



Clean Boats Campaign

The San Marcos Springs ecosystem is the second largest in Texas and has the most environmental stability and flow reliability of any spring system in the southwestern United States (USFW 1996). USF&W has designated eight species that live in the San Marcos Springs and Spring Lake as either threatened or endangered. Species are listed as threatened or endangered based on declining numbers or loss of habitat. Consequently recreational use of Spring Lake is limited. Two annual events, the Texas Water Safari and the Aquarena Sprint Triathlon have been able to use Spring Lake without any problems.

Recently, concerns about the introduction of aquatic and invasive species into Spring Lake have led the University to consider the implementation of a gear wash protocol to anyone assessing the lake. Boaters between waterways can unknowingly spread several plant species, including hydrilla, water hyacinth and 'Cryptocoryne becketii' found in the lower San Marcos River. If they are brought into Spring Lake they could cause many problems. Safe from the predators and diseases of their native habitat, they could reproduce uncontrolled, choking out and threatening the native, threatened and endangered species that live here.

Aquarena and the Texas Water Safari have agreed to request that race participants follow a boat cleaning procedure using an honor system to be overseen by race officials to help prevent the spread of exotic and invasive species into Spring Lake.

The best way to manage aquatic invasives is to halt their spread into new areas. It only takes a few minutes to inspect and clean your boat and other equipment each time you leave the water. Knowing how to do this properly will save time and ensure that your efforts protect our waters from plants and animals that don't belong.

All racers will be required to sign a waiver at check in stating they have cleaned the canoes using one of the cleaning methods listed below. (High pressure washing is acceptable.) If a canoe has not been cleaned, the team will be required to go clean their canoe before being allowed to enter the race.

How to Clean Your Equipment Properly*

Here are a few precautions that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Coast Guard recommends to protect your favorite fishing and boating spots from an unwanted invasion.

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It is important to follow these procedures every time you come into contact with any body of water. Even if you think the waterway is pristine, there may be an invasive species that has not yet been discovered. There are hundreds of different harmful species ranging from plants, fish, amphibians, crustaceans, mollusks, diseases or pathogens. Some organisms are so small; you may not even realize they are hitching a ride with you.

* Remove any visible plant matter, animals, mud, and dirt from your boat, trailer, boots, shoes, paddles, rudders and all equipment that was exposed to the water. Even plant fragments and dirt may contain tiny hitchhikers.

* Empty water from boat hulls, canoes and kayaks, boots, etc. Please do this before you leave. If you wait until you get home to empty water, it is likely to run down the gutter into a storm drain, which could contaminate local waters.

*** Clean your equipment, including your boat's exterior surface and bilge with hot tap water (at least 104° F). If hot water is not available, spray boat with high-pressure water.**

* Make sure that your boat and other equipment is allowed to dry for at least 5 days before using it in other waters.

* For equipment that cannot be exposed to hot water, either dip it in vinegar for 20 minutes or in a 1-percent saltwater solution for 24 hours. This table provides correct mixtures for the 1-percent saltwater solution:

Gallons of Water	Cups of Salt
5	2/3
10	1-1/4
25	3
50	6-1/4
100	12-2/3

*Procedure from Clean Boats Campaign of the Izaak Walton League of America