

BUSINESS NAME

LAKE LEADER

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **Why Aquatic Vegetation Is A Good Thing**
- **Too Much Water In Your Yard? We Know How To Fix It!**
- **Learn About Aquatic Invasive Species**

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PROMOTING STEWARDSHIP OF POLK COUNTY'S NATURAL RESOURCES

SUMMER 2017

Let it . . . grow?!

♪Let it grow, let it grow, don't pull your weeds anymore! Let it grow, let it grow, don't sand the whole lake floor!♪

Aquatic vegetation, also referred to as “weeds” by many lakeshore residences are often seen as a nuisance, when in actuality they are instrumental in keeping a lake and its inhabitants healthy. Native aquatic vegetation compete with algae for nutrients like phosphorus and some can filter pollutants in the water. Lakes that have much of their vegetation removed usually have higher algae blooms. The roots also help hold the lake bottom in place and stabilize the shore line preventing erosion. The more vegetation in the lakes the better the water clarity will be.

Fishing is a big part of lake culture and any fishermen knows that fishing around vegetation will most likely result in a bite on the line. Aquatic vegetation provides food, shelter and spawning areas for fish. Plant beds are a hotspot for macroinvertebrates which fish feed on and some species dine on the plants themselves. Young fish hid there and mating adults spawn (lay eggs) on plants. Similarly, ducks get their food and shelter from plant's seeds/roots and invertebrates. Vegetation is a huge part of the lake ecosystem.

So how do we keep the lake's vegetation healthy?

Let it grow, do not pull up or chemically treat your aquatic vegetation. Of course if you have invasive species encroaching in your area attempting to control them is wise, but look into the type of treatment you plan to use and its effects on native plants.

If you are concerned about an overabundance of aquatic plants reduce the amount of phosphorus going into the lake. Extra phosphorus means extra food for the vegetation that is growing in the lake. Make sure if you are using fertilizer on your yard that there is no phosphorus in it, that is the middle number on the packaging. Add a raingarden or shoreline restoration to catch runoff and filter it through the ground. Reduce the amount of lawn clippings and leaves that make it into the lake as these release phosphorus as they decompose. Also pick up after your pets and have your septic tanks inspected on a regular basis to keep their waste from leaching into the water.

Consider reducing the amount of shore that has sand and restore it with native vegetation. You could place your beach area farther up with a narrow walkway down to the lake, this will also help keep a lot of sand from washing away each year. When hauling new sand in in the winter make sure you keep it close to the shore not spreading farther into the lake, aquatic plants grow best in soft lake bottom areas, not sand.

Please remember, if you are altering your shoreline in anyway, even simply hand pulling or chemical treatments, you need to check with the DNR to make sure you have the appropriate permits. *See insert.*

Rain Barrels

A rain barrel is a great way to collect and store rainwater runoff from rooftops which reduces runoff and erosion. This improves water quality by preventing runoff from carrying pollutants into the storm water system. Tap water often contains additives and inorganic ions such as sodium, calcium, and magnesium; which can build up in the soil and harm plant growth. By using rainwater instead plant growth will improve because it does not have these additives.

Homeowners with rain barrels use less water from the municipal water system, so they have lower water bills. Also, this means less water has to be pumped and treated, which in turn saves energy. Rain barrel water can be used for many tasks including watering the garden, irrigating the lawn and washing your car, however, it is not safe for drinking or cooking. Many hardware stores, garden centers, and big box stores sell rain barrels of various shapes and sizes.

You can also make your own rain barrel while following these steps:

- First, you will need to find a container that will hold the water (a plastic drum works well). Cut a hole in the top of the barrel so rainwater can flow in from the downspout.
- A rain barrel should have a screen over the hole in the top to keep out bugs and debris.
- Cut a small hole toward the bottom for the spigot (to attach a hose to), and another toward the top in case the barrel overflows.
- To make watering easier, it should also be elevated on a stand (stacked cinder blocks work well) a few feet off the ground, which increases water pressure.

For more information visit

<http://homeguides.sfgate.com/benefits-rain-barrels-78431.html>

<http://epochrainbarrels.com/top-10-benefits-of-rain-barrels/>

<http://www.diynetwork.com/how-to/outdoors/structures/how-to-create-a-rain-barrel>

Rain Gardens



Rain gardens are beautiful as well as beneficial.

Have you ever wondered what to plant in that low spot in your backyard where the grass won't grow due to puddling from rain? Or how to fix the erosion gully where the rainwater drains away from one of your downspouts?

Well, there may be an easy, attractive,

beneficial solution:

Rain gardens!

A rain garden is simply a garden with a depression that is designed to catch rainwater runoff in your yard and help filter it into the ground getting rid of the excess water and pollutants they make be carrying.

Rain gardens provide wildlife and pollinator habitat, improve water quality, reduce runoff, and are aesthetically pleasing. Information on rain gardens can be found on the web, and at your local SWCD office.

Eurasian Milfoil

It is that time of year to go out to the cabin and have fun out on the lake, but it also a good time to remember the importance of controlling invasive species, such as Eurasian milfoil. Eurasian milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*), is an invasive aquatic plant that has negative effects on waterbodies including; reduced native species diversity, water quality, and recreation. It crowds out native species as Eurasian milfoil growth peaks before native species do, growing faster in the spring with branches reaching close to the surface to form a thick canopy, leaving native species with little sunlight or room to grow.

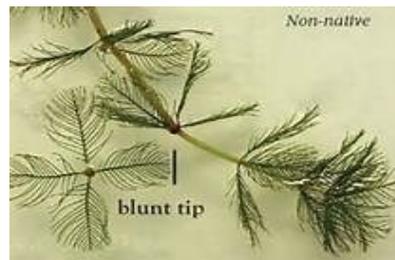
Eurasian milfoil most commonly spreads by hitchhiking on watercraft and trailers going from one waterbody to another. It especially sticks to keels, rudders, and propellers. Fragments that have broken off an individual plant can take root and form new individuals. Fortunately, there are ways to prevent Eurasian milfoil from spreading to additional lakes. People should check their watercraft and trailers, remove any vegetation and other aquatic hitchhikers, drain anything that is holding water, and allow equipment to dry completely before moving it from one body of water to another. For more information on how to safely remove Eurasian milfoil from your transportation, go to ...

http://dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/preventspread_watercraft.html

It can be difficult to distinguish the invasive Eurasian milfoil from the native Northern milfoil (*Myriophyllum exalbescens*), but there are some ways to tell the difference between the two species. Eurasian milfoil typically has 12 to 21 leaflet pairs, while the Northern milfoil has 5 to 10 leaflet pairs. The leaves of the Eurasian milfoil droop when taken out of the water, while the leaves of the Northern milfoil stay rigid.



Northern Milfoil



Eurasian Milfoil

Though invasive species can rarely be eliminated once established, there are treatments that selectively control Eurasian milfoil and minimize harm to native plants. Hand pulling and raking are ways to physically remove the species, but this can do more harm than good. When pulling/raking plant fragments break off and take root and form new individuals, so be sure to remove all plant fragments from the water when removing Eurasian milfoil. Also, minimize the disruption of native species, which will make it harder for the invasive to spread. Eurasian milfoil has a hard time establishing itself in areas with well established native populations, but readily takes over areas that have been disturbed. Herbicides have been used as well, but they often affect native species in addition to the milfoil, so be careful when using it. For more information on treatment options, go to...

<http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/aquaticplants/milfoil/program.html>

The North American Weevil (*Euhrychiopsis lecontei*), a native insect, is being considered for biological control of Eurasian milfoil. This insect consumes only milfoil species, especially Eurasian milfoil. However, this will not completely eradicate the species and not all water bodies where the weevil is present have experienced declines in the invasive species. Researchers have yet to determine what factors promote or hinder the effectiveness of the North American Weevil.

The pump on Union Lake is used to lower the water levels on Union Lake by transporting water through pipes from the lake to nearby wetlands. The pump has a screen to prevent Eurasian milfoil from damaging the pump and being transported through the pipes. Still, everyone needs to do their part to make sure we control the spread of this invasive species.

East Polk SWCD

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Regulations You Should Know

It is Unlawful to . . .

- Transport watercraft without removing the drain plug.
- Arrive at a lake access with drain plug in place.
- Transport any prohibited species on public roads.
- Launch a watercraft with prohibited species attached.
- Transport water from Minnesota lakes or rivers.
- Dispose of live bait into the water.

Penalties up to \$1,000

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!



- ✓ Remove aquatic plants and invasive species off your boat.
- ✓ Drain your live well and remove your drain plug.
- ✓ Dispose of used bait in the trash.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:

<http://dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/aquatic/>

New faces in the office!

Polk County Soil and Water Conservation District has gained three new staff members this year;

Sarah Mielke—*District Technician*, mielke.eastpolk@gmail.com

Starting up new programs for public education and lake shore erosion as well as taking over the water quality monitoring and county feedlot inspections, Sarah joins us from her hometown Hasting, MN. She has a degree in Conservation from University Wisconsin—River Falls and has interned at Dakota County SWCD and spent two seasons at the Prior Lake—Spring Lake Watershed District. She is looking forward to getting to know the area, spend some time on the lakes and go camping in the many local parks. Keep an eye on our website for new information and projects as the year continues.

<http://www.eastpolkswcd.org>

Dave Marshall—*Engineering Technician*, marshall.eastpolkswcd@gmail.com

Glen Kajewski—*MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program Area Certification Specialist*,
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