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Canadian Lakes Aquatic Management Program Frequently Asked Questions

A Publication of the Canadian Lakes Property Owners Corporation

November 2023



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Progressive AE

Eurasian milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*)



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Starry stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*)

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progressive|ae

The plant control program on Canadian Lakes focuses on the control of nuisance plant growth with a combination of aquatic herbicides and mechanical harvesting. The program is administered by the Canadian Lakes Property Owners Corp (CLPOC). Below are answers to some questions that you may have about the program.

Who oversees the plant control program?

Plant control activities are coordinated under the direction of the CLPOC's environmental consultant, Progressive AE. Biologists from Progressive AE conduct GPS-guided surveys of the lakes to identify problem areas, and detailed plant control maps are provided to the plant control contractors. Follow-up surveys are then be conducted throughout the growing season to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Who conducts the herbicide treatments and mechanical harvesting?

Herbicide treatments in Canadian Lakes are conducted by Michigan Lakefront Solutions, and mechanical harvesting work is conducted PLM Lake and Land Management and by the CLPOC.

What determines when and where treatments and harvesting will occur?

The timing and scope of plant control work is based on weather and seasonal growing conditions. Specific locations where nuisance plant growth is occurring are identified when biologists from Progressive AE conduct their surveys.

What plants are targeted for control?

The plant control program on Canadian Lakes focuses primarily on invasive plants, such as Eurasian milfoil and starry stonewort. Invasive plant species have the potential to spread quickly if left unchecked.

How about a pre-emptive strike?

To be effective, aquatic herbicides must be applied directly to the plant beds when the plants are actively growing. There are no pre-emergence aquatic herbicides like there are for agriculture.

Why are there still plants in the lakes following treatments or harvesting?

In managing aquatic plants, it is important to recognize that most plants are beneficial. Aquatic plants produce oxygen during photosynthesis, help stabilize shoreline and bottom sediments, and provide cover and habit for a variety of fish. The main objective of the plant control program on Canadian Lakes is to control nuisance, invasive species while maintaining beneficial plants. We do not want to remove all plants from the lakes. This would negatively impact the fishery and cause many other problems such as algae blooms.

Are permits required?

In Michigan, a permit must be acquired from the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE, formerly the DEQ), before herbicides are applied to inland lakes. The permit lists the herbicides that are approved for use, dose rates, use restrictions, and indicates specific areas of the lakes where treatments are allowed. Permit requirements are designed to protect public health and the environment. No permits are required for mechanical harvesting.

Aquatic plants are part of a healthy lake. They produce oxygen, provide food and habitat for fish, and help to stabilize shoreline and bottom sediments.

Insects and other invertebrates live on or near aquatic plants, and become food for fish, birds, amphibians, and other wildlife.

Plants and algae are the base of the food chain. Lakes with a healthy fishery have a moderate density of aquatic plants.

Aquatic plants help to hold sediments in place and improve water clarity.

Aquatic plants provide habitat for fish and other aquatic life.

Predator-fish such as pike hide among plants, rocks, and tree roots to sneak up on their prey. Prey-fish such as minnows and small sunfish use aquatic plants to hide from predators.

Can I apply herbicides myself?

If you have a permit from EGLE, you can treat your own shoreline, but we don't recommend it. In most cases, it is best to have herbicides applied by a licensed professional applicator rather than attempting to apply herbicides yourself. If applied improperly, herbicides can do more harm than good.

How do herbicide treatments impact swimming and fishing?

All herbicides, except algaecides, have a 24-hour swimming restriction, but only in the area where treatment has occurred as indicated by state-required posting signs. If there are no posting signs, or the sign indicates that only algaecides were applied, there are no swimming restrictions. There are no fishing restrictions for any herbicide treatments.

When can I water my lawn following a treatment?

If you draw water from the lakes for irrigation, be sure to read the sign posted along your shoreline at the time of treatment. Most irrigation restrictions do not apply to established lawns. However, if you water flowers or a garden, you should adhere to the irrigation restrictions posted on the sign. If you have questions regarding restrictions, call the number on the posting sign: 989-967-3600.

Why didn't my property get a treatment notice sign?

If there is no sign posted along your property, it means your area was not treated and there are no use restrictions. State regulations require that areas within 100 feet of treatment areas be posted with a sign that lists herbicides applied and the associated use restrictions. Not every property gets treated every time; which properties get treatment depends on where the plants are found during lake surveys.

Is there a permanent fix to the problem?

If conditions are favorable, aquatic plants will grow. However, there are steps property owners can take to help minimize plant growth in the lakes such as limiting the use of lawn fertilizers and maintaining natural vegetation along the shoreline to prevent nutrients from washing into the lakes.

What can I do to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in Canadian Lakes?

To help prevent the spread of invasive species, a new state law requires drain plugs to be pulled, water to be drained, and plants and debris to be removed from boats and trailers before trailering. If you trailer your boat to other lakes, be sure to thoroughly wash your boat, motor, and trailer before launching back into Canadian Lakes. With invasive species, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

