

## **Lake Como needs your help**

There is not a lake in Wisconsin that doesn't have at least one or two problems. Most lakes have several management issues which, are generally multifaceted and can seem overwhelming. However, there are often easy things that can be done which will help immensely. And luckily, there are a lot of concerned people willing to do their part to protect and improve the lake that they love.

Lake Como is no different. Some lake management problems for Lake Como include aquatic invasive species, like Curly-leaf Pondweed and Eurasian Water Milfoil and excessive nutrients which lead to alga blooms and increased plant growth. Both Eurasian Water Milfoil and Curly-leaf Pondweed can grow into very dense mats that cover large areas. In order to help keep boating lanes and fish cruising lanes open, a weed harvester is used to cut and collect plants. However, it is difficult to collect every single piece of the plants after they are cut. In addition, boat motors traveling through plant beds also cut and disperse plants.

Eurasian Water Milfoil is a particular problem because even small pieces can root and grow into new plants, which ends up creating new plant beds all over the lake. The Eurasian Water Milfoil pieces that do not root and grow into new plants, as well as all other cut plants, generally float into shore and decompose. As plants break down they release nutrients back into the lake, which often results in an increase in alga growth.

The good news in all of this is that you can help the lake. If there are floating aquatic plants by your pier please rake them up and out of the lake. The floating plants you remove can be left on the side of Lake Shore Drive. The Town of Geneva Road Crew travels the North shore of Lake Como every Monday morning to pick up and dispose of all those rotting aquatic plants that are left on the roadside.

This may seem like a lot of work but the benefits of removing the floating plants from the shoreline are very important. All those dead and dying plants that are removed will not be adding nutrients to the lake, which over time will help decrease the amount of alga in the lake. This will not happen over night but it will help. There will also be a noticeable reduction in the smell that is associated in decomposing plants. Finally, even live pieces of plants can float into shore. If all of the plants that are cut by boat motors and harvesters are removed from the lake, there will also be less Eurasian Water Milfoil pieces that root and grow into new plants.

Please understand that *native* aquatic plants are an essential part of a healthy lake. They provide important benefits including supplying food and shelter for fish and wildlife, stabilizing shorelines and near-shore sediments and producing oxygen. Because removal of good, native aquatic plants creates even bigger problems for lakes, aquatic plant removal is carefully controlled by lake managers and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). However, reducing the amount of nutrients in your lake by removing plants that have been cut and are floating will help control both plant and alga growth.