

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

At the July 2012 VVLA Annual Meeting, several lakeshore property owners voiced continuing concern over multiple years of aquatic plant related nuisance issues.

Based on requests from the floor, a subgroup consisting of Jim Sprester, Ed Brodsky, Jeff Burke, and Mike Czarny was formed. The group will survey lake property owners and determine level of interest about the following two (2) items:

- a) Desire to harvest weeds on our lake
- b) Estimated min/max levels of individual financial commitment.

We have provided this document to give you known facts, to help you understand the situation, to estimate cost ranges and to help determine future efforts.

One of the four individuals above will personally contact you to discuss the document, where possible help with questions, and record your vote(s) on the two (2) items.

We would like to get back to the Van Vliet Lake Association Board around mid-August, with some survey results. Please help us complete this REQUEST FOR INFORMATION in a timely fashion.

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DETAILS

- 1) At the July 2012 VVLA Annual Meeting, several lakeshore property owners voiced continuing concern over multiple years of aquatic plant related nuisance issues. These included :
 - a) Increased difficulty accessing residences by boat.
 - b) Loss of swimming areas.
 - c) Fishing areas now becoming inaccessible or weed choked by July.
 - d) Increased cut and floating weeds due to increased boat traffic at the DNR landing. A larger number of boaters, unfamiliar with weed choked areas, are powering through weed choked areas.
 - e) Floating mats of weeds , roots (tubers), and dirt clumps have made kayaking in back bays difficult. These also do not enhance the value of the lake for the fishery or recreation.

- 2) Based on requests from the floor, a subgroup was formed. The subgroup consisted of Jim Sprester, Ed Brodsky, Jeff Burke, and Mike Czarny. The group will survey lake property owners and determine level of interest about the following two (2) items:
 - a) Desire to harvest weeds on our lake.
 - b) Estimated min/max levels of individual financial commitment.

- 3) If the results of the survey indicate a favorable inclination to harvest weeds AND the financial backing is sufficient, the subgroup would move forward to:
 - a) Seek VVLA Board approval with review of the initial proposed harvesting plan, survey results, and funding support.
 - b) Contact and select a licensed DNR approved weed harvester and develop harvesting scope, budgetary costs, and timing.
 - c) Apply for a mechanical weed harvesting permit with the DNR.
 - d) Review and request oversight from the VVLA Board.
 - e) Move forward with the plan in 2013.

4) BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- a) **GENERAL** - All previous personal or anecdotal history, opinions, observations, or experiences with past efforts to manage or control weeds on this lake were undocumented. These undocumented observations will not influence or effect DNR decision makers.

- b) **DNR BACKGROUND** - Members of the VVLA Board have developed and established good relations with the local DNR decision-makers in Rhinelander.
 - i) Conversations with the DNR, during a VVLA boat tour on September 28, 2011 and with follow-up conversations during the winter of 2011-12 have helped us better understand DNR guidelines for managing future nuisance weed harvesting issues.
 - ii) The DNR will only manage future efforts in concert with the respective lake association, using our recently filed and approved APMP for Van Vliet Lake. The DNR will **NO LONGER ADDRESS INDIVIDUAL LANDOWNER** nuisance weed issues with individual harvesting permits.
 - iii) Mechanical harvesting of native nuisance weeds is an approved option under DNR regulations and is recognized and noted in both the 2005 Van Vliet Lake Management Plan (Bluewater) and the 2009-11 Van Vliet APMP (Bonestroo).
 - iv) Funding for these efforts must come from the lake property owners. The DNR is now focused on weed harvesting permits and funding for AIS (Aquatic Invasive Species) issues. The DNR will no longer support grant requests for money to support mechanical harvesting of native nuisance navigation issues.
 - v) Under the laws, the DNR **DOES CONTINUE TO RECOGNIZE** native nuisance navigation issues. In our 6 county-area alone, as of May 2012, the DNR issued a total of 6 harvesting permits. (Vilas, Forest, Florence, Oneida, Lincoln, Langlade). 5 Permits were for **NATIVE NUISANCE HARVESTING** and 1 was for Invasive nuisance weeds (AIS).
 - vi) The DNR has provided us with impact studies of the current documented science for nuisance weed cutting. (these can be provided on request). The number of studies are very limited. The DNR will admit that the hard science of mechanical harvesting is at a state that it is not prudent to draw or state strong (+) or (-) conclusions on both weed and fish populations.

- c) **Commercial Weed Harvester Background** - A member of the VVLA board contacted a commercial harvester in the winter of 2011-12. This contractor has maintained good standing with the local DNR office over many years.
- i) Potential cost estimates could range from \$5500 - \$9300. Depending on the amount of work contracted, costs about any future harvesting effort can only be estimated in ranges, until a formal plan and scope of work is developed.
 - ii) A budgetary estimate was developed over the phone, in the absence of any personal tour by the contractor. Information and guidance for this estimate was provided by the contractor at the 2012 rates below.
 - (1) The hourly rate for 2012 is \$165.00 per operating hour and an \$800.00 setup charge.
 - (2) These rates include all trucking and setup of equipment at your site, an aquatic plant harvester with a 7ft cutting width, an experienced operator, shore elevator, and a 15 cubic yard dump truck.
 - (3) There is a 40-hour minimum for harvesting operations.
 - (4) The Lake Association/District is to supply a disposal site within 2 miles of the shore elevator, if possible. Additional trucking is at \$4.00 per mile.
 - iii) Based on the rates above, a pro-forma estimated budget range is shown below.
 - (1) A minimalist plan involving cutting just three (3) access channels in Montgomery, Lemberg and Birch Bay – could be ~\$5500. (See next page)
 - (2) A more aggressive plan involving the three (3) channels above and constructing individual pier access “spokes”, could be in the range of ~\$9500.

~\$5500 - MINIMUM SCOPE



d) AREAS FOR POTENTIAL QUESTIONS

- i) **Is this a group of individuals or is this the Van Vliet Lake Association?** - - The subgroup is working as directed by the VVLA Board. If the program moves forward, the permit must be filed with the DNR as the VVLA.
- ii) **Will harvesting have to be done every year?** - - There are no guarantees but we should not expect this to be more than a short-term fix. After having spoken with the DNR and the mechanical harvester contractor, at this time, we have no history and do not know the answer. Some lakes require yearly cutting and others have gone through 3-5 year cycles. There is no clear-cut scientific study that we have found, with which one can use as a prediction. It depends on the lake.
- iii) **Why don't we approach the problem with chemical treatment?** - - This is an approved approach under Wisconsin law Chapter NR 107 - AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT. However, the DNR does not look favorably on this approach and typically does not grant permits, except for the treatment of AIS.
- iv) **Where are copies of these lake studies kept?** - - Copies of the 2005 Van Vliet Lake Management Plan (Blue Water Science) and the 2009-11 Van Vliet Lake Aquatic Plant Management Plan (Bonestroo) can be found on the Van Vliet Lake Association website. (<http://www.vanvlietlake.com/>)
- v) **When is the best time to harvest?** - - We do not have an answer at this time. We would hope to work with the contractor to harvest at the optimum time. Obviously, contractor's schedule and bookings for 2013 will play a significant role.
- vi) **Will this effort improve or deteriorate fishing on Van Vliet?** - - There are many opinions, both (+) and (-). After having spoken with the DNR and reviewed several scientific papers, there is no clear-cut scientific study that we have found, with which one can use as a prediction. Both the DNR fisheries and aquatic management groups agree, it depends on the lake.
- vii) **Will harvesting open the door to other AIS?** - - There are many opinions, both (+) and (-). After having spoken with the DNR aquatic management group (Rhineland) and reviewed several scientific papers, there is no clear-

cut scientific study that we have found, with which one can use as a prediction. It depends on the lake.

viii) **What are these scientific papers you refer to?** - - These are scientific journal references, provided by the DNR. They are studies set up to analyze impacts of mechanical harvesting. The citations are below. You can access the information on-line by visiting any library with a science database portal. The exact references are provided below.

(1) "Impact of manual spring harvesting on the regrowth of a spreading aquatic plant: *Ranunculus peltatus* SCHRANK "; C. Garbey, G. Thiébaud, and S. Muller, *Arch. Hydrobiol.*, **156**, 271–286 , 2003.

(2) "The Role and Interactions of Submersed Macrophytes in a Shallow Wisconsin Lake", Sandy Engel, *Journal of Freshwater Ecology*, **4**, 329-341, 1988.

(3) "Environmental Effects of Mechanical Harvesting", Ivanka Wile, *J. Aquatic Plant Management*, **16**, 14-20, 1978.

ix) **I do not have any weeds on my lakeshore. Why should I pay anything?** -

- If the project goes forward, all lake property landowners will be impacted, some more than others. The VVLA has chosen to make participation voluntary. We are surveying landowners on two (2) counts: Willingness to back the project and willingness to define an individual min/ max estimated contribution funding. Obviously, the project will not move forward without sufficient support for both facets.

x) **If I pay more, can I cut more?** – DNR harvesting guidelines are both very detailed and specific.

(1) This plan **WOULD NOT** be a clear-cut harvest plan of large swaths of the lake.

(2) DNR guidelines typically define access paths of up to ~150 ft for riparian owners. These paths connect with a main access channel or loop.

(3) Our 2005 lake plan cited a typical hub and spoke cutting approach.

xi) **Our household has multiple lake association members. Can we all vote?**

- - The DNR cutting permit form looks specifically at the affected land parcel and the individual owner. Based on this form, we are conducting the survey by the affected lake property parcel # – single vote approach.

5) SURVEY FORM - - We are asking that you complete the following questions and give your interviewer a signed / dated copy.

a) Are you in favor of the VVLA work towards development of a plan to mechanically harvest nuisance weeds? (Circle One)

YES

NO

b) If you answered NO to above question - - you do not need to answer this section.

If you answered YES to the above question - - - what range are you willing to contribute (Min / Max)? Please circle one number in the MIN column and one number in the MAX column. **(This is only an estimate and does not represent a commitment).**

MIN Contribution	MAX Contribution
\$0	\$0
\$500	\$500
\$750	\$750
\$1000	\$1000

c) Please sign, date the form below, and send it back to the committee member.

Respondent: _____

Parcel # _____

Date: _____