

The Lake Oconee Bassmasters grow and plant water willow for conservation

The Lake Oconee Bassmasters from Eatonton, Georgia wanted to do a unique and long lasting conservation project. The club decided to grow and plant water willow in their home waters of Lake Oconee. Water willow is an aquatic plant that can grow from the shoreline out to about 5 feet deep. It is a great plant because it is a native non-invasive plant, it provides great shoreline cover for young and adult fish, and it can help prevent shoreline erosion, said Tony Beck the clubs conservation director. It is a fairly easy plant to grow because it can generate roots from the stem. The club took cuttings from some established plants in June and potted them in half gallon pots. The pots were placed in small pools filled with water so the plants would have constant moisture. Other than keeping the pools filled with water, there is very little maintenance that needs to be done to the plants.



Pictured: Club conservation director Tony Beck taking cuttings of water willow



Pictured: Members of Lake Oconee Bass Club (left to right Chris Nelson, Leo Sauer, Tony Beck, Alan Schultz) with finished pots



Pictured: Club members (left to right Ed Fritch, Bill Brantley, Tony Beck) with water willow ready to be planted

After about 3 months, the plants were rooted and ready to be transplanted to the lake. According to Tony, the lower third of Lake Oconee has a good established population of water willow. One of the advantages of this plant is that once it is established, it will move around on its own by breaking loose, and rooting elsewhere. This is a great long lasting project that can really have a positive impact on the aquatic environment, said Tony. In all, about 150 plants were planted in 3 locations. The club hopes to continue the project for years to come .



Pictured: Members Wayne Barr, Ed Fritch, Bill Brantley, (Leo Sauer and Tony Beck not pictured) planting water willow in Lake Oconee



Pictured: Finish product

If anyone is interested in learning more about this project or The Lake Oconee Bassmasters, you can get more information at www.oconeebassmasters.com

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