

Imported aquatic plants proved harmful

AUSTIN — Introduction of potentially dangerous aquatic plants like hydrilla and water hyacinth will be halted outright, following action taken by Texas Parks and Wildlife Commissioners regarding the importation, sale, transport and release of noxious aquatic plants. This law (H.B. 1278 of the 64th Texas Legislature) will prevent the wholesale introduction of potentially dangerous plants into Texas waters. Lou Guerra, P&WD noxious vegetation control program director. The proclamation, approved by the Commission at its May meeting in Austin as presented by Guerra,

established rules and regulations and also sets up a permit system to regulate research projects into any of the 12 floating, rooted or submerged plant species listed in the noxious aquatic plant category. Guerra cited detrimental effects of the vegetation on humans; impediment to navigation; and diminished quality of water-oriented recreational uses. The vegetation control chief pointed out that noxious plants like hyacinth are dangerous to humans because they provide almost ideal breeding ground for mosquitos that carry Venezuelan equine en-

cephalitis (VEE), malaria and other potentially deadly diseases. "The major damage to any Texas lake from these plants is their rapid productive potential. Under good conditions, some of these plants can entirely cover a lake, making it totally unnavigable, in three years," Guerra said. "There are areas in South Texas where the climate is such that these plants would be in a state of growth almost on a year-round basis," Guerra noted. In contrast, Guerra indicated North Texas' climate could limit the growth of these plants during colder

winter months. Guerra said the Texas law was similar to legislation adopted by southeastern states that will make it illegal to import, transport, sell or release certain plant species. Of the 12 species listed, seven are native to the U.S., Mexico, or Central and South America. They include Salvinia (*Salvinia rotundifolia*), water fern (*Azolla caroliniana*), water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*), Florida Elodea (*Hydrilla verticillata*), Brazilian Elodea (*Egeria densa*), Alligator weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) and rooted water hyacinth (*Eichhornia azurea*).

"Some of these plants were originally used as aquarium plants and cattle feed," Guerra noted. "After the person got tired of the aquarium, he would dump the water and plants into a stream or river. That was the beginning of a very big problem to Texas. That is how hydrilla was introduced into Texas five years ago," Guerra pointed out. As the plants grew and reproduced, biologists discovered that certain species of water vegetation were resistant to every known herbicide approved as safe for use in the state. "Some plants, like hydrilla, have

the potential to spread across the country, with no effective means of halting it," Guerra said. Thus the need arose for methods and means to control the spread of these plants into recreational-area waters around the state, Guerra noted, adding that some of these plant seeds are so hardy that they can survive out of water for up to 17 years. The proclamation notes that research permits will be issued, "but strict guidelines in disposing of these plants after research has been conducted are spelled out," Guerra said.

CREATE NEW PLANTS WITH OFFSHOOTS

E. 29th St. WAREHOUSE 3715 E. 29th 846-6771 TOWN & COUNTRY CTR

A&M to hold estate planning seminar

Estate planning advice will be offered at a seminar to be held in Houston June 28 under the direction of Texas A&M University's Development Office. The meeting will be held at the Electric Living Center, 2121 West Loop South, beginning at 7 p.m. While primarily intended for Texas A&M alumni, the seminar will be open to the general public, said

Robert H. Rutledge III, the University's assistant development director. Rutledge said the session will include detailed information about proper estate planning and management, as well as discussions of various aspects of Texas probate law and federal estate tax law. "During a time when we see inflation materially distorting the value of

our estates and increasing the amount of federal estate and state inheritance taxes payable upon our deaths, each of us needs to be acutely aware of the importance of proper estate planning," Rutledge said. "It is unlikely that a person will achieve his desires for the disposition of his estate without careful planning and management." He said the latest statistics re-

leased by the Internal Revenue Service show a 31-percent increase over a three-year period in the number of deaths that required filing of federal estate tax returns, and a 38-percent increase in the estate taxes levied. Rutledge said the seminar will include presentations by four

Houston-area Texas A&M graduates well versed in estate planning. Appearing on the program will be Joel B. Coolidge, an attorney; R. H. Stevens Jr., certified public accountant; Eugene F. Howard Jr., certified life underwriter, and George L. Risien, a trust officer.

TTI assists rail operations

AMTRAK operates over 24,000 miles of track owned by many separate railroad companies. This gives them a sizeable headache in that they have extensive knowledge concerning locomotive and rolling stock, scheduled arrivals, departures and train services; however, it has little knowledge of the rail system over which it operates. Texas A&M University's economists at the Texas Transportation Institute are going to provide the aspirin in the form of excerpts from the National Rail-Highway Grade Crossing Inventory file they developed. In computer storage are 60 standard data items on over 225,000 parts of the U.S., according to project research economist John Sammon. "Each record contains locational information, administrative information, operating data, grade crossing warning device and highway system data. Also location and administration data is available for 300,000 other railroad-highway locations.

The operations of the carriers, from which it leases track rights, and grade crossings along its operating system," Sammon said. "This operating and grade crossing information will assist Amtrak management to locate specific problems that occur on high density traffic lines, timetable restrictions and potentially dangerous crossing locations," he said. "The operating and grade crossing information which we will provide Amtrak gives nearly a mile-by-mile profile of the railroad system on a national basis," Sammon said. "Train speeds, rail traffic density, number of tracks, joint operating carriers, warning devices at grade crossings and crossing highway system data would allow Amtrak executives to view the entire rail system over which they operate," he said. A separate complete crossing file is being developed by TTI re-

searchers for Amtrak by piecing together segments of crossings from carriers over which Amtrak operates, using software that has been developed for the National Crossing Inventory file. "This file will be oriented on a system-wide basis for Amtrak and also on a route-by-route basis," Sammon said. "Both formats would provide Amtrak with the detailed operating and grade crossing information in a manual which would help meet their data requirements." A scientific approach to diamonds. An artistic approach to fine jewelry. Carl Bussell's DIAMOND ROOM TOWN & COUNTRY CENTER 846-4708 3731 E. 29th MEMBER AMERICAN GEM SOCIETY

MSC Dinner Theater

Initial wonder at the need for this kind of information is quickly dispelled when it is realized that the rail system which Amtrak uses can be responsible for the reliability or unreliability of Amtrak's schedule. "Since Amtrak is operating trains over this rail system, it is also responsible for accidents which may occur as a result of its operating passenger trains," Sammon explained. Foremost in rail operating safety are grade crossing accidents resulting from auto collisions," he added. Also local speed ordinances restrict rail speeds over grade crossings which further restricts Amtrak's ability to maintain adequate schedule speeds. Even in this area, however, Amtrak possesses little data concerning

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Ace Reid to lead Tech trail drive

Nationally-known cowboy cartoonist Ace Reid will be putting on his act (and it's a great one) daily as he helps ramrod the Texas Tech Bicentennial Trail Drive and its herd of 70 Texas Longhorns from San Antonio to Lubbock. Six hard days on the trail, the herd leaves San Antonio on June 27, with stops in Kerrville, San Angelo, Stamford and Midland, arriving at the Ranching Heritage Center, Texas Tech University, July 2, just in time for opening ceremonies. Reid is no newcomer to trail drives, having played a big part in the drive from San Antonio to Dodge City, Kansas, in 1966. Want to help drive that herd to Lubbock? Contact Texas Tech Bicentennial Trail Drive, YO Ranch, Mountain Home, Texas 78058 or call them at 512-640-3222.

SIGHT Quiz

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