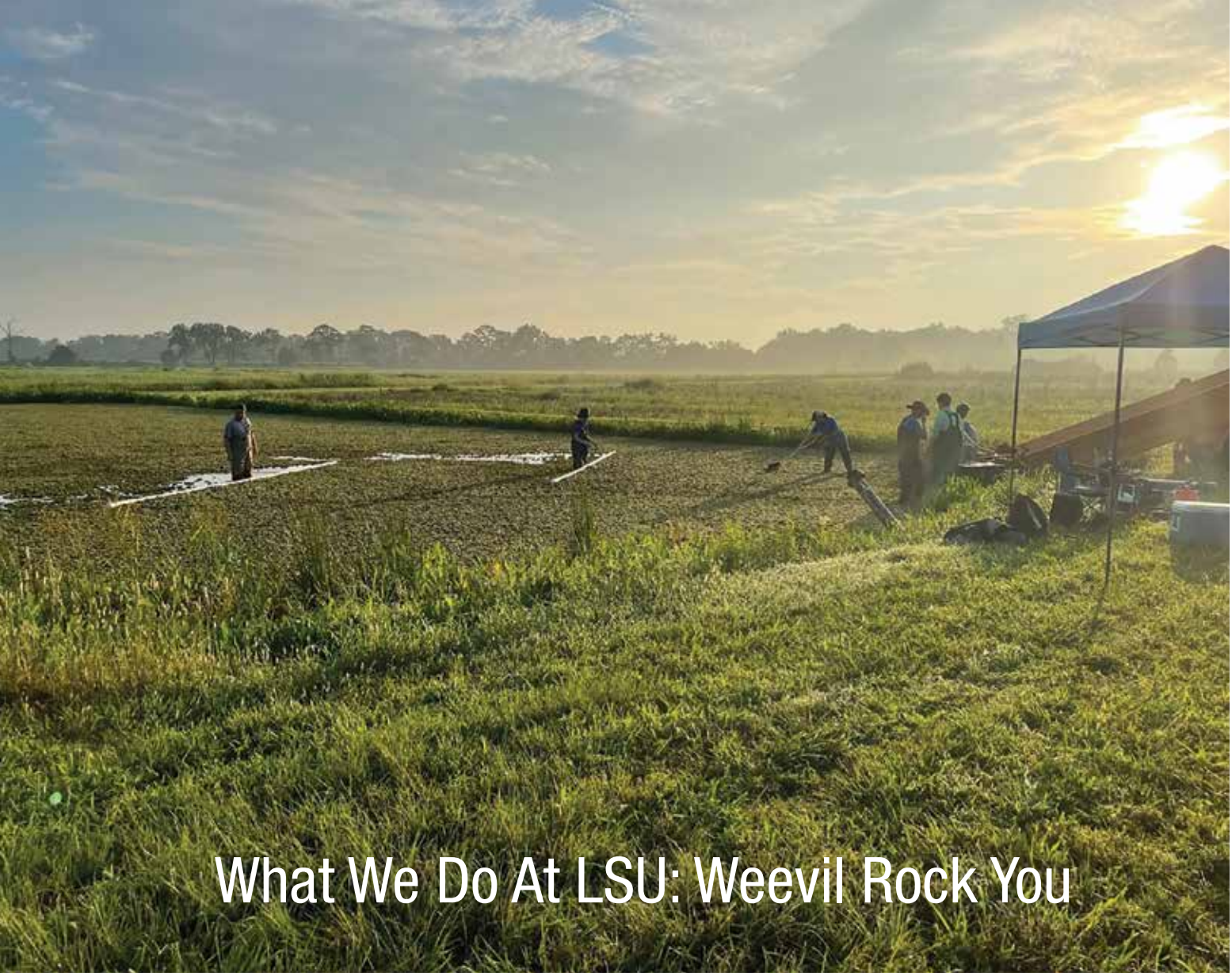

What We Do At LSU: Weevil Rock You

Photo by Korey Pham

Salvinia weevil rearing pond located at St. Martinville, Louisiana. This picture depicts the harvest of the pond to distribute the weevils to land managers.

Our laboratory at Louisiana State University studies invasive species and their impact on managed and natural ecosystems. We consider biological control the cornerstone of invasive species management. Specifically, we work with tropical and subtropical weeds that are invading temperate regions such as giant salvinia, water hyacinth, alligator weed, water lettuce, air potato, parrot feather, elephant ear, and many others. While we study the invasion of invasive species across the state of Louisiana, one of our focuses is on the free-floating aquatic fern, giant salvinia. Entomologists and aquatic weed scientists at the LSU AgCenter work together to study herbicide and biological control methods to optimize weed control. Our applied research directly benefits private landowners and our public stakeholders. We are responsible for rearing and distributing salvinia weevils in Louisiana. To improve the management of giant salvinia in Louisiana, we survey several locations to monitor the impact of the salvinia weevils. Due to the economic and recreational importance of freshwater wetlands in Louisiana, we consider managing invasive species critical.

Biographies:

Korey Pham, PhD Student and Research Associate

Korey Pham is an Entomology PhD student and Research Associate for the Department of Entomology at the LSU

AgCenter. She has a B.S. in General Biology from St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas. Her current role at the LSU AgCenter is to rear and distribute salvinia weevils to private landowners in south Louisiana and provide outreach materials to better manage aquatic weeds. Her current research responsibilities include the optimization of salvinia weevil release recommendations and understanding the competitive interactions between giant salvinia and Cuban bulrush and its impact on the salvinia weevil biological control program.

Hannah B. Laville, Undergraduate Researcher

Hannah Laville is an undergraduate student at Louisiana State University, studying Natural Resource Ecology and Management. Additionally, she serves as a student worker in the Entomology Department at the LSU AgCenter. In this role, she works closely with Dr. Rodrigo Diaz and Korey Pham to assist in the biological control program that rears and releases the salvinia weevil, as well as assisting with

tasks associated with ongoing invasive species research within the lab. In addition, she has conducted research that aims to understand salvinia weevil dispersal from a release site into a surrounding infestation.

Rodrigo Diaz, PhD, Associate Professor

Rodrigo Diaz is an Associate Professor in the Department of Entomology at Louisiana State University. Rodrigo's research focuses on biological control of non-native weeds and insects. Current projects include biological control of giant salvinia, roseau

cane scale, elephant ear and air potato. Louisiana. Due to his experience in classical biological control, Rodrigo has developed a network of international partnerships that have resulted in several research agreements, procurements of import/export permits, student exchanges, and scientific publications. In 2020, he became Associate Editor for the Journal of Aquatic Plant Management. Rodrigo obtained his master's degree at Texas A&M University in 2003 and his Ph.D. at the University of Florida in 2008.