

Water Committee Report June 1, 2024

Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) is an ongoing concern for people who are property owners on Pelican Lake and those who visit to fish and recreate. This invasive was first discovered by Onterra, LLC in 2011. It has spread and is the costliest budget item, by far, for the PLA as well as having the most time in board work devoted to the problem.

The heaviest infestations are in Musky and Outlet Bays with smaller colonies in Treacherous, Guth, and North Bays. The PLA has been active in trying to manage EWM. Once established, it cannot be completely eradicated with any known method.

There are 3 methods available to control EWM.

1. Harvesting

- Mechanical uses a large combine like machine is propelled across the water and gives the weeds a haircut going down about 4 feet. The cut weeds are collected and offloaded onto a trailer for disposal. The purpose is to improve navigation and recreational use. The cutting is usually done several times during the season. The cost currently is \$ 2,500 per day. DNR permit needed.

- DASH harvest (Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting) A diver uses a large vacuum type device to pull to the surface EWM plants. On the surface the EWM is dewatered and put into bags for disposal. The cost is currently \$ 2,500/day A DNR permit is needed.

2. Biological Control

Biological Control. Weevils in large numbers are released into the lake and feed on the EWM. Outcomes have been unpredictable with success in some lakes and nothing in others. Why is not known. Weevils are probably already present here. Cost about \$ 1/weevil. Some call them expensive bluegill food.

3. Chemical.

This is by far the most expensive and controversial. Everyone can recall chemicals that were approved and commonly used that were later found to have negative effects. Many lakes have used herbicides to control unwanted invasives including Crescent Lake in Oneida County and Lake Nokomis. The PLA has had reports from representatives of each of these lakes.

Currently a herbicide called ProcellaCOR is the favored herbicide. It is said to be EWM specific with little impact on native plants and the critters in the lake including humans and the water supply. It controls for an average of 4 years and will spread throughout the lake. The cost is about \$ 2,000/acre

The approach the PLA will take in 2024 and what was done in 2023 is to mechanically harvest and use DASH to remove EWM plants where found in lesser quantities like North, Treacherous, near Antigo Island, etc.

There will be up to \$ 40,000 spent on these approaches in 2024 giving a haircut to aid navigation and DASH to help slow the spread.

In considering herbicide treatment estimate 200 acres in Outlet and Musky Bays and multiply times \$ 2000. Also be aware that the maximum grant for this type of treatment is \$50,000. A permit is needed and approval is uncertain as currently the DNR is not a large fan of herbicides.