

Water WoRDs

Updates from the Water Resources Division



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Improving the Control of Aquatic Nuisances

Changes in effect for the next growing season will make it easier for local governments and lake associations to treat for aquatic weeds.

Dense aquatic plants can be unsightly, interfere with lake uses, and negatively alter natural species diversity and fish community structure. Sometimes, the nuisance is created by a non-native invasive species transferred from another water body, often due to poor cleaning of boats. Lakes in highly developed watersheds also can suffer from high nutrient loads from human activities that contribute to excessive plant and algae growth.



In these situations, many lake users wish to alleviate the nuisance.

The DEQ's Water Resource Division's Aquatic Nuisance Control Program issues permits for pesticide application to control aquatic nuisance plants and algae. Permits are required by Part 33, Aquatic Nuisance Control, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act. More than 2,500 permits are issued each year and that number continues to grow.

In order to increase permitting efficiencies as the number of permit requests grows, Part 33 was amended during the summer. Staff has been working diligently to update all necessary forms and processes to ensure the legislative changes are incorporated for the 2015 treatment season.

Beginning in 2015, issued permits will be good for three years. Expanding a permit for an area infested with a non-native invasive species is allowed without a permit revision so long as the infested area is adjacent (contiguous) to an already approved treatment area. A new fee structure will be posted by Nov. 1, 2014, and payments may now be made online with a credit card. Applicants will need to use a new form to obtain the permit now that its term has been extended and missed annual fees result in the permit being suspended. Deadlines for the WRD to issue permits are also much stricter.

In light of all these changes to the program, a webinar will be held Oct. 9 from 9 to 10:30 a.m. to discuss changes in the permitting process and answer questions.

What do you do in the WRD? Meet Heidi Ziegenmeyer.

Long-time readers may recall meeting Heidi Ziegenmeyer when we wrote a post about the Groundwater Discharge Permitting Program. Now Heidi is the newest employee of the WRD's Aquatic Nuisance Control Program, so this is a reintroduction of sorts.

Heidi shares: "It is a very interesting time to be coming into the Aquatic Nuisance Control program. Recent legislative changes as well as emerging invasive species issues and the threat of Harmful Algal Blooms keep us busy! However, I love working with permit applicants as well as citizens who have questions about the program. I hope that we can all continue to work together for the sustainability and wise use of our natural resources."

