Alligatorweed in the Delta; and early detection rapid response story
Jon O’Brien, Senior Environmental Scientist-Specialist
OVERVIEW

- Background of Boating and Waterways Aquatic Invasive Plant Control Program
- Alligatorweed in the Delta
AQUATIC INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL PROGRAM

- CA State Parks, Division of Boating and Waterways
- Lead agency for control of aquatic invasive plant species in the Delta and Suisun Marsh per Harbors and Navigation Code
- 24 field staff, based out of Stockton and Oakley
- 14 scientists/compliance and other staff in Sacramento
ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

- Programmatic EIR (CEQA)
- Biological Opinion (Section 7 of ESA), USFWS, extended from 2017
- Biological Opinion from National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA-NMFS)-current
- NPDES Permit issued by SWRCB
- Streambed Alteration Agreement (CDFW)
- Restricted Materials/Notification (CAC)
- Risk assessment (CDFW)
INTEGRATED CONTROL STRATEGY
Alligatorweed
ALLIGATORWEED

- Native to Parana River, South America
- First observed in Alabama and Florida in 1890s (USGS NAS)
- First observed in Los Angeles in 1946 (USGS NAS)
- CDFA Noxious Weed List, A-rated; Cal IPC Statewide Rating of ‘High’
ABOUT ALLIGATORWEED

- Aquatic and terrestrial perennial
- Aquatic form generally rooted in sediment, but can spread into open, deeper water as part of dense mats
- Mats are reported to be dense enough to hold weight of a person
- Generally does not reproduce from seeds, instead propagules break off of mats to recolonize new areas
- Tolerates cold weather but not prolonged freezing
ALLIGATORWEED IDENTIFICATION

- Opposite, generally sessile leaves
- Leaves generally waxy and smooth
- Aquatic form with hollow stems
- Small white flowers, generally June to October
ALLIGATORWEED IN THE DELTA

- September 2017: identified in Montezuma Slough by Dr. Brenda Grewell, USDA-ARS
- November 5, 2017: DBW submitted official risk assessment to CDFW
- February 13, 2018: DBW given federal permission to control the plant
- March 1, 2018: designated invasive species of concern by Ca Dept of Fish and Wildlife
- Spring 2018 to present: DBW actively treating alligatorweed in all known locations
Alligatorweed Sightings
As of October 31, 2018
ONGOING WORK

- Revisit all alligatorweed sites and retreat, if needed
- Survey Delta to find additional populations
- Work with USDA-ARS to create a Weed Alert?
- Continue to treat alligatorweed sites as we become aware of them
- Report sightings to USGS NAS
- Share alligatorweed sightings with other agencies and partners
- Communicate with other agencies and partners regarding the problem and the program
- Find out where source populations are located
QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

- Report alligatorweed sightings to:
  - DBW Aquatic Invasive Species Program
  - AIS@parks.ca.gov
  - Jon O’Brien
  - Jon.OBrien@parks.ca.gov
  - 916-327-1859