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Dr. James Leary is Assistant Professor for the Center of Aquatic and Invasive Plants with the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at The University of Florida. He was born and raised in Michigan, earning a BS degree in Horticulture and Chemistry at Michigan State University in 1996. He relocated to Hawaii in 1997, earning his MS and PhD degrees in Horticulture and Molecular Ecology, respectively, at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. He served the last decade stationed on the beautiful island of Maui as an Associate Professor for the University of Hawaii in invasive plant species management. He has over 20 year of experience in tropical weed management. Now he starts a new chapter in aquatic plant management continuing his mission to extend knowledge and technology contributing to efficient and effective invasive plant species management in natural and managed landscapes.

