

Fall 2017 Report Loon Lake Milfoil LMD

Lee Evans LMD Chairman

The spring/summer of 2017 started very wet and cold with near record setting high water levels in our lake. This resulted in some very unusual milfoil activities. As you may remember the Loon Lake LMD applied for and received a monetary grant from the Department of Ecology. The purpose of the grant is to study and develop effective methods to control or eradicate the newly discovered hybrid variety of milfoil discovered in Loon Lake last summer (2016).

In an attempt to follow the grant procedures, step one requirement was to collect multiple milfoil samples for a more in-depth DNA analysis of the plants, knowing that the process would likely take several months or more to fully analyze the new hybrid milfoil plants sent to Montana State University research facility. With this in mind we scheduled the first sampling foray in early June. The results of this effort were mixed. AquaTechnex (vendor selected to administer the grant requirements) with the assistance of LMD advisory board members were unable to find any milfoil plants to sample. A second attempt was scheduled in early/mid-July similar results.

The few plants collected in July were not of good quality and not considered good specimens for testing. That's all good news for those of us who don't want to see milfoil around our docks or swimming areas, but not a good start for the grant process. Late August brought success with the sampling efforts. Many plants were found all robust and growing vigorously. Quality samples were collected and sent away for analyst. Step two is to collect samples for a grow operation located at the University of South Carolina once the DNA has been established. The growing plant will then be subjected to various herbicide exposures to determine best methods for treating our hybrid plant. We may not be back on track with grant timelines due to factors beyond our control, but feel confident in our progress. The plant collection for the growing operation will happen in mid-October 2017 as well as a discussion with our herbicide application team about using a contact herbicide on plants this fall that we feel will become a fragmenting problem later this fall and winter.

One very positive step the LMD Advisory Board went forward with this year was the purchase of GPS equipment to aid in our efforts to find and track the milfoil. GPS equipment has been a topic of board discussion for the last several years debating the pros and cons. The decision was based on our ability to assist any vendor with surveys and eventually assuming all survey responsibility. We continue to look for additional advisory board members who have an interest and would like to help Loon Lake with Invasive Species control. The Advisory Board that include George Swannack, Barry Smith, Steve Pehl, Denny Drinkard, Daryl Howe, Jim Nimnicht and Lee Evans meets on the second Monday of each month during the season usually April to September at 6:30 pm in the basement of the Old School House. We would encourage your involvement as there are two board position available. Please note our meetings are open to the public. All are welcome.