

Are fertilizers to blame?

Fertilizer encourages the growth of all aquatic plant life, should it wash into the lake. But eliminating fertilizer will not stop the spread of HEWM.

What about lakefront property values?

A local real estate agent reports that properties lose significant value at lakes where infestation is unchecked. A lakefront house on Clark Lake earns premium value. If the lake deteriorates, the value reverts to what that house would bring in a non-lake neighborhood. Many lakefront owners realize this – as witnessed by individual donations to treat the four sites this spring greatly exceeding \$85.

What about off lake properties?

After careful consideration, the committee concluded that it would be difficult to know how far to extend the SAD beyond the lake. Adding this complexity could retard action where acting quickly ensures success.

Once HEWM is treated, what happens to the resulting biomass? Won't this create more muck?

By not treating HEWM, there will be much more of it; and therefore, more muck. Early treatment will minimize the amount of biomass that sinks to the bottom.

Zebra mussels came and went. Won't the same thing happen to HEWM?

Zebra mussels declined after sewers were installed, reducing nutrients. Their large numbers also reduced nutrients. This self-corrected the population. HEWM differs completely. Studies of infested lakes shows no evidence suggesting that it departs on its own; it only gets worse. HEWM creates a level of density that curtails boating, destroys wildlife habitat and reduces property values. One report said that ducks walked on top of infestations; another eyewitness watched muskrats, not swimming through it, but crawling over it. Try running a boat through the HEWM at the County Park at the east end. It's a no-go.

What is the Clark Lake Invasive Species Committee?

Members are part of the petition drive and are all volunteers, most of whom live at Clark Lake. No member is compensated. They pay for their own gas, use their own paper and printer ink to copy documents and incur other expenses that come out of their own pockets. Their motivation is to work on behalf of all of us to prevent this weed from changing Clark Lake into something none of us wants. The committee operates with the support of the Clark Lake Spirit Foundation.

What is being done to inform the public?

The topic is covered thoroughly on www.clarklakespirit.com. A public information meeting was held in December 2014. About 90 residents attended, asked questions and made comments. After the presentation and Q&A, a straw vote revealed nearly unanimous support for the proposed treatment. At the conclusion of the meeting, a member of the audience rose and made this comment: "I don't like the idea of using chemicals in the lake, but I like even less the idea of losing the lake that we know – therefore I support the treatment program." As this was being said, heads nodded in agreement, followed by applause.

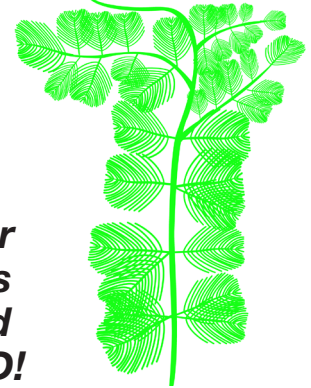
FOR PETITION INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

ATTENTION CLARK LAKE LAKEFRONT PROPERTY OWNERS:

Only You Can Help Stop the Invasion!

Clark Lake Needs a Special Assessment District to Combat Invasive Weeds from Clogging Our Beautiful Lake! To Stop the Weeds from Taking Over, You Are Needed to Sign a Petition to Form the SAD!

Hybrid Eurasian
Water Milfoil
(HEWM)



The Clark Lake Invasive Species Committee invites lakefront property owners to sign a petition to create a **Special Assessment District (SAD)**. The purpose of the SAD is to **reverse infestations of an invasive weed – hybrid Eurasian water milfoil (HEWM)**.

DNA evidence confirms the presence of this fast spreading weed in Clark Lake. Other lakes that did not stop this weed found that it severely curtailed recreational use, destroyed wildlife habitat and was detrimental to property values. HEWM grows in 20 feet of water right up to the shoreline. A study from September 2014, funded by the Clark Lake Spirit Foundation, revealed 20 acres of the HEWM invader in the lake.

Four small areas of the lake are being treated in 2015. Timing of the treatment is dependent on weather and HEWM's seasonal life cycle.

To legally treat the entire infestation, it's necessary to set up a SAD, and this petition drive is a first step. The SAD will have a 7-year term, beginning in 2016. The cost will be added to property taxes collected by the Township – not more than \$85 the first year. That amount could be less in future years if our experience parallels some other area lakes.

Quick action works best in thwarting the advance of this aquatic invader. Your signature on the petition will indicate that you support the formation of a SAD. If you are not at the lake and wish to sign the petition, you can request that a petition be emailed to you.

For the petition to be counted by the Township, the following steps should be taken.

- The pre-printed petition form for each lakefront property lists the owner(s). Each should sign the form and be witnessed by a "circulator." The circulator must be someone other than the owner(s). After witnessing the signature(s) of the owner(s), the circulator also signs including his or her address.
- The completed form should then be returned by U.S. mail. To initiate this process, email your request to clarklakespirit@gmail.com.

**FIND UPDATES, RESEARCH AND ARTICLES AT:
www.clarklakespirit.com under "Invasive Weeds"**

FAQs

Who may sign the petition?

Only lakefront property owners. If a property is held jointly, all owners must sign. It is not necessary to be a Michigan resident to sign the petition. There is a separate sheet for each lakefront property; it includes the parcel ID number and the name(s) and address of the owner(s).

What does the circulator of the petition do?

The circulator takes the petition to lakefront property owners and asks them to sign it. The circulator must witness the signing and fill out the appropriate section of the form. There are no requirements of residency or ownership to be a circulator, but it must be someone other than the signer(s) of the petition.

Special Assessment District (SAD) focus

The SAD is restricted to the "eradication and control of nuisance aquatic invasive species." The SAD cannot morph into something else and divert funds. It has a 7-year life and does not extend automatically.

What happens if \$85 annually is not enough?

In this unlikely event, the options would be to reduce treatment or ask the Township to initiate a process to increase the assessment. However, that's not likely to happen. Successful control can lead to less treatment and lowers costs. If the \$85 assessment should generate excess funds, the surplus would either reduce next year's assessments or be refunded.

How do you treat HEWM?

The two herbicides that are typically used target the invasive weeds, but not native plants. Their use is approved by the DNR/DEQ and EPA. Neither the American Cancer Society nor U.S. Toxicology Program has listed the herbicides as a carcinogen. There are no known detrimental effects to humans, pets and wildlife. All treatments will be applied by professionals and done by permit with all rules rigorously observed.

What about swimming in the lake after the treatment?

The 24-hour swimming restriction applies only within 100 feet of the treatment areas. The herbicides are in common use – you may have some in your garage right now. A small amount on your hand while spraying dandelions would amount to far more than swimming in the lake right after treatment.

How long do the herbicides last in the water?

Renovate, used within 250 feet of shorelines, and 2,4-D, used more than 250 feet from shore, may be detectable for several days, up to a week, though greatly reduced from target concentrations. These two herbicides have no irrigation restrictions for lawns, but they do for some ornamentals. There is a 120-day Renovate restriction for ornamentals, but the applicator comments "sampling has shown within 3 to 5 days after treatment it is non-detectable." Round-up will not be used.



If we don't act, this could happen to your prop!

What's the worst downside of using herbicides in the lake?

It's possible that treatment will not find every plant. One tiny stem or leaf can generate millions of new plants. This suggests the need for ongoing treatment. After treating all known infested areas, experience shows that HEWM declines markedly. For that reason, subsequent treatments can also be greatly reduced. Devil's and Round Lakes recently reduced treatment and costs to property owners declined (read newspaper article at www.clarklakespirit.com).

Aren't there solutions other than herbicides?

The committee exhaustively researched solutions that have been tried elsewhere. Here's a quick summary:

- **Harvesting (cutting)** – This is the worst solution; cuttings will cause many more plants to propagate.
- **Weevils That Eat Eurasian Milfoil** – This was found to be ineffective and the weevils are no longer distributed.
- **Sterilized Carp** – This is illegal in Michigan.
- **Suction Harvesting** – With divers removing plants by hand, there are risks that splinters will cause spreading. Roots left behind will reestablish the plant. To remove 20 acres by divers would not be possible in one season and costs would be exorbitant.
- **Mats** – The DNR/DEQ permits placement only in small areas and this would cover only a tiny fraction of the 20 acres. Mats are known either to float away causing navigational hazards or to be become mired in muck. Regulations require that they must also be periodically removed. Once removed, the invasive weeds reestablish themselves.
- **Aeration** – Installing electrically operated bubblers in a lake as deep as Clark Lake in all the affected areas would be a logistical nightmare – and very costly.

Since invasive weeds can tag along on boats that have been elsewhere, shouldn't owners be required to wash boats before they go into the lake?

Unfortunately this worthwhile idea presents both infrastructure and enforcement challenges. Runoff from the boat washing must be collected and there are strict rules for transporting it. HEWM is already established and no amount of boat washing will diminish its ever-growing presence in Clark Lake. HEWM also arrives through visiting wildlife. Geese, eating the weed at another lake, may visit Clark Lake and "deposit" the results here. That's enough to start new colonies of HEWM.

Is there any way to control public boat access to the lake and shouldn't others help pay for weed control?

This is a question for Columbia Township, Jackson County and the DEQ. It's beyond the scope of the committee. Adding complexity to this project will cause delays, impeding efforts to control HEWM. Time is of the essence.



Here's a close up of the invasive weed. Please contact the committee to get the petition for your lakefront property today! Each petition is specific so property owners must sign their own.