

February 2024 Member Update

It has been brought to the attention of the Board of Directors, (BOD), that we have not been communicating information on activities the board is pursuing sufficiently with the membership. To improve that, we are adding a page to the website to keep members, and the public, up to date on these efforts.

It has also been suggested that a contact list for all members be provided to the membership. Concerned about everyone's privacy, we are reluctant to do that and that may be a question we can take up with the membership to see if there is support for that. In the meantime, we intend to communicate through the website or by bcc to current members.

Invasive Plant Control

This is and will continue to be the primary focus of the BOD and is far and away the most important issue concerning the membership in our view. The invasive weed variable leaf water milfoil is the predominant invasive plant in our lake and has been an ever-increasing problem for years. The association was able to receive an herbicide permit from DEEP for the first time in July. Two weeks later the herbicide ProcellaCOR was applied to waterfront areas of the lake where abutting property owners funded the cost based on the amount of waterfront of each property. Approximately \$18,000 was raised for this treatment and about 16 shoreline acres were treated. The boat launch and the ELRA dock area was included as they were viewed to be the source for the milfoil being spread throughout the lake. ProcellaCOR is most intended to kill variable leaf water milfoil. The treatment appears to have been highly effective on milfoil and several other plants as well and the areas treated showed a significant improvement. With these positive results, the board is moving forward with plans to do a second treatment this coming July as is strongly recommended by our consulting contractor and by results that have been reported on other lakes. The evidence clearly indicates that one treatment is not enough while a second treatment will have a more lasting, multi-year effect on the milfoil plant.

During this process, the BOD became aware of a State of Connecticut grant program to fund invasive weed treatments. A grant application was completed and submitted in January requesting funding to treat 25 acres to include the areas previously treated and other areas bypassed due to the absence of resident participation and available funding. The association will need to provide 25% of the total cost and depending on whether the state awards the full amount of the request or only partially, there is a good chance the association, through dues and donations, has sufficient funds to cover the cost and additional fund raising will not be needed. We have been told our application has an excellent chance to be successful based on our circumstances but we may not know the results until late May or early June, based on the timing of past awards. If our application is denied, we will need to again raise funds from the membership similar to last year.

Additionally, the BOD has approached the town board of selectmen requesting funding to support this effort. We are told our request is under consideration at this time as the town budget is being negotiated. We will also be reaching out to the East Lyme Rowing Association and the Board of Education, significant users of the lake, to support us through a membership and/or donation.

Non-Invasive Plant Control

Water lilies are native plants and as most of us are aware, somewhat out of control in the lake's coves. The herbicide best designed to control them requires a different permit from DEEP than the one we have for ProcellaCOR. DEEP has advised us that because there are known to be plants found in areas along the lakeshore considered to be endangered, an endangered plant species survey must be conducted. The survey must be done by a qualified scientist while these plants are in bloom between July and September and a detailed report submitted to DEEP for their review. If the results are favorable, treatment could be applied the following year. The treatments to control water lilies need to be done twice a year, annually. The cost per acre is less than the cost of the ProcellaCOR treatment but it would be necessary to obtain funding from the membership on an ongoing basis. There is no grant program for non-invasive species.

The BOD wanted to pursue this, at least experimentally, to see if there would be support to maintain such a program. The immediate problem with doing so is the cost of the survey. The BOD prepared a Request for Proposal, (RFP), for the survey, contacted three qualified parties that verified their interest in bidding for this work, and sent out the RFP, also in January. The results have been disappointing, only one bid came back for far more than we are ready to accept. As a result, and because we need to maintain funding for the ProcellaCOR treatment, the BOD has decided to hold off on this for now.

Dam Concerns

Last fall, the top board of the dam was observed to have been lifted out of place with excess water flowing out of the lake. You may have noticed lake levels were lower than usual last fall and this may have been at least partially to blame. DEEP was notified but before they responded, the board was set back in place. It was observed that a substantial amount of water was still leaking through the boards below the surface. DEEP did an initial inspection and found the boards to be deteriorated and in need of replacement. We are expecting that work will be done sometime in 2024 and we will remain vigilant to make sure it gets done, to the extent we can.

Hydrilla

Our letter to the ELRA seeking funding support primarily concerns the dangers of introducing hydrilla into the lake and for the need for increased vigilance for cleaning their boats and trailers entering the lake. We have photos of one of their trailers leaving the lake covered in milfoil. Given the nature of hydrilla, milfoil pales in comparison, as bad as it is. We have reached out to DEEP requesting they enhance their signage at the launch to make sure all users are aware of the situation and the need to inspect and clean their boats. Hydrilla has been found in the Connecticut River and several state lakes, including Amos Lake in Preston and was introduced there by boaters using the launch. It remains to be seen how DEEP will respond to our request and to this threat.