

BLIA's EWM Treatment Strategy

Background:

EWM was first found in Bay Lake 18 years ago. The initial infestation was located in Hunter's Bay. Quick treatment eliminated the plants in Hunter's Bay, but subsequent infestations in other areas of the lake were evidence that pieces of the EWM plants had traveled prior to treatment. EWM grows more aggressively than native weed varieties so if left unchecked it will take over. EWM infestations can become extremely dense and matted at the surface.

EWM Management Process:

Unlike Hunter's Bay, which is a fairly small and isolated area, most of Bay Lake is too large to treat as a whole. Also regulatory, environmental and financial constraints prevent whole lake treatment. Therefore our treatment strategy is based on the following:

- infestation identification by underwater (i.e. divers) and surface monitoring (spring & fall) and resident reports
- GPS based record keeping of infestations and treatments
- prioritizing sites
- targeted treatments (spring & fall)

Current Status:

Much of Bay Lake has conditions that are conducive to the growth of EWM (soft bottom, 5 to 20 feet deep). Although it is unlikely that EWM will ever be eradicated from Bay Lake, it is abundantly clear that it can be managed if we continue to effectively locate and treat the infestations.

Every year is different. Mild winters, limited snowcover, early spring ice out, warm summer temperatures and low water levels all contribute to aggressive weed growth. Conversely late ice out, cool temperatures and high water seem to hinder (or hide) growth. 2010 started out with conditions that were favorable for EWM growth, so we're seeing more sites than in cooler years.

Treatment Timing:

Fall treatments are more effective than spring treatments so approximately 70% of our treatment activity is in the fall. However every spring there are infestations that need to be addressed immediately. This year we treated 37 acres in the spring. At this point it is logical to project the treatment of approximately 100 acres this fall. The areas that are treated this fall will likely be clear of EWM for a couple of years, and, hopefully, native varieties will return.

Leadership & Management:

David Devins, Chairman of the BLIA Aquatic Nuisance Committee, has led our efforts to manage EWM from the very beginning. He developed our strategy of identification, prioritizing and treatment and, in the process, has become an expert. His dedication and methodical approach has led to our success in managing this exotic invader.

Summary:

As the map clearly shows, the EWM threat is everywhere. But it also shows that our management efforts are successful because without them there would be dense and matted EWM along all of our shoreline and on all the offshore sites that are less than 20 feet deep.

With dedicated management and consistent funding, we can continue to manage EWM.