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Preface

The research reported in this issue of the Journal of Aquatic Plant Management was presented at the 32nd annual meeting of the Aquatic Plant Management Society and International Symposium on the Biology and Management of Aquatic Plants held in Daytona Beach, Florida, July 12-16, 1992. This meeting was attended by over 300 people representing over 30 countries in the world, probably one of the largest meetings ever held on the biology and management of aquatic plants. This symposium would not have been possible without the financial and other services donated by the Symposium sponsors. Individuals, too numerous to mention, devoted much time and expertise in program planning, local arrangements, reviewing papers and conducting other tasks that permitted such an informative meeting.

The production of this "Special Edition" was only possible through the volunteer efforts of Ms. Jessica Ruff, Technology Transfer Specialist, and Mr. J. Lewis Decell, Manager, Corps Aquatic Plant Control Research Program, of the U.S. Army Engineer Waterways Experiment Station, Vicksburg, Mississippi.

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Dedication

It has been widely accepted that the waterhyacinth, the world's most widespread aquatic weed problem, was introduced into the United States at the 1884 Cotton States Exposition in New Orleans. A century ago, by 1892-93, the waterhyacinth was spreading its green growth and purple flowers through the critical navigational waterways of the Southeast United States, including the St. Johns River, some 40 km west of the symposium venue. The problem with waterhyacinth in navigation areas was severe in many locations by the mid to late 1890s, finally prompting Congress to enact the River and Harbors Act of 1899 which authorized the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to do everything possible to eradicate the waterhyacinth and thus maintain navigation and commerce. Further modifications of the original Act through the present time authorized, in addition to Corps operational programs, federal cost sharing, research and technology transfer programs. The initial battle against the waterhyacinth required imaginative and sometimes dangerous application of mechanical and chemical control methods. Aquatic weeds have been removed from navigable waters with cargo nets pulled by tractors, giant draglines and steam shovels, and various conveyors. Plants were chopped, sawed, crushed, and sprayed with steam, various salts and acids, and even burned with propane torches. These early experiences led to the development of the current national, state, and local aquatic plant management programs in herbicidal, mechanical, and biological control.

Since 1899 many people of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers have devoted their professional lives to research and operational programs in aquatic plant management. In recognition of these activities, the Aquatic Plant Management Society, Inc., dedicates this "Special Edition" to the men and women of the Corps of Engineers and their achievements over the last century toward the management of nuisance aquatic vegetation.



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