

## **EWM Working Group Action Plan for 2021**

We have received Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (OMNRF) approval to deploy coconut fiber matting at 4 locations in Drag Lake, the original Harris Beach site and the 3 new sites identified last year. Much remains to be done, including the following actions planned for 2021 by the Working Group:

1. Assessing the degree to which deploying matting over the Harris Beach weed bed has been successful at controlling the growth of EWM at that location. This assessment will involve observations via aerial drones, underwater photography and surface inspection.
2. Determining the size of the three new outbreaks. This work will also depend on aerial drones, underwater photography and surface observations. These initial determinations will be accepted as the baseline for assessing the success of control activities.
3. Performing water sampling/analysis and weed species mapping. These activities will provide base data for a lake management plan to be developed at a future date. U-Links will be providing senior level undergraduate students to perform this work with support from volunteers and the Association. The timing of this work has not been agreed upon but will take place between May and August 2021. Upon completion a report of water sample findings and a completed weed species map will be provided to the Association.
4. Purchasing materials, contracting commercial divers and supervising the deployment of matting over the four outbreaks during the period between July 15 and September 30. We know that the cost of this activity is roughly \$10,000 for each deployment day.
5. Purchasing materials as needed and performing tests to determine best practice for harvesting EWM in shallow water. This test is essential to avoid the unwanted spread of EWM fragments to other areas.
6. Documenting control procedures. Documenting the procedures for deployment of biodegradable matting with the assistance of commercial divers will take place prior to July 15 and will be based on our experience in 2020. Documenting the procedures for hand harvesting will begin prior to July 15 using best practices found in literature search and be completed following hand harvesting tests in August.
7. Forming a local networking group to share our experience regarding EWM identification and control with other stakeholders in the Municipality of Dysart et al. The initial meeting with lake stewards or lake association representatives and municipal council representatives will occur on March 28.
8. Continuing to raise funds by appealing to all property owners and select local businesses whose owners may value their relationship with our property owners. As of March 1, we have raised almost \$40,000 towards our goal of \$50,000 to cover anticipated 2021 expenses.

9. Continuing to search for organizations that support environmental and community building projects such as ours through grants, donations and sponsorships and completing applications for open programs.
10. Continuing to inform, educate and train property owners and visitors to our lakes regarding accurate EWM identification and safe removal and disposal of EWM debris found floating, on shore or hitchhiking on boats, motors or trailers.
11. Continuing to inform and educate motorboat operators and fishing enthusiasts regarding the ways in which their activities contribute to the spread of EWM.
12. Continuing to verify reported EWM sightings on Drag and Spruce Lakes. The Working Group aims to visit each reported sighting within five days to perform an identification and will publish details of all confirmed sightings on the Association website.
13. Seeking OMNRF approval to control the spread of EWM in 2022 at all verified outbreak locations.
14. Continuing to research best practices for controlling the spread of EWM.
15. Continuing to network with others involved in their own EWM control programs. The Association has shared information with three lake associations on Farlain Lake (Penetanguishene), Wollaston Lake (Coe Hill) and Chandos Lake (Apsley).