

Project Cooperators

Additional funding is being applied for to continue removal of the remaining elodea in the main stem of the Chehalis River. If progress continues at the pace it has to date, it may be realistic to establish an eradication goal in the future.



Thurston County crew removing Elodea.



Chehalis River main stem-Prather Road
2006



Chehalis River main stem-Prather Road
2010

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Elodea removed from the river



THURSTON COUNTY
WASHINGTON
SINCE 1852

The Chehalis River Brazilian Elodea Removal Project



What is Brazilian Elodea?

Brazilian Elodea (*Egeria densa*) is a non-native submersed freshwater aquatic plant.

It is found in both still and flowing waters, in lakes, ponds, pools, ditches and streams.



Brazilian Elodea creates beds of floating vegetation that restricts water movement.



This plant displaces native submersed plants, such as native elodea, pondweeds, and coontail.

Where did it come from?

Brazilian Elodea is native to South America. It has been a popular aquarium plant, the sale of this plant in Washington State is prohibited.

It was found in 1998 in the Chehalis River while surveying for purple loosestrife and parrotfeather. It is the only infested site in Thurston County.

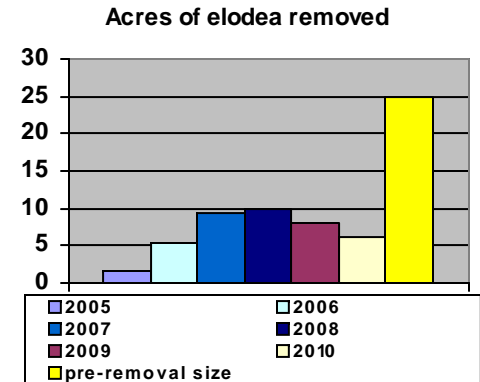


It was most likely introduced into the river by someone dumping the contents of their home aquarium into Plummer Lake, in Centralia. The plant has spread 15 river miles downstream from the point of introduction.

The Chehalis River Brazilian Elodea Removal Project

In Thurston County, the Noxious Weed Control program began removing individual plants as early as 1999. Hand removal continued to 2003 when the infestations became so large that individual hand removal was no longer practical. Funding was provided by D.N.R. .

The Elodea Removal project began with a pilot project funded by D.N.R. in 2004. The project was expanded in 2005 with funding from U.S Fish and Wildlife. In 2006 the Chehalis Tribe joined the project, and began removal of elodea in the Chehalis River near Centralia. In 2007 the Dept. of Ecology provided funding. In 2008, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board provided funding through a project with the Nature Conservancy. In 2009 and 2010 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Washington State Department of Ecology again funding this project. The goal of this project is to remove as



much Brazilian elodea from the Chehalis River as possible, which will prevent new infestations. Removal will increase water movement resulting in higher dissolved oxygen. *In 2007, oxygen levels were measured before and after removal efforts. Following removal, oxygen levels increased 7.75%.* Populations of elodea have now been reduced to the point where future readings will most likely not show any differentiation. Removal will also decrease sediment retention. The method of removal includes diver suction dredging to remove the entire plant and root structure. The plants are then transported away from the river.