

## Porters Lake Eurasian Water Milfoil

The major news from Porters lake is something we advised the members in July, 2012. We have confirmed Eurasian water milfoil (EWM) is in the lake. If we are unable to confine or eliminate EWM our lake faces an ecological disaster.

What have we done so far? The regional aquatic plant specialist for Waushara County is Paul Skawinski from Central Sands RC & D Council in Stevens Point. Paul has been to the lake four times. He has been assisted by Dick Hansen and Sharon Hansen in exploring the lake and GPS mapping areas where EWM has been founded. The bulk of the EWM infestation is in the south west corner of the lake although individual plants have been found in other areas.

Earlier this summer Skip Hansen, Pat Doyle and a friend of Pat's put on scuba tanks and dove the deeper portion of the lake out from the boat landing looking for invasive plants. They found none. On 8/18/12 Skip Hansen dove from the raft that was in the center of the lake south past Joan Olson's island in water 6 to 9 foot deep looking for EWM. He found a great deal of the good, native North American milfoil but no invasive EWM.

On 8/25/12 we organized a EWM pulling event. The following volunteered to help: Pat Doyle and Kris Helms-Doyle, Dick Hansen, Dave & Cheryl Hansen, Skip & Sharon Hansen, Don & Barb Dalton, Buzz & Marcie Busse, Jack & Ellie Fassbender, Paul & Vicky Zagorski, Karen Bennet and Greg Danielson. These volunteers invested 83 hours locating, hand pulling, bagging and transporting EWM out of the lake. When you see any of these volunteers please thank them for their service.

On 9/1/12 we organized a follow up EWM pulling event. The following volunteered to help: Skip & Sharon Hansen, Joel Daum, Carol Homen, Dick Hansen and Annette Gelbach. These volunteers invested 12 hours in this follow up event. Skip Hansen put on a scuba tank and pulled some EWM that was found on 8/25/12 but was in water too deep for the snorkelers to pull. He also found four other single EWM plants in the general area. The other volunteers kept other boaters out of the area and transported pulled EWM to Annette's pontoon boat for proper disposal.

What can you do to prevent the further spread of EWM? First, learn to identify milfoil. If you are not sure what it looks like please contact Skip, Sharon, Dick, or Dave Hansen, Greg Danielson, Pat Doyle or Kris Helms-Doyle for assistance in identifying invasive Eurasian water milfoil and the good, native North American milfoil. Second, keep your boat away from the south west corner of the lake. EWM spreads by fragmentation. Breaking off pieces as short as one inch in length with boat motors, boat oars or kayak paddles or fishing lures will cause it to spread. Third, look around your own pier and shore line. If you notice any milfoil let one of the above people know. They can help identify the plant and show you how to hand pull the plant. If you hand pull EWM you must get the roots as it is a perennial plant that will re-grow if the roots remain. Fourth, keep pontoon and other motorized boats out of the shallow water anywhere around the lake. Prop wash from motors disturbs the soft marl lake bottom. EWM, like all invasive plants, usually starts growing in disturbed areas.

If you think EWM is not a major problem think again. Mt. Morris Lake spends about \$980 per acre to apply aquatic herbicides on their EWM. Porters Lake is 70 acres. You do the math. It makes our current annual assessment of \$100 look very cheap. A mechanical harvester costs between \$100,000 and \$200,000 – used ones are a little cheaper. A lake infested with EWM affects the selling price of lake front property. A UW Madison professor conducted a study from 1997 to 2006 where he examined 1,841 shore line property transactions on 170 lakes in Vilas County. All the sales examined were between unrelated parties. What did this study revealed. It showed the average selling price for developed shore line property dropped by 8%. The average selling price of undeveloped shore line property dropped by 13%. On average shore line property owners were willing to pay \$1,400 per year on pro active management and education to keep their lake EWM free. You can read the entire study by clicking on this link:

<http://www.aae.wisc.edu/pubs/sps/pdf/stpap530.pdf>

Our aquatic plant specialist, Paul Skawinski, believes our EWM infestation is small enough that we can manage this problem by hand pulling plants. We will be getting a second opinion from Onterra when they complete their update of the 2007 lake management plan. Hand pulling will certainly be a much less expensive way to manage this problem. If we follow this course it will require constant monitoring of the entire lake and all of us will need to be able to identify EWM.