

FAQ - WEEDS

Offut Lake Community Steering Committee

1. Will the whole lake be treated at one time or will it be done in sections? Who decides?

We can only treat a maximum 1/3 of the lake at any given time. The area of our treatment will also be constrained by the amount of money we have to spend.

2. Our lakefront is loaded with lily pads. Will the proposed LMD/SUD take care of my situation?

Our Invasive Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan (IAVMP) will delineate what plants will be treated and what treatment will be used. Plants that prohibit or restrict recreational activities in and around shoreline residential and community properties are normally targeted for treatment if and when funds are available.

3. With two types of noxious weeds (Elodea and Pond Weeds) in our lake, will two different chemical treatments be used?

The treatment plan will be created by your lake survey committee, the county ARS and the contractor that the county hires to do the treatment. There are more than just two types of weeds in your lake, but the two most prevalent are Elodea and Pond Weeds (Big Leaf, Narrow Leaf, Curly, etc.). The team (survey committee, ARS and contractor) try to target only the most prevalent submerged (aquatic) weeds each year (Lily's, Yellow Flag Iris, etc.). The weeds that grow above the water are targeted differently as noxious weeds with a different application. These treatments can be done by either a contractor hired by the county and paid by your LMD funds or done by the County Noxious Weed Department at little or no cost to your lake.

4. What chemical treatments would be used to treat the weeds?

Sonar is the only chemical authorized to treat Elodea. It can also treat for some pond weeds. Aquathol is used for most pond weeds. See FAQ Chemicals for more info.

5. What (approximate) month or day will the treatments take place?

Sonar is usually done from April through June. Three different treatments spaced three weeks apart, but that is contingent on your team.

Aquathol is normally done later when the plants are growing (May/June and sometimes as late as July). A letter/snail mail notification will be sent out to all LMD residents at least three weeks before any treatment is performed and notification signs will be placed in front of every parcel along the shoreline within 200 feet of any treated area the morning of or the day prior to the treatment actually being made.

5. Can lake treatment be done without involving the County?

The Thurston County Commissioners must approve the Release for Proposal (RFP) that goes out to obtain a qualified contractor. That process is normally done every 5 years – which mirrors the permit timeline granted to the county by the Department of Ecology. The contracting process is very involved and costs money so the county contracts with the same contractor for the same period as our permit. Once the bids come back from the Request for Proposal (RFP) the board selects the best qualified contractor and puts together a contract that the county commissioners must once again approve. Once the County Commissioners approve the contract and the contractor is selected, they are no longer involved in the process until the contract once again comes up for renewal.

6. Will this be just a one year treatment plan or will it take longer to complete the job?

This will be a multi-year plan. To save costs (election and administrative) it is recommended that we created a 10-year plan for the LMD. Offut Lake, like many here in Thurston County and Western Washington are considered eutrophic lakes (dying lakes). If we do nothing, we will not have a lake to enjoy in the future. Aquatic vegetation does not get eliminated, it just gets reduced to a manageable level. The goal is not to treat/kill everything. The goal is to manage the vegetation so it does not restrict recreational activities, harm fish, animals, humans, or cause huge amounts of biomass to accumulate on the bottom of the lake. This accumulation reduces oxygen levels, hurts fish (kills them sometimes) and creates such large amounts of phosphorous producing huge toxic algae blooms. Toxic blooms can seriously harm/even kill people and animals (examples: Summit Lake three years ago, Black Lake and Long Lake in 2020).

7. Instead of a chemical treatment, what other options are available?

These are the options: Chemical, Mechanical, No treatment

Lake Lawrence and Long Lake have done all three and continue to do some mechanical (physically pulling Fragrant Water Lily plants and disposing of them to reduce the use of chemicals). Lake Lawrence have also used aquatic mowers to mow down the tops of submerged weeds, but have found that to be very expensive and not very efficient. They have also hired divers to lay down matting on the bottom of the lake, in shallow areas with heavy weed density, to block the weeds from growing. This did not provide the desired result and then the matting had to be removed at great expense.

8. What about the algae that blooms on the lake on occasions. Will that be addressed?

The agreed upon treatment plan will address this.