

SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.
SECOND DISTRICT, GEORGIA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEES:

CHAIRMAN

AGRICULTURE, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, FOOD
AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION AND RELATED AGENCIES

VICE CHAIR

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS
AND RELATED AGENCIES
FINANCIAL SERVICES AND GENERAL GOVERNMENT

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

LIVESTOCK AND FOREIGN AGRICULTURE

GENERAL FARM COMMODITIES AND
RISK MANAGEMENT



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1002

September 15, 2022

OFFICES:

WASHINGTON, DC

2407 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-1002
PHONE: (202) 225-3631
FAX: (202) 225-2203

ALBANY

323 PINE AVENUE, SUITE 400
ALBANY, GA 31701
PHONE: (229) 439-8067
FAX: (229) 436-2099

COLUMBUS

18 NINTH STREET, SUITE 201
COLUMBUS, GA 31901
PHONE: (706) 320-9477
FAX: (706) 320-9479

MACON

300 MULBERRY STREET, SUITE 502
MACON, GA 31201
PHONE: (478) 803-2631
FAX: (478) 803-2637

Mr. Steve Dickman
8121 Clearwater Dr.
Donalsonville, GA 39845

Dear Mr. Dickman:

I am writing to thank you for your advocacy and outreach regarding the hydrilla infestation at Lake Seminole. Your voice on this issue has helped guide my efforts in advocating for more support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in addressing this perennial problem. I would also like to update you on some of the success I've had in addressing hydrilla through my work in Congress.

First, my request to add hydrilla to the list of invasive species the Corps of Engineers can research was included in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2022. The bill passed the House and is waiting to be conferenced with the Senate's version of the bill. The Senate's version also includes a provision that addresses hydrilla, and I will advocate for the inclusion of both hydrilla provisions in the final version of the WRDA bill.

I also continue to work with Col. Jeremy Chapman, commander of the Corps of Engineers Mobile District, to ensure the Corps includes robust funding for hydrilla treatment in its fiscal year 2024 budget request. This includes securing a commitment from the Corps to include \$2.08M in their budget to treat invasive aquatic plants on Lake Seminole. Their FY24 budget request represents a sharp increase in the Corps' current budget of \$200,000. Their budget request includes the cost for environmental assessments, surveys, an airboat to handle the workload, and triploid grass carp for aquatic weed control. They estimate that the funding will provide treatment for roughly 5,000 acres of affected areas using aerial, biological, mechanical, and manual treatments.

Next, I worked with my colleagues in the House Appropriations Committee and secured additional funding for the fiscal year 2023 appropriations bill for aquatic species management. The bill provides \$2,000,000 for the Corps to monitor, survey, and control hydrilla in places like Lake Seminole. This funding was included in the House-passed version of the annual appropriations bill, and we are currently waiting for the Senate to take action on the bill. You can

Mr. Steve Dickman
September 15, 2022

rest assured that I will do all that I can to ensure the hydrilla provisions are included in the final appropriations legislation.

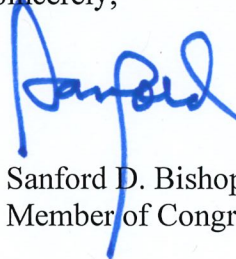
I am proud of the work that my office has done, and I know I am not alone in advocating for increased treatments and mitigation actions by the Corps of Engineers. The Lake Seminole community's focus on hydrilla has kept the pressure on the Corps to treat hydrilla within their existing budget. Recently, the Corps treated hydrilla and other invasive aquatic weeds in trouble spots including Ray's Lake, Fishpond Drain, the area around Seminole State Park, Four Mile Creek, the Big Slough near Bainbridge, the area around Big Jim's Restaurant, and the At Ease Campground (formerly Jack Wingate's).

Additionally, the Corps conducted an experimental application of herbicide using a drip system on Spring Creek in February 2022. The Corps is monitoring the results, but it appears to hinder the growth of hydrilla on the Spring Creek arm of the lake. The Corps selected Lake Seminole as one of three sites in the United States for this type of study, and I eagerly await the study's results.

We have made considerable progress thus far on garnering the attention and resources on our serious hydrilla issue, but there is more to be done. Hurricane Michael damaged the existing carp gates, requiring extensive repairs and updates. The repairs are underway, but the Corps still has work to do. There is good news, though—they have the funding and are developing a contract to complete the work. Once the gates are operational, the Corps will then acquire additional sterile grass carp to stock the lake.

Rest assured that I will continue to monitor the progress on these issues and advocate for more funding and support to address these challenges. My staff in Georgia and in Washington is always available for you if you would like to share additional concerns or updates on Lake Seminole. Paul Fryer (paul.fryer@mail.house.gov) and Brennan Randel (brennan.randel@mail.house.gov) are the best points of contact for hydrilla matters. Once again, thank you for your continued advocacy and support for our community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sanford", written over a blue horizontal line.

Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress