

EWM Update April 1 to June 30, 2021

The DLPOA Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) Identification and Control Program moves from planning, education and fundraising as the snow and ice disappear from the lakes and surrounding land to activities on and in the water. 2021 is no exception, although the Working Group now has a much better idea of what needs to be done, by whom and when. During 2020 and following several years of monitoring the growth of EWM, the Working Group developed an action plan that focused on one outbreak. For 2021 the Working Group needs to evaluate the success of the 2020 mat deployment and continue with mat deployment as needed at the original outbreak and the three other outbreaks included in the MNR Letter of Authority. Additional sightings of outbreaks by property owners have come to the Working Group and become items in the action plan that continues to evolve as conditions change. The following activities and results have occurred between April 1 and June 30, 2021.

1. Following a delegation to Dysart Council in March the Working Group was prepared to work with staff to follow on the instructions of Council to respond to our request for assistance. Sadly, Dysart staff have not contacted us and requests for an explanation from Council have revealed nothing. The Working Group is also surprised by Dysart's lack of action regarding the EWM outbreak at the Head Lake municipal dock, one year after it was brought to their attention by the Working Group.
2. Following a well attended Zoom presentation to Dysart Lake Associations in April, the Working Group has provided presentation materials to the LKO executive for use with their membership. These materials are available for review on request. The LKO was also made aware of the continuing outbreak at the Head Lake boat launch and dock since many of their members use this facility to launch their boats and tie up for town visits.
3. Two community-based research projects were negotiated and started during this reporting period. U-Links located 2 senior Trent University students whose programs allowed for research projects related to Eurasian Watermilfoil. One student is completing her research remotely as it involves literature and online searching pertaining to control methods. The second student has visited Drag Lake twice to test water quality and collect bottom samples at our 4 primary outbreak sites. His final visit will take place on July 14 at which time he will examine and describe weed species present at the 4 sites. The Working Group has provided on-water transportation and assistance during these visits.
4. The Working Group has expanded its social media presence by launching a Twitter account and an Instagram account.
5. In anticipation of more reports of possible EWM outbreaks, the Working Group asked for volunteers willing to be trained and to respond as needed to visit reported outbreaks and verify the presence and exact location of each EWM outbreak. 20 lake residents responded to the call and have been assigned to verify 4 additional reported outbreaks.
6. In recognition of the service and dedication of Mike Podmore, founding member of the Working Group who died suddenly this past winter, a new family event was launched at the end of June. Families are encouraged to

experience the lake in a canoe, kayak, peddle boat or stand-up paddleboard in search of weed beds (all species). Entry in The Mike Podmore Memorial Weed Hunt is limited to 2020 or 2021 association members. Every family will receive a prize and an entry into a prize draw.

7. The Working Group requested a revision to the MNRF Letter of Authority to allow the use of burlap matting as well as coconut fiber matting and to start mat deployment early (June 1) if there is no spawning activity observed in the weed beds. The first part of the request was approved, the second for only one of four weed beds. The use of burlap and coconut fiber matting in one weed bed will allow a comparison of their respective effectiveness.
8. The Working Group has chosen one newly identified outbreak to use as a trial of hand harvesting techniques. If the trial is successful, this technique offers a less costly control method and can be undertaken without MNRF approval, relying instead on the Invasive Species Act allowing property owners to remove invasive aquatics on their own or with assistance of the lake association.
9. The Working Group visited the 4 original outbreaks to document spring growth in each weed bed and determine the area covered by each outbreak. This activity will be repeated following mat deployment and near the end of boating season.
10. A number of in-kind donations were secured from Haliburton businesses. These will provide materials for matting activities and prizes for the event.
11. A number of grant applications were completed and submitted. Presently only one is still active and under review, an application to the Ontario Wildlife Foundation.
12. The fundraising campaign continued with donations to the EWM Fund totalling \$43,000 at the end of June.
13. The Working Group has identified almost 200 addresses around Drag and Spruce Lakes that have not contributed to the EWM Fund. Volunteers will visit each of these addresses this summer and offer property owners a written appeal to donate from the Working Group.
14. An in-kind contribution was suggested by an association member and has been "approved" by the Working Group and launched. The member, and his band, are offering to play rock covers in front of the dock of anyone who contributes at least \$100 to the EWM Fund.
15. The Working Group developed a plan for 2021 mat deployment and purchased materials to support the plan. The agreement with our dive company is that they will monitor weather conditions and propose dive days likely to provide a safe and productive day for all involved.
16. The Working Group co-chairs, Jim Miners and Bert Bicknell, prepared presentation materials for the association annual general meeting scheduled for July 11. These materials are available for review on request.

Questions for clarification or addition details should be directed to Jim at DSLPOAEWM@gmail.com.

EWM Update May 1, 2021

Spring has definitely sprung on Drag and Spruce Lakes. The warm weather birds and insects have begun to arrive. Maple syrup season has come and gone. Many garden and forest perennial varieties are visible. Most of the roads and laneways have firmed up. A few boats are already on the water, which is at normal levels for Drag and Spruce Lakes. And, as experience has taught us, Eurasian Watermilfoil is getting ready to rise from the bottom of the lake. Although last year's stems and leaves have died, the roots will have survived the winter and are preparing for their annual growth toward the surface of your lake. The DSLPOA EWM Working Group has already begun its 2021 education, control and fundraising activities so that all property owners will have the opportunity to know about EWM, be part of the control plan and offer their financial support to the continuing measures to control the spread of this invasive aquatic weed.

At this time of year many property owners will be setting up their docks and launching their motorboats. These activities offer each of us an opportunity to inspect our docks, boats and trailers for evidence of hitchhiking invasive species. Although the Working Group is focused on EWM, there are other species of concern. You can familiarize yourself with all of them by visiting [Ontario's Invasive Species Awareness Program website](#). The safest approach is to collect all plant fragments attached to your boat, trailer or dock and dispose of them well away from the lake. If you believe you have discovered an invasive species please send a picture and your location to dslpoaewm@gmail.com so a member of the Working Group can confirm your suspicion.

Fundraising within the Drag and Spruce Lake property owner community continues to be the main source of funds for our education and control activities. We have made it past the \$40,000 milestone and are still welcoming all contributions regardless of size. The almost 50% of property owners who have not yet made a donation will continue to receive personal reminders that they too are receiving the value of the work being done to control the spread of EWM and that this work has a price tag.



In the January Update there was a mention of grant and fundraising possibilities to support the Working Group's planned activities. The Haliburton County Development Corporation's Local Initiatives Program is open to non-profits

such as the DSLPOA and has recognized the importance of educating ourselves and others and continuing our research into EWM control by awarding a \$5,000 grant to the DSLPOA. We acknowledge this local support and thank the HCDC for making DSLPOA one of their 2021 recipients of the LIP Grant.



The Working Group will have the assistance of two Trent University senior students this summer. One student will be reviewing research and on-line reports regarding the control of EWM and preparing a summary report for the Working

Group. The second student will be conducting two field studies regarding water quality and weed species mapping. Since the second project involves field work, COVID-19 protocols will be in place. Both of these projects have been made available to us as an in-kind contribution from the U-Links Centre for Community Based Research, a Haliburton County based organization that pairs community needs with available Trent University and Fleming College students as part of their course requirements. Thank-you to both Trent University and U-Links for their support.



To close this update we have a request for road association chairpersons – we would welcome your assistance in reaching all property owners on both lakes. Please distribute this update to your membership prior to Canada Day in case we have missed anyone through our communication channels.

EWM Update January 2021

It is with sadness that we share with you the news that Mike Podmore passed away suddenly on Saturday, January 9. Mike will be remembered by the other members of the Working Group and all Drag and Spruce Lake property owners as a true steward of our lakes and the surrounding land and forests. He was a leader in our efforts to identify and control outbreaks of Eurasian Watermilfoil and will be missed by all.

Even though our two lakes are covered with ice and snow, activity related to identifying and controlling Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) on Drag and Spruce Lakes continues. Thank you to all who have already helped in any way with this important project and those who have volunteered to help as we continue our work during 2021 and beyond. Your EWM Working Group is busy preparing for the coming year's control activities and wanted to inform you of a few of the things we will be working on before summer arrives.

1. Our request for approval by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to apply biodegradable matting over the 4 confirmed outbreaks on Drag Lake has been approved. This work must be performed between July 15 and September 30 to minimize impact on the bass and lake trout populations. We will begin our work in the spring by assessing the growth at the four locations using overhead drone photography, surface observations and underwater photography. This assessment will help us to prioritize our mat deployment and the funds in our Lake Stewardship Fund will set the limit on how much work is possible.

2. Donations by property owners during the summer and fall of 2020 rose to just over \$35,000. Since this amount is still short of our goal of \$50,000 we will continue reaching out to the half of all property owners who have not yet made a contribution. If you recognize yourself as a property owner who has not contributed, we urge you to consider doing so. The spread of EWM in our lakes will continue if we do not take steps to control it. Some of these steps, such as avoiding areas containing EWM and checking boats and trailers for EWM fragments, cost almost nothing. Others, such as deploying matting with diver assistance as we did last year, cost about \$10,000 per day.
3. Donations by businesses have been limited to a few at this point. We have compiled a list of roughly 100 Haliburton businesses and will begin communicating with them soon. Although many businesses have experienced reduced sales and revenue during the COVID-19 crisis, we have heard that residential construction, renovations and real estate transactions have continued at a higher-than-normal level. For that reason, our first approach to the business community will be in the construction and real estate sectors.
4. Donations by our municipal governments have been zero. We have not yet determined the best way to approach the two levels of municipal government but believe that a donation equal to potential tax revenue losses without EWM control would be a good starting point.
5. The beginning of a new year marks the opening of many grant programs for new applications. There are a few for which our association and project seem to qualify, and we are in the process of preparing our applications. Most grant programs require recipients to contribute significantly to the budget for their project. Some programs will award grants no higher than the funds already available within the recipient's organization. This means, among other things, that the success of our fundraising can have a direct impact on the size of grants available to us.

The Drag and Spruce Lakes EWM Working Group has made a good start at understanding and meeting the EWM threat, but we need everyone's help to continue this essential work. Whether that help comes by way of volunteering, donating, sharing information or other means it is important and appreciated. We will provide further updates as news arises. In the meantime, if you have questions or would like to add your name to the volunteer list, send an email to DSLPOAEWM@gmail.com.

EWM Update September 29, 2020

The DSLPOA deployment of benthic matting over the Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) outbreak located on the sandbar south of Harris Beach has been completed for this year. Bert Bicknell, our Lake Steward, describes the activity on September 28 this way:

"On Monday September 28 Dundee Marine installed eight 8 ft x 40 ft rolls of coconut fibre matting over most of the remaining milfoil off Harris Beach. We were very pleased that there was minimal disturbance to the weed bed and consequently relatively little debris loosened. What little was created was picked up by volunteers who patrolled around the perimeter of the site in boats and raked up the strands of floating milfoil for disposal on shore. Many thanks to those volunteers in attendance who were Jane and Bob Heyes, Allen Pizzey and Andrew and Kelly Falls assisted by Larry Olivo and me. Although Mike Podmore could not be present on Monday he was very helpful during our preparation.

Towards the afternoon the wind rose and the dive team were concerned that it was perhaps too rough to tow the floating platform loaded with a ton of river rock out to the site. Instead they utilized rock lying on the sandbar to weigh down the matting. Bob Heyes allowed us to store the unused rocks at the edge of his beach for use next year.

The dive team photographed the underwater site and repositioned the buoys to the milfoil extremities and noted their GPS positions.

It was a long but satisfying day and special thanks to Larry Olivo who assisted all day."

Although we previously indicated our plan to place matting over the 3 additional smaller outbreaks identified this summer we were not able to convince the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) to extend our Letter of Authorization to include sites other than the original site. To those whose hopes were raised, we apologize and assure you that those 3 locations will be included in our next application to the MNR. We also need to include all EWM outbreaks that we identify this fall in our next application so that we at least have the option of performing work on those outbreaks next summer. We need every property owner's help in this regard. Use our EWM Identification and Reporting Guide to help identify any EWM among the aquatic weeds that you notice growing along your waterfront or while you are on the water. Exact GPS locations will enable us to find the location. A clear photo of the weed, in the water if possible, will also help us to confirm your suspicion. Send your sighting details to the EWM Working Group at DSLPOAEWM@gmail.com. Thank-you to every weed watcher who takes the time to look along their own waterfront and the waterfront of neighbours who have already completed their seasonal closing.

If you have not been following our fundraising progress on the website we can give you an update now. Thanks to a very generous donation of \$2,500 from one Drag Lake family and \$29,660 from 216 other Drag and Spruce Lake property owners we are well on the way to achieving our fundraising goal of \$50,000. Unfortunately there are another 325 property owners who have contributed nothing. As is often the case there are those among us who are willing and happy to allow others to carry their share of the load. Our commitment to those who have already contributed is that we will continue reaching out to every property owner on Drag

and Spruce Lakes to make them aware of the seriousness of this threat to our lakes. Our commitment to those who have not yet contributed is that we will be communicating directly with you so that we know you know about the threat to our lakes and how others have already helped.

Finally a word of thanks to the 70 individuals who have shown their interest in helping combat EWM in our lakes. More than half of these individuals have committed firmly, while others would like a few more details before committing. One of our volunteers, Dominique Binckly, is getting in touch with every individual on the list so that we can have a clear picture of how each person can assist. If you want more information about EWM volunteer possibilities send an email to DSLPOAEWM@gmail.com.

Thank-you again to all who have helped, all who will help, all who have made a donation and all who will make a donation.

From the EWM Working Group

EWM Update September 13, 2020

There definitely is good news to report in your Lake Association's ongoing efforts to control the spread of Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) in Drag and Spruce Lakes. Thanks to the concern and generosity of 171 property owners around the two lakes we are half-way to achieving our goal of \$50,000. To each and every one who has contributed we thank you for caring about the current and future health of your lake and all the aquatic life that thrives within our lakes. You clearly understand the threat to our future enjoyment of these lakes if we do not take decisive action now to control the spread of EWM.

Throughout the fall the Lake Association's EWM Working Group will be responding to property owner requests for assistance to identify EWM. We have prepared a [guide to identification](#) that property owners can use on their own before contacting the Working Group. Including the location reference is essential when reporting - GPS coordinates would be ideal. Additional educational materials for property owners, boaters, anglers and others will be developed and made available on the DSLPOA website. We are developing a control plan for 2021 that will include further mat deployment and/or weed removal as considered appropriate and approved by the MNRF. While all these activities are taking place the EWM Working Group will continue to accept donations from property owners, will appeal to business owners for their support and will seek funding and support from government and non-government sources.

This may sound like a lot of work, and it is. Although the EWM Working Group includes members of the DSLPOA Executive, the group also includes several additional volunteers. We encourage anyone who would like to assist the Working

Group to contact us by email at DSLPOAEWM@gmail.com. Tell us how you think you could help and we will find a place for you as a volunteer.

At the beginning of this update we reported that our donation glass is now half full. But that also means the glass is half empty. The 171 property owners who have contributed to date represent roughly one third of all Drag and Spruce Lake property owners. If you have not yet made your contribution to our EWM Fund, please take time to review the materials on our [website](#) and the comments being made by members of the [Facebook group](#). Your future enjoyment of the lake and the value of your property will be negatively affected if together we are not able to stop the spread of EWM in Drag and Spruce Lakes. We need your help. The lakes need your help.

The next update from the EWM Working Group will be presented at the upcoming DSLPOA AGM.

EWM Update September 4, 2020

In the past few years the Drag and Spruce Lakes Property Owners Association has been monitoring an outbreak of an invasive aquatic species, Eurasian Watermilfoil, in Drag Lake. This summer we took action to begin the defense of our lakes from this threat.

Our Lake Steward, Bert Bicknell, has completed one deployment of biodegradable matting on Drag Lake and is busy preparing for the second deployment on September 12. We appreciate that many property owners are curious about the process and might be tempted to observe up close in a boat. This interest is understandable, but can interfere with the deployment and might also contribute to the spread of weed clippings. For that reason we ask that you show your support from a distance – we will post a progress report, including pictures, following the deployment to keep you informed.

This week we started a fundraising campaign to provide the resources needed to control these and future outbreaks of Eurasian Watermilfoil. I'm pleased to report that we're off to a very good start. **As of 6 pm today we've received contributions from 102 donors totalling \$17,300.** Thank-you to everyone who has taken the time to use the new PayPal donation option on our website, make an e-Transfer to dragandsprucelakes@gmail.com or send a cheque to PO Box 603 in Haliburton. Thanks as well to those who haven't yet made their donation, but intend to do so. To those who are undecided, please have a look at the Eurasian Watermilfoil information on our website and Facebook page. Most of the Facebook comments have come from your neighbours because they are concerned about the future health of Drag and Spruce Lakes.

We will provide regular updates to keep all Drag and Spruce Lake property owners aware of our progress with respect to Eurasian Watermilfoil control and fundraising.

If you have questions for the Eurasian Watermilfoil Working Group or wish to report a possible outbreak, send an email to us at DSLPOAEWM@gmail.com.