

## **Eurasian Watermilfoil Report**

### **EWM Working Group - Spring 2024**

During 2023 the Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) Identification and Control Program was conducted, again, under the direction of the DSLPOA EWM Working Group and with the support of volunteers from the Drag and Spruce Lakes community. The program which began in 2016, when EWM was first identified in Drag Lake, has become cyclic. The annual cycle includes planning the season's activities, arranging necessary permits, communicating with EWM control experts, arranging qualified divers as budget allows, conducting a spring inventory of known EWM sites, identifying suspected new sites, obtaining materials, scheduling volunteers to support diver activities, communicating with property owners, conducting a fall inventory of remaining EWM growth, soliciting new donations and grants to support the activities, and reporting to funders and permit issuers.

Last summer we had hoped to conduct control activities for four days, starting on July 17. However, work was interrupted on the first morning by an emergency call to another site for the dive team. They were able to return to Drag Lake on July 19 but could only complete two days with us. During that shortened week the team was able to deploy 11 burlap mats at two sites and hand harvest EWM plants at 7 sites. Volunteers attended these sites and gathered any stray plant fragments. Up to the beginning of September the Working Group members monitored EWM growth and a few sites were found to have increased. These will be top of list during Dive Week 2024. In September 2023 we estimated the total EWM growth to be about 10% higher than in September 2022. Were it not for this program, the growth would likely be much greater, as experienced at other unmanaged lakes. The goal of the program is to stop the new growth and reduce the extent of the existing sites. One site near the hazard buoy in the northeast corner of Drag Lake was found to contain native, non-invasive plants mixed with EWM. Since these plants may be able to compete with EWM and play a role in controlling EWM growth, the area will be studied as an example of the lake controlling itself.

The life cycle of EWM is not stopped by winter weather. By spring some plants survive, some plants return from established roots and others grow from fragments and seeds. The Working Group will monitor growth at all known sites and will investigate reported new sites, leading up to the July 15 scheduled dive week. Everyone can monitor their own waterfront and remove floating fragments or report possible EWM growth. Most aquatic plants do not need be controlled; most are beneficial and, currently, only EWM causes problems. If you think you've spotted EWM, please use the identifying and reporting guide ([https://cewf.typepad.com/How\\_to\\_Identify\\_EWM.pdf](https://cewf.typepad.com/How_to_Identify_EWM.pdf)). It's also on the DSLPOA website. Three photos would be helpful: one of the EWM plants in the water, one of an EWM fragment in a white saucer or bowl with water, and one showing the location on the shoreline. Please also provide the site's location. GPS coordinates or an E911 address would be helpful. You can email these to [dslpoainvasive@gmail.com](mailto:dslpoainvasive@gmail.com).

Although our goal four years ago was to eradicate all EWM plants in our two lakes we have learned that this goal could only be achieved with funds far greater than those being contributed. We, instead, will address significant growth and work to stop new growth. We will use our funds to purchase diver services and material (mats, etc.). We will use our volunteer resources to identify EWM outbreaks, assist before and during dive week, remove and dispose of floating EWM debris, and safely control small outbreaks along their own waterfronts. With this approach we hope to manage outbreaks and to build a knowledgeable community able to manage this invasive species.

The available funds and volunteer resources will be directed towards a targeted annual control program which, to date, has been effective. Without these resources we would not have a chance of controlling the spread of EWM. A big thank-you goes to the volunteers who have provided us with their contact information and the 25 who were available to help during the dives. Dominique Binkly continued as our Volunteer Coordinator and Bob Heyes provided direction to volunteers and dive contractors. Registered volunteers can expect an email from Dominique Binkly as we get closer to Dive Week 2024. To those who have contributed to the DSLPOA EWM Fund, we thank you for your support. Your donations, together with three small grants have allowed us to purchase the needed materials and the costly diver services since 2020. Because the EWM problem is ongoing, we will be fund raising again this year and will be seeking donations and grants. The program's sustainability depends on this.

Follow us at [www.dragandsprucelakes.ca](http://www.dragandsprucelakes.ca)

Communicate with us at [dslpoainvasive@gmail.com](mailto:dslpoainvasive@gmail.com)

Direct fundraising questions to [dslpoaewm@gmail.com](mailto:dslpoaewm@gmail.com)

Volunteer at [dslpoainvolunteer@gmail.com](mailto:dslpoainvolunteer@gmail.com)

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