

Presidential Address¹

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Welcome distinguished guests, members of the Aquatic Plant Management Society, and ladies and gentlemen. We have gathered together for the sixteenth annual meeting of our Society and for the first annual meeting under our new name change, The Aquatic Plant Management Society.

It is great to recognize old friends and faces, and I especially want to welcome those who have joined us for the first time. The basis of this Society is to share our experience and technologies with others.

In previous meetings we have repeatedly heard the problems of environmental regulations as they relate to the aquatic problems that we face each day in this field. The aquatic plant problems have continued to expand, environmental regulations have increased and the result has been a decrease in the capability of the applicator to use his available tools. Industry has been placed under even more stringent controls, making it almost prohibitive, from the stand point of cost, to develop and obtain a new or broader label for a chemical used within the aquatic environment. This cost has increased 300% over the past 10 years due to regulations imposed. The number of chemicals presently being evaluated for aquatic uses is somewhat less than in previous years; however, several new herbicides such as Velpar, diuron, and glyphosate show great potential for certain aquatic weed problems.

The regulations that are in effect or being considered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Environmental Regulations (DER) fail to recognize that aquatic plant management is definitely a part of the total aquatic environmental program. Aquatic plant management is needed to provide and maintain potable water supplies, water for industry, recreation, and water for our most urgent need, agricultural products.

It is recognized by all responsible persons within the field of aquatic plant management that it is necessary to regulate the materials used in this industry and to professionalize those engaged in their uses. This Society agrees and promotes the idea that safety and professionalism is a basic need in the industry. The area that is difficult to understand is the refusal of many governmental and private agencies to recognize the true value gained from a sound aquatic plant management program. Many of you have witnessed the beginning of an aquatic plant management program in a canal, waterway, lake or drainage ditch choked with an assortment of aquatic plants, brush and algae, but the continuation of this initial effort is a part

of aquatic plant management. Having freed these channels for the open movement of water for drainage, irrigation, and recreation can also improve the quality of the water. Aquatic weed management is not a new concept but when considered as a part of total aquatic environmental management it is a new frontier.

The day has come when we must recognize that herbicides applied in accordance with the labels are very similar to the medication prescribed by our physicians. When they are administered properly, they are a great asset and can help to correct many of our aquatic problems. Many of them are less toxic than aspirin when used correctly. Misused by inexperienced or poorly trained applicators, they can become extremely toxic.

I selected the theme for this meeting "Aquatic Plant Management, a Continuing Frontier" because we have barely scratched the surface as it relates to the solution of our problems. Our research and development has been curtailed because of environmental regulations or inability of regulatory agencies to agree on a policy. I believe the time has come for our governmental agencies to recognize if they place these stringent controls upon our industry, then the governmental agencies should subsidize the industry. Industry must have assistance to develop the needed control methods that are required to cope with the ever growing problem. This Society must begin to speak for our industry and educate regulatory agencies on the need for help if we plan to stay abreast with the problems.

The development of pesticides for use in agriculture has greatly exceeded the development of herbicides for use in the aquatic environment. We, in aquatic plant management should note the willingness of the agricultural industry to accept change and use the newest technology and methodology. This change has not occurred as rapidly in the aquatic industry and we are still using the antiquated methods, mechanical means, improper herbicidal formulations, and in general, refusing to take advantage of the tools and methods that are available to us. To achieve our objectives the aquatic plant management industry must begin to use new and improved technology. This will help us to hold the line on cost, achieve the control of the aquatics, and improve the quality of the aquatic environment.

The problem of aquatic weeds in many of our lakes, canals, and rivers have progressed to a point that aquatic plant management programs must be established. In developing these management programs we must be concerned with the tremendous amount of nutrients that will be released into the waters as a result of management programs. This, however, can be controlled to some extent by proper planning to treat proportionately those areas of

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vegetation during each application that will maintain a balance within the system.

The public is very concerned with the question "are herbicides a water pollutant?" The answer to the question should be "no" if used in accordance with the label. Aquatic plants are a potential water pollution problem in many cases before a herbicide is added to the water. Certain kinds of algae produces objectionable taste, color, and odor in the water while others are toxic to fish and many causes swimmers itch. Submerged weeds such as hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata* Royle) Eurasian water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum* L.) and southern naiad (*Najas quadalupenses* [Spreng] Magnus) certainly would be considered pollutants in most waters.

We must have aquatic herbicides if we expect to prevent serious water pollution and obstructions in our water resources. Proper usage of aquatic herbicides will assure us that aquatic plants will not become the dominant resource in our aquatic environment. To assure the use of our available water supplies in the future, we must have additional tools for our management programs. This means that we must have additional research at the government and private area as our water supplies become more limited and our aquatic weed problems become more acute. It is necessary for all methods of control to be thoroughly researched, expanded, and perfected. We need biological and mechanical methods for the control of aquatic problems, and these methods must be improved. The continued research for the possible use of aquatic plants for human or animal food supplements, mulch, fertilizers, and other economical use should be thoroughly investigated. The struggle between man and aquatic weeds has been going on for many years. Aquatic weeds have gradually gained the upper hand in our environment while mans' influence on the aquatic environment has been to introduce new species and make the environment a more luxurious place for them to thrive and grow. We are concerned with aquatic plants but many times the public becomes concerned only when the plants interfere with his recreational activities, causes the canal to overflow, or detracts from the beauty of the lake or stream. The question arises, would the public become more involved with better education?

I would also like to point out that the reluctance to change within our industry also carries forth within the membership of the Society. The goals of this Society are to assist in promoting controls of noxious aquatic weeds, to provide for the scientific advancement of members of the Society, to encourage scientific research, to promote university scholarships, and to extend and develop public interest in noxious aquatic weed problems. This Society has met some of these objectives and provides an avenue for us to meet the other ones. I wonder how many members of this Society have participated in developing and carrying out the Society objectives. Many of you are 3-day members instead of 365-day workers. You want someone else to develop the Society, defend your industry and establish your professionalism with no effort on your part except to complain if the task is not accomplished. I wish to encourage each of you to get involved within your Society. Open up the lines of communication with your Society. Communicate with the board members, come forth and work on the various committees, encourage others within the field to become active within the Society, and pass onto them the objectives of this Society. During my term as president, I have tried to establish an "open door" policy to all members. This Society has a vast amount of untapped talent that could be used to build in the future.

The people who volunteer their time, talents, and efforts to make this Society go and grow cannot satisfy everyone, and moreover, they certainly cannot consider your needs and wishes if you do not let them be known. Therefore, in selecting the theme, "Aquatic Plant Management, a Continuing Frontier," I believe that it is a continuing frontier in every aspect, in our efforts to control our aquatic environment as well as the continued growth of this Society.

It has been established that the frontier of the Aquatic Plant Management Society is worldwide. As your president, I encourage you to accept this international concept and devote your time and energy to developing and disseminating aquatic plant management technology in all areas of the world.