

The DSLPOA Story against EWM - 2022

The diver assisted part of the Drag and Spruce Lakes Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) Identification and Control Program is complete for 2022. Anyone following the activity over the last two weeks could have seen members of the DSLPOA Executive, members of the EWM Working Group, concerned or curious property owners, 20 program volunteers, two senior Trent University students and their professor, the 4-person Dundee Marine dive team or Brad Brown, a videographer documenting the process, taking part in the program. I'm happy to report that, thanks to all the hard work performed by this group on behalf of all 500+ Drag and Spruce Lake property owners, we are continuing to learn more about the aquatic plants in our lakes and identifying those locations with EWM growth encroaching docks, swimming areas and high-traffic areas for watercraft. With the help of Dundee Marine, we were able to deploy 18 burlap mats and hand harvest a large number of mature EWM plants at 10 locations on Drag Lake. Several previously known outbreaks showed either little or no signs of EWM growth – these will be monitored for return growth this September and next spring. Several previously unknown outbreaks were reported and confirmed as EWM, some were harvested, and others will be monitored. A few possible outbreaks were reported and found to contain other, non-invasive plants. Some of these non-invasive plants can compete with EWM and can play a defensive role in controlling EWM growth and spread. The bottom line – a busy couple of weeks, many hands sharing the workload, good leadership and coordinating by Bob Heyes, Dominique Binckly, Rick Wesselman and Laurie Jennings, a skilled, hard-working dive team, cooperative weather, and good results.

What happens now? As long as one of the members of the Working Group has a boat in the water, we will continue to investigate reported possible EWM sightings. If you think you've spotted EWM use the [guide to identifying and reporting](#) on the DSLPOA website. Three photos would be helpful – one of the EWM plant in the water, one of an EWM fragment in a white saucer or bowl with water, and one showing the location on your shoreline. If you can provide GPS coordinates of the plant structure it would be helpful, if not then a 911 address.

Since we had approval from the MNR to place matting on the structure in 4 locations this year, we will submit a report of our activities. Following that the Working Group will determine which outbreak sites might benefit from matting next year and prepare a request to be submitted to the MNR by DSLPOA for all property owners. Hand harvesting of invasive plants in front of a property does not require a permit if it is done by the property owner or someone acting on their behalf.

As mentioned above two Trent students were conducting research on our lakes this summer. They were taking samples of aquatic plants for identification purposes so that we will have a record of the plant varieties growing near our shoreline. The majority of plants identified will not be invasive and might even be able to help us control EWM by competing with it under some circumstances. Karl and Terry Hartwick were kind enough to offer the students a dock for their boat and a campsite to minimize driving to and from Peterborough – thank-you Karl and Terry.

During the fall and winter the Working Group will continue to research what is being done on other waterways experiencing EWM growth. As anyone doing their own research will find controlling EWM is challenging and what works well in one situation may not work well in another. If you have a personal interest in learning more about EWM and helping the Working Group to help all Drag and Spruce Lake property owners in this venture, get in touch by emailing me at DSLPOAEWM@gmail.com. If you have experience in fundraising, grant proposal writing or marine biology, we can certainly use your help. If you would like to donate to the DSLPOA EWM Fund, visit the [DSLPOA Website](#) and follow the instructions near the top left of your screen. Your donation will help fund this important project in 2023 and beyond.