

Description of Grass Carp Policy in Washington State

by
Scott Bonar¹

Triploid grass carp were legalized for aquatic plant control in Washington State in December 1990. Grass carp stocking is regulated through the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW), which allows only triploid grass carp to be used. Diploid grass carp are considered deleterious exotics, and their use is not allowed.

Currently, there are no producers of triploid grass carp in Washington, so all fish must be shipped from out-of-state. The following documentation must be completed and approved to use triploid grass carp in Washington (Anonymous 1990):² (a) verification from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the grass carp to be stocked are sterile; (b) certification from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the fish to be stocked are disease free; (c) a Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife fish-stocking permit; (d) a State environmental policy act checklist (SEPA) describing the site to be stocked and potential impacts; (e) a hydraulic project approval if outlets or inlets to the lake are to be screened; and (f) a list of property owners with land adjacent to the targeted water and their consensus to the proposed stocking.

In addition to the above documentation, other requirements must be met to use grass carp in Washington (Anonymous 1990):² The WDFW exotic species policy (POL-4001) must be followed to stock triploid grass carp; only triploid grass carp greater than 8 in. in length may be used; the grass carp must not pose a significant threat to rare native plants or to fish and wildlife; grass carp may only be stocked in naturally closed water systems or those that can be screened with barriers that do not prevent migration of native fish species; and stocking rates for grass carp must be based on the stocking rate model used by the WDFW. The goal for lake plant control in Washington is that a minimum of 25-percent coverage of aquatic plants be maintained.

For private lakes, only the above WDFW requirements must be met. To stock waters having public access, the above requirements must be met along with a lake restoration feasibility assessment meeting the standards of the Washington State Department of Ecology.

¹ Fisheries Biologist, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Olympia, WA.

² Anonymous. (1990). "POL-5220 Triploid grass carp planting policy," Washington Department of Wildlife, Olympia, WA.