

Long Lake Aquatic Plant Control Program

Frequently Asked Questions

A Publication of the Cheboygan Long Lake Area Association

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In 2014, Aloha Township approved a five-year exotic plant control program for Long Lake (2015 to 2019). The program is administered by the Aloha Township Board and is being coordinated with the Cheboygan Long Lake Area Association. The program involves the control of invasive plant species in Long Lake with the select use of herbicides. In the first year of the program, about 43 acres of the lake required treatment. In 2016, about 14 acres were treated and the initial treatment in 2017 was only 8 acres. It appears things are moving in the right direction.

Below are responses to some commonly asked questions about the project.

Who oversees the plant control program?

Plant control activities are coordinated under the direction of the township's environmental consultant, Progressive AE. Each year, biologists from Progressive AE conduct GPS-guided surveys of the lake to identify problem areas, and detailed treatment maps are provided to the plant control contractor. Follow-up surveys are conducted throughout the growing season to evaluate treatment effectiveness and the need for additional treatments.

Who conducts the herbicide treatments?

The herbicide treatment contractor is PLM Lake and Land Management of Caledonia, Michigan.

Who determines when and where treatments will occur?

The timing and scope of treatments is based on where nuisance plants are found when biologists from Progressive AE conduct their surveys.

What plants are targeted for control?

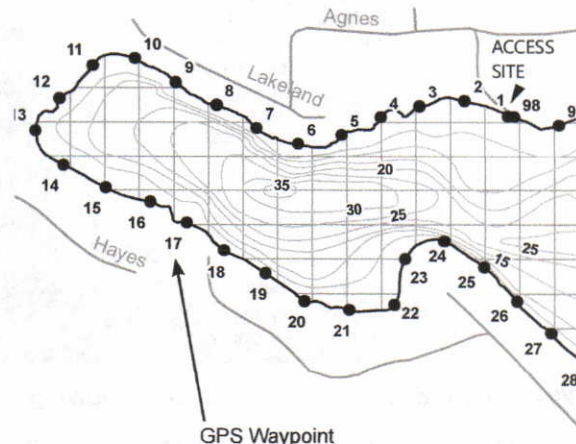
The Long Lake plant control program focuses on non-native (i.e., exotic) plants, such as Eurasian milfoil. This plant is highly invasive and have the potential to spread quickly throughout the lake if left unchecked.

Is there a permanent fix to the problem?

If conditions are favorable, aquatic plants will grow. However, there are steps property owners can take to help minimize plant growth in the lake such as limiting the use of lawn fertilizers and maintaining natural vegetation along the shoreline to prevent nutrients from washing into the lake.

How about a pre-emptive strike?

To be effective, aquatic herbicides must be applied directly to the plant beds when the plants are actively growing. There are no pre-emergence aquatic herbicides like there are for agriculture.



Eurasian milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*)

Prepared by:

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Aquatic plants are part of a healthy lake. They produce oxygen, provide food and habitat for fish, and help to stabilize shoreline and bottom sediments.

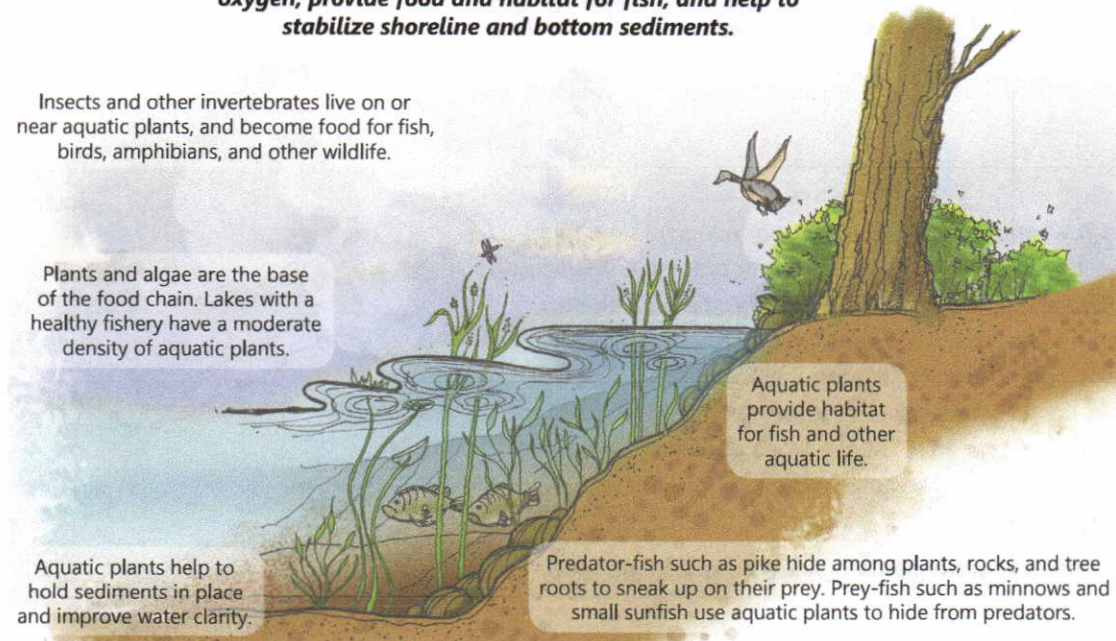
Insects and other invertebrates live on or near aquatic plants, and become food for fish, birds, amphibians, and other wildlife.

Plants and algae are the base of the food chain. Lakes with a healthy fishery have a moderate density of aquatic plants.

Aquatic plants help to hold sediments in place and improve water clarity.

Predator-fish such as pike hide among plants, rocks, and tree roots to sneak up on their prey. Prey-fish such as minnows and small sunfish use aquatic plants to hide from predators.

Aquatic plants provide habitat for fish and other aquatic life.



Why are there still plants in the lake following treatments?

In managing aquatic plants, it is important to recognize that most plants are beneficial. Aquatic plants produce oxygen during photosynthesis, help stabilize shoreline and bottom sediments, and provide cover and habitat for a variety of fish. The primary objective of the plant control program on Long Lake is to control nuisance, exotic species while maintaining beneficial native plants. We do not want to remove all the plants in the lake. This would negatively impact the fishery and cause many other problems such as algae blooms.

How do the treatments impact fish?

If applied properly, herbicides have no direct impacts on fish. In general, lakes with a variety of plants often support more productive fisheries. The plant control program in Long Lake is designed to control invasive plants while preserving plants that provide valuable habitat and cover for fish.

Why didn't my property get a treatment notice sign?

If there is no sign posted along your property, it means your area was not treated and there are no use restrictions. State regulations require that areas within 100 feet of treatment areas be posted with a sign that lists herbicides applied and the associated use restrictions. Which properties get treatment depends on where the plants are found during the surveys of the lake. Not every property gets treated every time; it depends on where the plants are found in a given survey.

When is it safe to swim after a treatment?

All herbicides have a 24-hour swimming restriction that will be posted on signs along areas of the shore that have been treated. However, if you do not have a sign posted or the sign indicates that only algaecides were applied, there are no swimming restrictions.

When can I water my lawn following a treatment?

If you draw water from the lake for irrigation, be sure to read the sign posted along your shoreline at the time of treatment. Most irrigation restrictions do not apply to established lawns. However, if you water flowers or a garden, adhere to the irrigation restrictions posted on the sign.

What can I do to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species in Long Lake?

If you trailer your boat to other lakes, be sure to thoroughly wash your boat, motor, and trailer before launching back into Long Lake. With exotic species, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!