**2017 Season Invasive Plant Report**

The 2017 season brought some welcome assistance in the Milfoil Harvesting efforts. Aqualogic was hired to perform harvesting, concentrating on the three most affected areas on the upper lake. These are: the eastern end of the lake from the inlet across the entire bay, the western end of Grass Island from the shore along the “sand bar” to the rock, and a band going down the middle of the wide area of the eastern part of the narrows. The volunteers also assisted in these areas as well as along the entire shoreline, shallow waters and the less concentrated areas where Aqualogic would be less productive.

The season began with the annual Curly Leaf Harvest at Grainger’s/Daniel’s beach. This location has been the most affected area so a group harvest has been held there over the last three years. This area has shown a decline from 500 plants harvested the first year to 200 in 2017. This continues to be an area that needs annual harvesting to keep the plants in check. Curly leaf plants have also been harvested in Legoy’s Bay and an area heading into the narrows, which are also checked each year.

The high-water last season did delay the volunteer’s efforts in spotting and marking milfoil. This allowed the plants to become more mature before much harvesting could be performed. Aqualogic was able to start diving in mid-July. They spent a total of 12 days on the water during the month of July and September focusing on the three most effected, concentrated areas.

It was a relief to see Aqualogic on the water since our volunteer diver’s time was limited due to personal commitments until later in the season. There is also a small group of Snorkelers and “mudders” that put a continued effort into the shallower and weedy areas throughout the year that the divers have difficulty getting into.

After reviewing Aqualogic’s first season, both parties agreed there was a learning curve. Aqualogic was accustomed to working in lakes with much larger and more concentrated patches. Many of our volunteers are available on weekends and were not available for surface support when Aqualogic was harvesting. We met to discuss the lessons learned and how we could be the most efficient working together. The Board has taken the ideas from this meeting and come up with a plan to improve the process moving forward.

For the 2018 season, Aqualogic will be on the lake for 12 consecutive Saturdays, weather permitting, beginning late May. We hope the Saturday schedule will enable additional coordination between Aqualogic and our volunteers who will provide assistance in both spotting and fragment retrieval. This more visible presence on the lake will allow all Lake residences an opportunity to observe and assist, helping with the overall effort.

A single point-of-contact with a Board member, Nancy Girling, will aid in improving communication. Nancy will provide direction to Aqualogic weekly on the area of the lake that they will be working on.

We hope to avoid the prolonged presence of markers like we experienced last year, especially in the narrows at the end of the season, by coordinating the sweeps and the harvesting efforts closer to each other. Aqualogic can be most effective when our scouts have swept the area and marked the plants ahead of their arrival, so less time is spent seeking out plants versus harvesting them. Sweeps will be scheduled, a week ahead, where Aqualogic will be harvesting. This will put an added strain on the scouts to stay ahead of Aqualogic as well as providing surface support. If anyone is able to head up organized sweeps during the week prior to dives, this help would be appreciated.

In addition, lower lake scouts will continue their individual efforts along with a few organized sweeps of the area heading into the inlet. After one sweep last year there were another two plants found in the widening of the narrows into the lower lake that were immediately removed. There have also been some floating fragments recovered in the narrows.

2017 Year summary and comments:

With the high-water early in the year it allowed the plants to mature and began fragmenting earlier than we had available dive support. Additional support and vigilance is needed to contain the fragments while harvesting. It has been and will continue to be a major concern. Everyone should keep an eye out for floating and washed up fragments to help contain the spread of the milfoil.

This past year’s algae growth was still present, although is seemed less extensive. It was mostly found in the west end of the narrows in the wider areas.

It has been difficult to compare the amount of plants harvested this year to prior years, since Aqulaogic measures in gallons and the PLA has always reported the actual number of plants harvested. This past year the volunteers harvested 2,176 Milfoil plants and Aqualogic harvested 1,200 buckets. Moving forward we will determine the best way to report and monitor expected improvement from year to year.

Based on overall observations, at best we have been able to contain the most infested areas but have fallen behind in our harvesting efforts that help to reduce these concentrated patches. With the help of Aqualogic we expect to move closer to reducing and eliminating the affected areas. In both 2016 and 2017 we saw a lot of early fragmentation which typically means more plants in the following year.

We have had some successes. One area that showed improvement was in the Inlet. The prior year a couple hundred plants were harvested a hundred yards into the inlet. Although the mouth of the inlet still had numerous plants, fewer plants were found heading up the inlet and native plants have grown in. The Caldwell bay area, which was very dense with Milfoil a few years ago, has shown great improvement in the shallow areas. Some new plants were found in the deeper water that were probably a result of prior year natural fragmenting and will be monitored.

We have been very fortunate to have the volunteer support over the last few years including (4) divers Emery Dergosits, Emery Dergosits Jr, Jim Clarke and Jim Belott, a few snorkelers and numerous scouts on both the upper and lower lake. Without their dedication we would have lost the battle years ago. Many thanks to all the volunteers and their families for their time spent in this effort.

Moving forward we hope to better utilize the Paradox Lake association website for posting events and updates throughout the summer. : [www.paradoxlake.mylaketown.com](http://www.paradoxlake.mylaketown.com)

As always additional volunteers are always welcome to lighten the load, please contact Jim Frederick if you have an interest or would just like assistance in identifying invasive plants. (518) 399-6393.

I look forward to seeing everyone this upcoming season and working closely with Aqualogic.