

20 EXOTIC AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT

EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL CONTROL PROGRAM

Eurasian watermilfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*) has been a growing problem evident in several Minneapolis lakes. Milfoil causes problems on several levels. From an ecological standpoint, it out-competes native species and reduces the available habitat for fish and other organisms. From a recreational perspective, milfoil is problematic in that it forms dense floating mats that interfere with boating and swimming. It also reduces the overall aesthetic appeal of area lakes.

No environmentally safe method has been proven to rid lakes of milfoil, but several management methods exist to treat the symptoms of infestation. The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board (MPRB) primarily uses harvesting to control the growth of milfoil in city lakes. Harvesting milfoil is analogous to mowing a lawn. Only the top two meters of the milfoil plants are removed, but this temporarily allows for problem-free boating and swimming. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) requires a permit to remove or control Eurasian watermilfoil. These permits limit the area from which milfoil can be harvested. Harvesting was completed on Calhoun, Harriet and Isles in 2006. Lake Nokomis and Wirth Lake also received limited harvesting in 2006. Cedar Lake was not harvested in 2006 because milfoil growth was limited. For acreage, check individual lake sections. In 2006, 405 flatbed trucks full of milfoil were removed which is roughly 2,200 cubic yards.

The MPRB assisted the University of Minnesota in exploring the potential use of a native weevil (*Euhrychiopsis lecontei*) to naturally control nuisance growth. The use of biological control methods is being examined as a potentially longer-term solution to milfoil management. Aquatic weevils that eat Eurasian watermilfoil and burrow through the stems were released in previous years into parts of Cedar Lake, Lake of the Isles, Lake Harriet and Lake Hiawatha. Weevils have not been as successful controlling milfoil in the Chain of Lakes as they have at other lakes being studied. The most likely explanation is fish predation. High sunfish densities appear to limit weevil populations. Research is ongoing to study how weevils affect milfoil growth.

PURPLE LOOSESTRIFE CONTROL PROGRAM

Since 1999 the MPRB has collaborated with the MDNR to introduce leaf-feeding beetles (*Galerucella spp.*) as a biocontrol for purple loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*) in Minneapolis. Both biocontrol methods and chemical herbicides are used to manage purple loosestrife throughout the park system. Beetles were found feeding at all major purple loosestrife sites on MPRB properties in 2006. The MPRB and MDNR staff, continue to monitor beetle release sites on MPRB properties.