

**LAKE MINNETONKA CONSERVATION DISTRICT (LMCD)
2013 Final Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) Harvesting Program Report**

A. Harvesting season data and conditions summary:

1. Harvesting Season- The 2013 season consisted of approximately six weeks starting on Wednesday, June 26th, and ending on Thursday, August 15th. The length of the season was 26 working days. This was significantly less than the 35 day season in 2012. The season was planned to start on the week of June 10th; however, it was postponed until June 26th due to the low early season EWM growth. The crew operated three LMCD harvesters and transport barge four days a week, 10 hours a day.
2. Water Level- Lake levels during the course of the 2013 season were significantly higher when compared to 2012. In fact, the LMCD nearly initiated a high water declaration around the 4th of July holiday. The high lake levels and late ice out contributed to the low EWM growth in 2013.
3. Acres Harvested- Total acreage harvested in 2013 was 267. This compares to 412 in 2012, 268 in 2011 and 384 acres harvested in 2010. Acres harvested during a season have been calculated since 2003 utilizing Global Positioning System and Geographic Information System software. In 2013, there were seven bays involved in large scale coordinated herbicide treatment projects. These bays included Phelps, Carmans, Grays, Gideons, St. Albans, Carsons and St. Louis Bays. Mechanical harvesting was not conducted in these areas due to the herbicide treatments. (see attached map for further details).
4. Harvester and Truck Loads- The total number of harvester loads in 2013 was 203.25, which generated 114 truck loads or 4.38 per day (see attached spreadsheet for further details). This compares to a total number of harvester loads of 262.25 in 2012, which generated 181 truck loads or 5.17 per day. In 2013, the daily average of truck loads decreased by approximately 15%. One contributing factor appears to be the significantly lower EWM growth in 2013 compared to 2012.

B. Operating Highlights

Harvesting priorities were based upon impediment to boat navigation on the lake, with higher priority given to areas of the lake where EWM has matted. Although there were some areas of the lake with significant EWM growth that was not aesthetically pleasing, we generally did not harvest them unless they were impeding boat navigation. There was a high emphasis in recovering EWM fragments. This was done through utilizing one of the harvesters as a skimmer at times. Another technique that was used was emphasizing tandem cutting and returning to areas the following day and skimming the areas with the harvesters.

The LMCD has assembled a rotating harvesting schedule for Lake Minnetonka (see attached schedule for further details). In 2013, the South Upper Lake Option was implemented. At the beginning of the season, the program deviated

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from the schedule to harvest Crystal Bay and North Arm. The basis for this decision was heavy EWM growth on these bays and lack of significant growth in the scheduled bays. The program also deviated from the schedule due to the inability to utilize the offload site in Wayzata Bay due to road construction in the area.

Similar to past seasons, a combination of clear-cutting and limited channel-cutting was utilized to address harvesting priorities. This year there was a high emphasis on tandem cutting when possible. All areas that dictated the need for harvesting were cut at least once, with high growth areas harvested twice as time permitted.

Public response to the harvesting was encouraging, with a limited number of telephone calls from the public. Harvested EWM was mainly composted at two Three Rivers Park District (TRPD) sites. LMCD staff has worked closely with TRPD staff to utilize Gale Woods Farm and Noerenberg Gardens as compost sites because of the close proximity to Lake Minnetonka. The recent change to utilize Noerenberg Gardens has improved trucking efficiency. With the discovery of Zebra Mussels on Lake Minnetonka, LMCD staff decided to no longer use the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum as a compost site to reduce the risk of the spread of zebra mussels to uninfested water bodies. Prior to 2010, the Arboretum was used as the primary compost site.

C. Personnel

Judd Harper served his 13th year as Project Manager in 2013. Joel Pantos served as the EWM Site Supervisor for the first year in 2013. An additional five employees were hired for the 2013 season, which included one returning and four new seasonal employees.

D. Equipment Operation and Maintenance

The LMCD contracted with Curfman Trucking and Repair, Inc. for their 12th year providing maintenance of the EWM harvesting equipment. The program also used Kirvada Fire Inc. to perform an extensive hydraulic repair on one of the harvesters prior to the season. In previous years, the LMCD entered into a flat rate contract with Curfman Trucking and Repair, Inc. for maintenance and repair of the equipment. In 2013, the LMCD entered into an hourly maintenance contract. This change is anticipated to be an area of cost savings. At the end of the season, one of the three harvesters was identified as having problems with one of the main paddle wheel motors. This motor will have to be replaced in the offseason.

E. 2013 EWM Harvesting Program Budget Analysis

The overall budget for the 2013 EWM Harvesting Program was \$92,200. Estimated expenses incurred through October are approximately \$76,000. There will be other expenses incurred for post season work in which invoices have not been received and paid. Funding for this program comes from a combination of levies from the 14 member cities and a grant of \$26,700 from the MN DNR.