

Section C
Project Description



C. Project Description

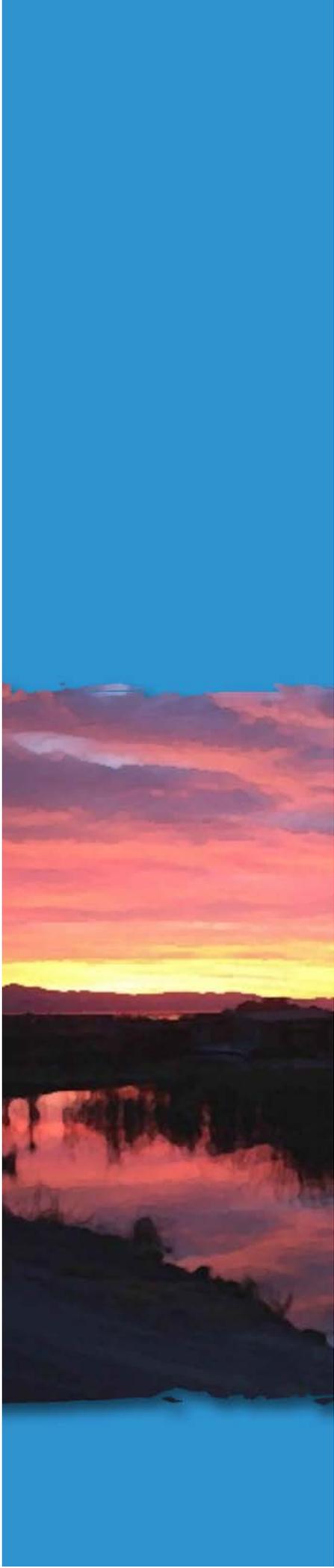
In 1982, Senate Bill 1344 amended the California Harbors and Navigation Code and designated the California Department of Boating and Waterways as the lead agency for controlling water hyacinth in the Delta, its tributaries, and Suisun Marsh. The goal of the WHCP is to keep waterways safe and navigable by controlling the growth and spread of water hyacinth in the Delta and surrounding tributaries. The primary treatment method for the WHCP is chemical, although the program has utilized some mechanical controls (primarily hand-picking), and has also researched biological controls.

The DBW has six (6), two-person crews conducting WHCP treatments (plus one Fresno County crew, and one Merced County crew). Treatments begin April 1st, or April 15th, in selected areas, however, the main region of the Delta can only be treated between July 1st and October 15th, to avoid potential impacts on fisheries. In 2008, approximately 84 percent of herbicide use, and 80 percent of acreage treated, utilized 2,4-D (Weedar[®] 64). The remaining acreage was treated using the aquatic herbicide glyphosate (Rodeo[®] Herbicide or Aquamaster[®]). Both chemicals are used with an adjuvant surfactant, Agridex[®], to increase adhesion to water hyacinth leaves and to reduce drift.

The DBW has divided the WHCP into 368 treatment sites that average between one and two miles in length. Sites may be treated multiple times during a treatment season. Treatment sites are prioritized so that nursery areas, and areas with public, agricultural, or industrial impacts are treated first. Logistical factors such as wind, travel time, and weather are also taken into account when selecting treatment times and locations.

The WHCP includes portions of eleven (11) counties that encompass much of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and its upland tributaries. The eleven counties include: Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Yolo. The general boundaries for the treatment area in the Delta and its tributaries are as follows:

- West up to and including Sherman Island, at the confluence of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers;
- West up to the Sacramento Northern Railroad to include water bodies north of the Southern confluence of the Sacramento River and Sacramento River Deep Water Ship Channel;
- North to the Northern confluence of the Sacramento River and Sacramento River Deep Water Ship Channel, plus waters within Lake Natoma;
- South along the San Joaquin River to Mendota, just east of Fresno;
- East along the San Joaquin River to Friant Dam on Millerton Lake;
- East along the Tuolumne River to LaGrange Reservoir below Don Pedro Reservoir; and
- East along the Merced River to Merced Falls, below Lake McClure.



There are three (3) important characteristics of the WHCP that make it somewhat different from many projects or programs that require EIRs. First, like other invasive weed programs, the WHCP has long-term beneficial impacts. The beneficial impacts are in contrast to potential short-term detrimental impacts resulting from water hyacinth control alternatives. Discussions of the overall environmental impact of the WHCP must take into account trade-offs between potential short-term negative impacts and long-term positive impacts.

Second, the WHCP is a legislatively mandated State of California program. The WHCP was implemented in order to address problems created by water hyacinth in the Delta.

Third, the WHCP has been in operation for over twenty-five (25) years. The program was initiated in 1983, and has successfully operated each year since then, with the exception of year 2000.

When the WHCP was initiated in the early 1980s, the federal and State agencies involved with the program determined that the WHCP did not require an EIR (or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)). With completion of this WHCP Final PEIR, the DBW has voluntarily updated its environmental documentation, and provided environmental documentation parity with its newer aquatic invasive weed program, the *Egeria densa* Control Program (EDCP).