

What's the WWMD Aquatic Plant Management (APM) Committee Been Up To? by Mike Waghorn

The results of the Riparian Owners Survey showed people are not satisfied with the amount of weed growth in the waterway. The APM Committee is charged with managing this and we're not satisfied either.



Eurasian Milfoil

This season has seen some new approaches and adjustments to existing processes. We continuously face obstacles trying to balance the needs of boaters, fisherman, budget and WDNr regulations.

Herbicidal Treatments There are two basic types of herbicidal treatments during the season, Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) and Navigational. The approaches, herbicides and regulations vary between them. Treatments begin with a survey of the waterway. The WDNr allows us to treat the most common AIS found in our waters: Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) and Curly Leaf Pondweed (CLP).



Curly Leaf Pondweed



Coontail

We found over 60 acres of AIS this season. At the end of the season, the survey is repeated to assess the impacts.

In 2014 we received approval of our grant application from the WDNr to help with the costs of the AIS treatments. This was the culmination of over a year of work on the application and provides up to \$57,000 for AIS control over three years.



Elodea

As the season progresses we schedule treatment of native plants such as Coontail and Elodea on an as needed basis. As these grow naturally in our waterway, the WDNr limits our treatment to provide navigational lanes, 30-50 feet wide, to piers only. We cannot treat along the shoreline or broad areas of the waterway. We have been working with the WDNr on the use of a new herbicide (Clipper) in limited areas that has

shown some success.

These treatments vary in their effectiveness, do not last long and are expensive. The shallow areas allow the new plant growth to reach the surface quickly. The muck washed in from farms and golf courses up river, as well as runoff from homes, provide a very fertile environment for the plants.

One plant we struggle with is Lily Pads. As these are native plants, we can only treat navigational lanes and they grow back quickly. You are encouraged you to get out there and start pulling them out (including the root) from around your shore and pier. Individual homeowners can do this without a permit.



Lilly Pads

Manual Weed Pulling and Raking A new approach was tried this year to control weeds in a shallow area. A company was hired that has scuba/snorkel divers in the water, hand pulling

the weeds. These are ferried in bags to the shore by volunteers, emptied into wheel barrows and disposed of. In a six hour period, an area in front of three lots, approximately 50 feet out from the piers was cleared. We will be monitoring this area for re-growth into next season.



The WWMD has two rakes available to loan out.

Weed Harvesting (Cutting)

After a small trial weed cutting was inconclusive in 2013, a larger weed cutting trial was done in Buena Lake this year. The permit we received restricted the area we could harvest to a 'water ski' loop in Buena Lake as well as navigational lanes around the perimeter.



WDNR restricts harvesting in areas where the water is shallow. We are limited to cutting to one foot above the bottom of the lake. Once the depth gets to be less than three feet we cannot harvest. (continued...)

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Aquatic Plant Management (APM) Committee (continued)

Results of the four days of harvesting done in June show mixed success. Over 50 truckloads of weeds were removed. Areas with more depth have held up reasonably well, but the shallower areas are poor. At this point we are planning on repeating this trial next year and will ask the WDNR to allow us to harvest wider navigational lanes.

Weed Harvesting (Suction)

Suction harvesting is an approach that has not been considered in the past. This uproots the targeted plants and their rooting system and feeds them into a vacuum hose that brings them to the harvester where they are stored in bags for disposal. The advantage of this process is the complete removal of the targeted plant as opposed to trimming of the weed plant.



We are currently working with a new contractor to test the effectiveness of this. The permit application is underway and if it is approved we will have a one week trial in the channel north of Elm Island Drive.

Prevention and Monitoring In addition to the plant management programs listed above, we have two activities aimed at prevention and monitoring. The Clean Boats, Clean Waters program (CBCW) is funded by a grant from the WDNR, supplemented with volunteer hours. Most weekends at the Library Launch, boats entering and leaving the waterway are inspected for any invasive species. Boaters are educated on AIS

and data is collected about what other waterways they have visited.

The Citizens Lake Monitoring Network (CLMN) is staffed with WWMD volunteers. These individuals visit specific areas on the waterway on a regular basis and monitor for AIS.

Data collected from both programs is entered into the WDNR Database (SWIMS).

Conclusion A healthy waterway needs plant growth. The goal of the APM Committee is NOT to create a waterway that resembles a swimming pool. Plants support the fish population which leads to a diverse wildlife population. The problem comes when the amount of plant growth reaches a point that inhibits use of the waterway.

As you can see, we are trying some new approaches to managing growth. In addition to regulatory and budget constraints, the main issue we face is related to the amount of sediment and lack of depth. If there is only a couple of feet of water, any approach we take will have limited success as re-growth reaches the surface very quickly. Further compounding the problem is the fact that the sediment, several feet in some areas, is highly nutritious and supports abundant plant growth.

The committee will continue to explore new approaches and adjust how we implement the current techniques. We are always open to input and feedback. If you have heard of other tactics, please feel free to let us know.

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