, and American Waterlily. In July of 2012, there was a second survey conducted throughout the planting area. This survey showed that both American Pondweed and Water Stargrass were the most prominent from the May 2012 planting. In October of 2012, another evaluation was conducted as well as a re-planting effort. This re-planting consisted of 275 emergent plants planted every 150 feet along the shoreline. At this point in time, there are now plants every 25 feet along the six miles of shoreline at various depths giving them the best opportunity to re-establish.

Currently Lake Conroe is seeing a strong resurgence of native vegetation due to these restoration efforts, as well as

Courtesy of: Michael D. Homer Jr.

Thus the current native plant restoration initiative began in 2008.

The first step in the rehabilitation process was to establish colonies of native plants on the northern portion of the lake, primarily in the undeveloped Sam Houston National Forest. These colonies would then produce seeds and fragments that would populate other areas, and spread along the shoreline. We saw results of this effort within the first two years with almost 1,200 acres of native coverage. Since that time it has been our goal to establish a balance between invasive species management and the re-establishment of native vegetation. Since the first attempt to re-establish native vegetation in 2008, we have seen waves of resurgence for our native vegetation as well as for some inva-

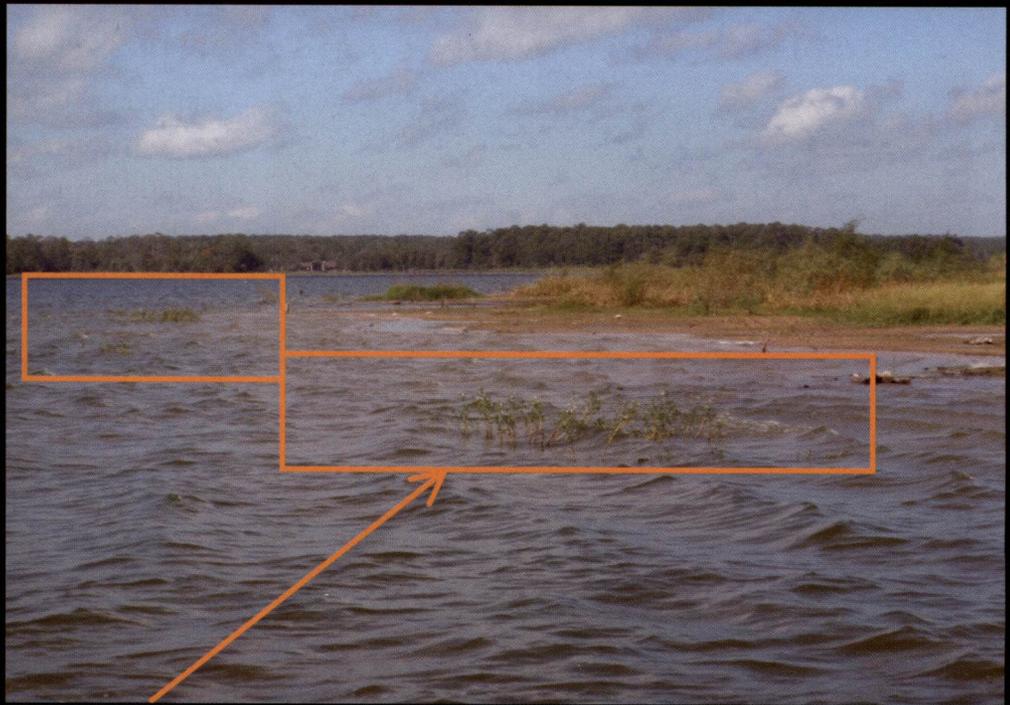


Pen Evaluation (Lynde Dodd, LAERF)

a proactive invasive species management program involving a monthly shoreline survey and routine herbicide applications during the growing seasons. While Hydrilla does still exist in the lake, it is only able to grow in areas that are inaccessible to Grass Carp. Water Hyacinth has been kept to less than 50 acres and mostly exists in the upper reaches of the lake. Giant Salvinia, another very aggressive invader, has been kept to less than one-tenth of an acre due to low lake levels and a proactive treatment program.

The lake now has over 1,800 acres of native vegetation coverage. This coverage consists of various species, in addition to the planted species, such as Panic Grasses, Rattlepod, Smartweed, Water Hyssop, and Sedges. This is great news for future fish and waterfowl populations. These areas offer excellent fish habitat creating safe spots for juvenile fish. Wintering waterfowl will find food sources in abundance due to the seeds of the plants and insects that live on them.

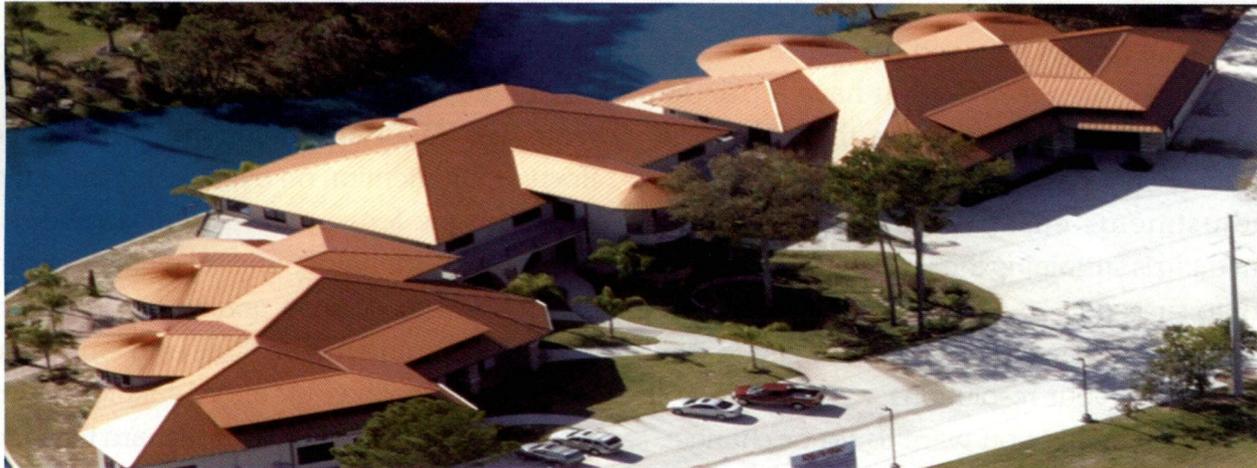
The SJRA along with TPWD and LAERF will continue to monitor the current native population as well as continue its growth with future planting projects while continuing to balance the support of native aquatic plants with the proactive management of any invasive plant species encountered. ♦



Water Willow planted August 2011, observed/evaluated October 2012, Lake Conroe, Texas. Approximately 20 weeks later, colonies expanded to 4-ft to 6-ft diameter located in 12 to 18 inches of water.

References: The SJRA wishes to acknowledge the support and expertise of the following individuals who contributed to this article and to the SJRA's native aquatic plant program: Lynde Dodd (Lewisville Aquatic Ecosystem Research Facility; USACE – ERDC, University of North Texas); and Michael D. Homer Jr. (Assistant District Fisheries Biologist, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Inland Fisheries Division - District 3E)

Your Trusted Business Partner in Conroe is Expanding



At Chicago Title we know that our clients' needs are ever changing, and we are committed to being there with you every step of the way. So as our clients continue to grow, so does Chicago Title. We are pleased to announce the opening of our new office in Montgomery, Texas.

Please stop by and meet your new neighbors. We are ready to serve you!

110 Blue Heron Drive, Suite 108 • Montgomery, TX 77356
(936) 441-1411 • www.ChicagoTitleHouston.com

 **CHICAGO TITLE**
A trusted business partner since 1847