

## Case Study: Alligatorweed Control in Riparian Habitat

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Alligatorweed, *Alternanthera philoxeroides*, is a perennial deep rooted emersed aquatic plant with the ability to survive in dry land habitats. Stems are round and generally hollow in cross section and float on the water surface. The plant spreads by fragmentation and is not known to produce viable seeds in California. Alligatorweed forms large, rapidly growing mats in ponds, waterways and other aquatic habitat, often restricting water flow and impeding boat traffic. It has been found growing at various dry land sites including: schools, golf courses, nurseries, parks and crop lands, where normal cultivation has increased its spread. A native of South America, it was first found in the United States in Florida in the late 1800's. Since that time, it has spread to the mid-Atlantic and southeastern States. In California, it was brought to the attention of the Los Angeles County Agricultural Commissioner in 1956. Infestations in Tulare and Kings Counties, in the San Joaquin Valley, were detected in 1965 and 1966 respectively, in Riverside County in 1996 and in San Bernardino County in 1997. Today, while total alligatorweed acreage in California has been greatly reduced by the efforts of many agencies, statewide eradication programs are still underway. Persistent survey is necessary as young plants are difficult to locate in often weedy and brushy aquatic environments. Historically, endangered species have not affected the survey or treatment of alligatorweed. Surveys are generally done on foot and each plant is individually treated or physically removed. This allows for careful handling of the habitat. Chemical tools have been limited by the plant's aquatic habitat and its resistance to many materials. Historically, however, consistent survey coupled with metham fumigation, dichlobenil or dicamba treatment has provided lasting results.