



Little  
Traverse  
Lake  
Association

Promoting the protection and preservation of the lake and its watershed

# 44.9° north

## *An imminent threat to LTL*

### **Eurasian Watermilfoil is a threat to the future of Little Traverse Lake!**

A highly aggressive aquatic weed known as Eurasian Watermilfoil is wreaking havoc in freshwater lakes throughout Michigan. It poses an imminent threat to Little Traverse Lake. We must take immediate action to defend our lake from this and other invasive species.

### **What is Eurasian Watermilfoil?**

An aquatic invasive species (AIS), Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) grows quickly and spreads easily, forming large mats of floating vegetation that shade-out native plants, reduce fish populations and water oxygen levels, and impede recreational activities. Most importantly, once established in a lake, this relentless invader is virtually impossible to eradicate.

### **How does EWM grow and spread?**

EWM's feathery leaves are arranged in whorls (circles) of 3 to 5 leaves around stems 3 to 10 feet in length. It can grow nearly three inches per day in ideal growing conditions — drop-offs of 8 to 12 feet with ample sun.

It spreads primarily through fragmentation. A ½ inch fragment is capable of growing roots and developing into a new plant. After it blooms it releases thousands of seeds. These seeds live for up to seven years in the lake bottom. This makes it virtually impossible to eradicate EWM.

EWM is spread lake-to-lake via transport on a boat, motor, trailer, fishing gear, and/or bilge water.

### **Has EWM been found in LTL?**

Not yet, but that is only thanks to good luck. Once infested, if remediation steps are not taken to control and vigilantly monitor for the presence of this AIS plant, EWM has the potential of taking over vast areas of a lake.

Nearby Lake Leelanau Lake Association (LLLA) has been battling an approximate 2-mile long EWM infestation (1/6th of this 12 mile long lake.) Last year alone LLLA spent \$140,000 on eradication efforts. They were only able to clear 3.5 acres. They are past the point of eradication. They will be focusing their funds and efforts on containment for years to come.

Studies have shown that infestations can reduce property values by 15 to 20 percent.



*EWM has invaded Lake Leelanau. They will be focusing their funds and efforts on containment for years to come.*





**How can we help prevent EWM from infesting our lake?**

Keeping in mind that personal watercraft facilitate much of the long-distance spread between bodies of water, the LTLA Water Quality Committee recommends immediately installing a self-serve boat cleaning station on Little Traverse Lake. Day boaters will use this solar-powered station to clean a vessel before it is launched. Its purpose is to offer a first line of defense against any aquatic invasive species that may be on a boat coming into LTL from another lake or stream.

As an example, last Summer, the boat wash staff at Glen Lake stopped several boats coming from Lake Leelanau that had EWM on them.

As a second line of defense, we have partnered with Freshwater Solutions. Several times during the Summer and Fall they will perform aquatic surveys to search our lake for signs of AIS.

Zero Gravity Aerial will also continue its annual aerial AIS detection efforts. If anything does get through, we will catch it via these surveillance methods. We do have an eradication plan in place if AIS is found.

**How much will all of this cost?**

Installation of the boat cleaning station will cost approximately \$34,500 plus \$2,000 for signage and placement. Ongoing monitoring of aquatic invasive species will cost approximately \$10,000 per year, for a total of \$46,500.

**How will these important proactive activities be funded?**

Last February, the LTLA applied for a grant through the State of Michigan to be used toward the purchase/installation of a boat cleaning station. We found out earlier this week that out of the 18 Northern Michigan grant requests, we were one of three chosen. We received a grant for \$14,602. We have also received two generous donations: \$3,000 from Cherry Republic and \$5,000 from the Shutz family.

Our goal is to have the boat cleaning station in place by the 3rd week of June. We have \$22,600. We must quickly raise the balance of \$24,000 for the purchase of the boat wash and the aquatic surveys.

It is crucial that everyone participate at some level, so as not to have the financial burden fall on only a few residents. To that end, a tiered fee structure will allow you to choose the level that best fits your financial situation:

- **Lake level: \$350**
- **Leadership level: \$750**
- **Legacy level: \$1,000 or more**

**Learn more**

Please visit [www.littletraverselake.org/invasive-species.html](http://www.littletraverselake.org/invasive-species.html) for more information on EWM. You are also welcome to email [jeff1shutz@gmail.com](mailto:jeff1shutz@gmail.com) if you have specific questions or concerns regarding this timely and important issue.

Let's all do our part to preserve the beauty of Little Traverse Lake and leave a legacy for ourselves and future generations!



*A boat cleaning station can facilitate a 70% decrease in aquatic invasive species violations.*

