FAQ - ASSESSMENTS

Offut Lake Community Steering Committee

1. As a senior-disabled person, my taxes are reduced. Will I still need to pay the lake assessments that will be charged annually for the duration of the LMD? Also, would I perhaps receive a lesser tax because of my senior-disabled situation?

**Those currently receiving a reduction for other property taxes will also receive the same reduction for LMD assessments, which is a 95% reduction in the assessment. Example: If your assessment is say $300.00, and you have filed with the county auditors/assessor's office to receive a property tax reduction, and that has been approved, then you will only be paying a $15 assessment.**

2. What dollar amount is my yearly tax obligation to support any lake management association that is formed and how many years will this last?

**The formula for how to assess each property is not yet decided. When it is decided it will be approved or denied by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) and will be part of the public vote on forming a Lake Management District (LMD) or Special Utility District (SUD).**

3. Who sets the rates to be charged on each individual parcel or do all the lake owners pay the same amount?

**There is not a uniform assessment for all lake owners. The formula for each person's assessment will follow the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) guidelines to be "fair and equitable," and be proposed by the Steering Committee, approved or denied by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC and will be part of the public vote on forming the LMD or SUD.**

4. Who will oversee the use of our tax money that goes into a reserve account at the court house? Both incoming and outgoing.

**The County Treasurer collects the tax dollars and places the assessment funds into our LMD/SUD account to be used by the Steering Committee/County Lakes Division to pay for expenses incurred by the LMD/SUD. Your Steering Committee receives a monthly budget report that delineates all expenses incurred (outgoing) and all revenue (incoming) collected.**

5. Has the committee looked into grants and if so can they be used now and in the future?

**Yes, our committee will be applying for grants. Once our LMD is formed (approved by voters) we can apply for grants. We cannot apply before then.**

**Have questions? Email us at: Info.Offut.Lake@gmail.com**

FAQ - SAFETY

Offut Lake Community Steering Committee

1. Will the treatments hurt the animals on the lake such as the birds (eagles) ducks, geese, fish, beavers and otters and most important we human beings?

**Absolutely not. The chemicals authorized for use by LMD’s are very safe. That is why an LMD is so critical – if you don’t have an LMD any chemical authorized by the State Department of Ecology can be used and some of those are harmful.**

2. What is my pet accidently drinks the water during the period of actual treatment?

**Your pet will not get sick – however, if you have an algae bloom and your pet drinks the water he could get sick and/or die. If your pet gets into Yellow Flag Iris he could get very sick and possibly die. The LMD treatment program reduces these dangers by treating for these hazards when there are sufficient funds to do so.**

3. What is the active life of the treatment or treatments being used or how long after treatment is applied can the lake be used again?

**The lake is never unusable during the treatment plan because the chemicals the LMD’s are allowed to use have no restrictions on swimming, fishing, etc. That’s why we use only these approved chemicals.**

4. I am concerned about possible chemical treatments on our lake. What can you tell me about that?

**Only part of the lake is treated in any given year. Once the LMD is formed the Steering Committee (which you can join) along with the County Aquatic Resource Specialist (ARS) makes the decision on which chemicals, if any, to apply, when to apply them, and what aquatic, invasive or nuisance plants/weeds to treat.**

**The LMD is the best solution to prevent unwanted chemicals from being used in your lake. this is because Individual property owners without LMDs have the right to treat the lake in front of their property with any chemical that is authorized by the State of Washington by contracting through a Washington State Licensed Aquatic Pesticide Applicator. That applicator obtains a permit to perform the treatment through the Washington State Department of Ecology. Treatment of the Lake under an LMD in Thurston County restricts chemical treatment to only two chemicals which are very safe for fish, wildlife, and people. Lakes without LMD’s have had many problems with private and community property owners putting chemicals in their lake that others that live around the lake do not want, but they can do nothing about it.**

**Have questions? Email us at: Info.Offut.Lake@gmail.com**

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.**

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 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.**

**Have questions? Email us at: Info.Offut.Lake@gmail.com**

FAQ - Lake Management District (LMD)

Offut Lake Community Steering Committee

1. Which type of district (LMD or SUD) is the Steering Committee going to propose to the Board of County Commissioners (BoCc)?

**We propose to form a Lake Management District (LMD). The main reasons for choosing this are:**

* **This is the most commonly chosen district.**
* **The SUD requires a very committed group that will put in many hours of work each month. Forming an LMD moves that work to the County level.**

2. What day or month is set for the community to vote yes or no on the lake treatment?

**The date for the vote for/against the LMD will be set by the Board of County Commissioners (BoCC).**

3. What are the benefits of forming an LMD?

* You get a 50% reduction in storm water fees (~$37 a year) for every parcel owner in the LMD. If you have 95 parcel owners in the LMD that would be a combined savings of ~ $3,515 back in the pockets of parcel owners every year.
* Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) pays into your LMD for the public boat launch facility (approximately $14,000 a year) with no strings attached to how that money is spent – your steering committee decides how it is spent. That is a big percentage of all our revenue, each year, being paid by the state to help your lake.
* Access to State Grants to hire consultants for Integrated Aquatic Vegetative Management Plan (IAVMP) – could be 50-80% of IAVMP cost (~$30,000+).
* Access to other State Grants (DNR, WSDA, etc.)
* Control over chemicals put into the lake. Without an LMD you do not have any control on what type of chemicals, what quantity of chemicals or how frequently chemicals are put into your lake.
* A financial means to improve water quality, lake environment, habitat, recreational activities that is fair and equitable to all LMD members – those that have the greatest stake (waterfront parcels pay the most) – those that don’t live on the lake, but have access to it and use it (upland parcels pay considerably less).
* A means to prevent our lake from becoming a marsh/wetland.

**Have questions? Email us at: Info.Offut.Lake@gmail.com**