



Volume 39, Number 1, April 2024

## NEW HARVESTING HOTLINE! 262-332-3670

The WLMD has added a harvesting hotline to help streamline the process when dealing with lake weed issues. The Harvesting Program Manager will carry the phone during the harvesting season to deal with questions and concerns regarding lake weeds. If the HPM does not answer, please leave a detailed message (voice or text) on the issue with a specific location of the weeds, including your address and any lakeside landmarks that might help locate the problem area.

Please remember that when it comes to harvesting strategy, the WLMD takes many factors into consideration such as:

- There is not any pre-emergent aquatic herbicide so we cannot spray areas to prevent the growth of plants.
- We cannot harvest areas if the plants are 2-3' below the surface, so harvesting can only happen when the weeds reach the surface.
- We are limited by what the DNR permit allows. Water depth must be over 3' and we must leave 1' of plant growth on the lakebed. No cutting into the lakebed is allowed.
- Native plants need to protect the lakebed from the expansion of invasive species.
- Violation of the permit rules can lead to warnings, fines, and the rescinding of our harvesting permit.
- Low lake water levels may also limit harvester access to certain areas late in the season.

## WLMD NOW HIRING

The Wind Lake Management District is accepting applications for the position of Harvester Operator. Interested persons should submit a resume and/or a letter of interest with their qualifications and contact information to: *Norway Town Hall, Attention: WLMD, 6419 Heg Park Road, Wind Lake, WI 53185. Letters must be postmarked by May 15, 2024.* Primary interviews will be completed by the Harvesting Program Manager and final interviews/approval will be at the WLMD Board Meeting at 7pm on May 21st, 2024, at the Norway Town Hall located at 6419 Heg Park Road, Wind Lake, WI 53185.

The Harvester Operator job description can be found on-line at [wlm.d.org](http://wlm.d.org) and any questions can be directed to the Harvesting Program Manager Pat Fitzgerald at our **Harvesting Hotline (262) 332-3670** or Chairman Ron Mayer at **(414) 614-5859**. Once selected, the Operator will report to the Harvesting Program Manager and will be paid through a temp agency.

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN RON MAYER

Lake lovers can't wait for this time of year! Spring is here and the lake looks amazing. Piers are going in and boats are being prepped for the season. The warm weather is coming and we are all looking forward to enjoying our lake this summer. Whether you kayak or fish, cruise on a pontoon or enjoy wakeboarding, we know it is important to make every day count. The WLMD Board and our harvesting team continue to work towards the goal of making Wind Lake safe and enjoyable for everyone.

As we enter year four of operating our own harvesting program, we are prepared for the potential of another heavy lake weed season. With the limited snow cover this winter and the lake water warming early, we are anticipating rapid weed growth. There was heavy weed growth last year, but our crew was able to stay on top of it. The advantage of owning and operating our own harvester was never more apparent than last year. We were able to harvest when and where it was needed. We are prepared to do the same this year if needed.

Last year we contracted with Solitude Lake Management to research and complete a 5-year Aquatic Plant Management Plan. This plan is required for the district to perform chemical treatments and to complete mechanical harvesting of lake weeds. The plan was completed and approved by the WDNR. Our long-term goal is do more mechanical harvesting where possible and less chemical treatments. At the 2023 Annual Meeting, the membership approved to the Resolution to perform additional sampling to determine the need for an Alum treatment and to apply for a grant. The Board is looking at options on how to proceed as the cost of an Alum treatment could exceed \$500,000. A grant could cover up to \$200,000 of that cost. The district is also currently setting aside \$25,000 annually from lake dues towards the future treatment.

Also approved at the Annual Meeting was the Resolution to purchase a second harvester, contingent on successfully receiving a grant. The advantages of a second harvester (which would be smaller) is it would be able to access more areas, allow for more mechanical harvesting and less chemical treatments, and it could off-load onto the same trailer as the large harvester. It would also provide a backup option in the case of a long-term breakdown of the large harvester. The Board will be applying for the grant this year and could take delivery of the smaller harvester next year.

One frustration of all lake owners for the past three years is the low lake level during the summer months. Big Muskego Lake sends excess water to Wind Lake through the channel. Every spring, the Big Muskego Dam and the Wind Lake Dam are closed in late April or early May when the lakes are at or slightly above spillway levels, which is considered "full". If there isn't significant rain during spring and summer months, the dams will remain closed, and the lake levels will drop from evaporation. Over the course of the summer, a lake could lose 18 inches of water through evaporation. Without rain, there is no other source of water coming into Wind Lake. Unfortunately, we are at the mercy of Mother Nature to provide rain and keep us operating at optimal lake levels all summer long.

Another frustration of lake owners is the infiltration of geese on the shoreline. Geese can present a parasite hazard on the shoreline and an ecological hazard in the water. The district worked with the USDA last year to complete a successful roundup and will be monitoring the number of geese again this year. The district has to cover the cost of the roundup, so hopefully the geese count will be low and a roundup will not be required this year.

Last year, the Board added a **Harvesting Hotline (262-332-3670)**. The intent of the hotline was to address issues in a timely manner by improving communication. The Hotline was a success and will be continued again this year. Property owners are encouraged to use it as necessary as it allows Operators to address questions/complaints quicker and provide a follow up if needed. We have renewed our contract with Jerry Kotarek Trucking to haul harvested weeds. Jerry has been an integral part of the harvesting team and has been incredibly reasonable with his billing. We have also renewed our contract with Butch's Hometown Services for roadside weed pickup. Butch's team does a great job as more people are using the roadside service than ever before. These are all important pieces to the weed harvesting program and overall lake management.

As your representatives, we are working hard to find the proper balance of lake management in the most cost-efficient manner. We appreciate your trust and support as we work to make Wind Lake great.

## HOMEOWNER ACTION

The DNR allows all homeowners the ability to clear an area 30' wide in their lake frontage as far out as they chose to a depth of 4'. This can be done by the manual method of raking to provide plant removal and the owner can remove both invasive and native plants in the 30' area. The raked vegetation can be placed by the roadside for pickup.

## ROADSIDE LAKE WEED PICKUP

The WLMD will continue the roadside weed pickup program this summer. Only lake weeds can be placed on the roadside for pickup. Please make sure the pile is close to the side of the road and not setting back up against a building or tree line. We will not be picking up "ice-off" debris. Do not put lake sediment, dirt, rocks, branches, garbage, or other debris in the pile. The pile will not be picked up if anything other than lake weeds are on the pile. Piles must be out by noon on Mondays to be picked up between Monday and Wednesday evening.

Here are the pickup dates for 2024: **June 3rd, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>; July 8<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, August 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup>; September 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>; and October 7<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>. All dates are Mondays.**

## CHEMICAL TREATMENTS

WLMD receives a permit annually from the DNR to chemically treat weeds in Wind Lake. Most of the areas treated are shallow, weed-choked and restrict lake access for property owners. The plan is to treat when the conditions warrant, usually in early May and early June, weather permitting. Treatments to control the Starry Stonewort (SSW) are also planned.

### NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT PERMIT

The Wind Lake Management District has applied for its annual Aquatic Plant Management Permit for the control of aquatic vegetation in Wind Lake with the WI DNR.

Interested parties may review the Permit Application at the District's website: [wlmnd.org](http://wlmnd.org).

The lake is considered "Waters of the State". Treatments will be conducted to try to maintain access for property owners and lake users.

When the treatment takes place, shoreline adjacent to treated areas will be posted with bright yellow signs, indicating what herbicide has been used and when it was done. The notice will also indicate if there are any recreational use restrictions following the treatment. The boat launch will also be posted with a treatment map. Because weather, including winds, affect the ability to conduct treatments, last minute changes may occur. We will keep the [wlmnd.org](http://wlmnd.org) website up to date as much as possible on when and where treatments are taking place.

The plants that are targeted for treatment include milfoil, curly leaf, SSW and filamentous algae. Occasionally, native plants are treated, but only if they are blocking navigation areas. DNR has the final say in all treatment areas for chemical control and may deny the treatment of specific areas. To the right is a map of the proposed areas of treatment.

Wind Lake – Racine County, WI

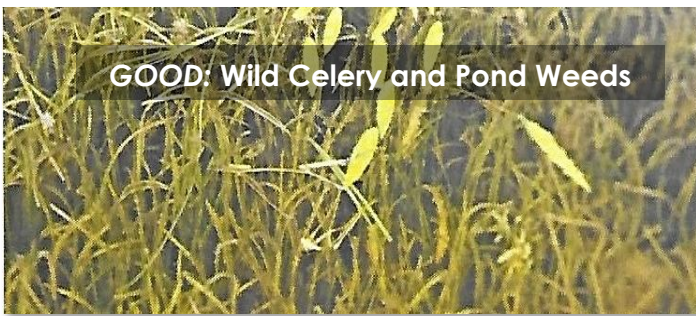


 Shoreline  Navigation Areas

# PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF INVASIVE SPECIES

History has shown that once invasive species are present in a lake, it is pretty much impossible to completely eradicate it. Prevention is the key! Here are some steps that are recommended:

- Do not move your boat and fishing equipment from lake to lake without thoroughly decontaminating it.
- Remove all plant fragments from your boat, trailer, anchor ropes, live wells, etc.
- Dump all your bilge water before leaving a lake.
- Do not transport fish in water. Dump all water and put your fish on ice.
- Flush your motor cooling system between lakes.
- Keep your boat and equipment dry docked for a week after using a lake will help prevent the spread of invasives.
- Try to avoid launching into a lake with a "dirty" boat launch, one that has lots of weed fragments floating around.
- Check out the Wisconsin DNR website for more information on clean boats.



## GOOD V.S. BAD, NATIVE V.S. INVASIVE

Wind Lake has experienced many problems over the years, from water quality problems to Eurasian watermilfoil, from too-high water to too-low water. Each year seems to present a new challenge. Since August 2017, the newest, and most significant challenge for Wind Lake is the highly invasive, Starry Stonewort (SSW).

SSW complicates everything we do.

Back in the 80's the water quality on Wind Lake was so poor that the main problem was pea-soup, smelly algae blooms. There were very few native plants, and most of the plants in the lake were curly-leaf pondweed and milfoil, both invasive species.

As work began to clean up the water quality, clear water led to more aquatic plants (weeds). Milfoil seemed the happiest with the new conditions, growing thick and dense, blocking boat traffic, and choking large areas of the lake. A couple of years, over 200 acres were blocked by milfoil growing to the surface on the East and NE side of the lake. To make matters worse, filamentous algae, that slimy surface algae, covered the milfoil on the surface, clogging water intakes on boats.

The district responded by harvesting channels through the milfoil so lake users could access the open water areas. Shoreline areas of milfoil were chemically treated to try to reduce the access problems. Once the water quality and runoff problems were addressed, the native plants started to rebound. In 2011, 23 different plant species were present in Wind Lake. In 2017, the number increased to 29 species. Milfoil declined in that time going from 63% frequency to 20%.

Good weeds, in general, are less dense, have a thinner architecture, and often can be boated through. Native weed beds are great for the fisheries. Invasive species weed beds are generally very dense and can quickly block boat traffic. Dense, monotypic strands of invasives negatively affect the fisheries.

## BLUE-GREEN ALGAE: A CLOSER LOOK

Wind Lake, like many Wisconsin lakes has areas and conditions that can foster the growth of algae. One of the most frequent types is filamentous algae which from time to time, can be seen along the shoreline during the summer or after episodes of storm run-off following a period of heavy rain. However, it can be found in deep waters as well. When weeds have reached the surface and the water warms up, the familiar green mats that form on top of the weeds are filamentous algae. Starry Stonewort is also an algae that not only can affect the water surface but also the water column below. While the presence of both can degrade the water quality and negatively impact the aquatic ecosystem, neither familiar algae produces toxins. The same cannot be said of *all* blue-green algae.

Unlike the name suggests, blue-green algae is actually a group of bacteria, often referred to as "pond scum." While they are frequently blue-green in color, they can express themselves as blue, green, reddish-purple, or brown. Blue-green algae generally grow in stagnant or slow-moving water. When water temperatures rise and nutrients like phosphorus or nitrogen are abundant, the blue-green algae will form scum layers or floating mats, usually between mid-June and late September.

### Reason for Concern?

Only certain species of blue-green algae can produce toxins that can cause illness. Concerns associated with blue-green algae include among others, discolored water, odor, depletion of dissolved oxygen and toxin production. When a blue-green algae bloom dies off, the blue-green algae decays resulting in decreased oxygen in the water; a process that can negatively affect or even kill fish and other aquatic life. Toxins from certain blue-green algae are produced inside the cells of the blue-green algae. The chemicals are not produced all of the time and there is no easy way to tell when blue-green algae are producing them and when they are not. When the cells are broken open, the toxins may be released.



People and pets may be exposed to possible toxins through:

**Skin Contact**  
**Inhalation**  
**Ingestion**

Blue-green toxins can negatively affect you and the health of your pet differently depending on the species type and the level of exposure. Pets are especially susceptible to blue-green algae. Because of their relatively small size, they can become extremely ill, and even die, after swallowing or licking their fur following contact with water containing blue-green algae.

### Are Chemical Treatments Possible?

Unfortunately no. Chemical treatment of an area experiencing a blue-green algae bloom may kill the blue-green algae, but any toxins contained in the cells will be released at once. So, while the bloom may no longer be visible, toxins may be present for some period of time following treatment. It is best to stay out of a water experiencing a bloom and wait for the bloom to dissipate on its own.

### Measures You Can Take to Protect Yourself:

- Do not recreate (swim, boat, ski, fish, etc.) in water that looks like "pea soup", green or blue paint, or that has a scum layer or puffy blobs floating on the surface.
- Do not let pets swim in, or drink, waters experiencing blue-green algae blooms.
- Always take a shower after coming into contact with any surface water (whether or not a blue-green algae bloom appears to be present; surface waters may contain other species of potentially harmful bacteria and viruses).

If you think you are experiencing symptoms related to exposure to blue-green algae (e.g., stomach cramps, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, fever, muscle weakness, difficulty breathing), contact your doctor or the Poison Information Hotline, **(800) 222-1222** right away. If your pet displays symptoms such as seizures, vomiting, or diarrhea after contact with surface water, contact your veterinarian right away.

### What You Can do to Limit Lake Nutrients:

- Maintain native vegetation along shorelines as buffer areas.
- Minimize activities that result in erosion.
- Reduce the amount of fertilizer used on lawns.
- Use only phosphorus-free fertilizer.

## ANNUAL FIREWORKS SHOW

The Wind Lake Firework Association expresses heartfelt gratitude to the community for their generous donations and support at the Wind Lake Firework's Ice Fishing Jamboree on January 27th. As we enter our 7th year, our dedicated committee has worked on a volunteer basis to raise funds for the 2024 fireworks display on Saturday, June 29th at dusk.

To achieve our 2024 goal, we're actively seeking additional funds through community donations and various fundraisers. Keep an eye out for our #SupportTheShow yard signs available in Spring, and stay updated on upcoming events by following us on Wind Lake Fireworks Facebook Page or visiting **windlakefireworks.com**

We're committed to collaborating with local businesses to explore creative fundraising initiatives that not only contribute to our firework funds but also support the local community. We are eager to gain more volunteers for this initiative. If you're passionate about getting involved, reach out to us at **windlakefireworksassociation@gmail.com** or call **(414) 870-6631**. Your participation is crucial in making the 2024 firework show a spectacular success.



Thank you for your continued support!



## GOOSE REMOVAL PROGRAM

Wind Lake has taken part in a goose-removal program in prior years to reduce the number of geese on Wind Lake. This program has been highly effective at keeping the numbers of non-migratory geese on the lake manageable. Excessive numbers of non-migratory geese contribute to water quality problems including

E-coli bacteria and increased phosphorus loadings (which increases plant and algae growth).

We are proceeding as though the roundup will take place. We hope to conduct the goose roundup again in mid-June when the birds are molting.

**Please send in the form below if you have not sent one in previously and want to grant us permission to go onto your property. Please note that your permission will continue until you rescind it.**

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### GEESE ROUNDUP APPROVAL FORM

I authorize representatives from the US Department of Agriculture-Wild Life Services and Wind Lake Management District to access the property listed below for the purposes of goose management.

**I understand that this permission form has no expiration date and remains in effect until I request to be removed from the approved site list.**

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Lake Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature (mandatory): \_\_\_\_\_

**Please drop off or mail form as soon as possible to:**

Norway Town Hall  
Attention: Wind Lake Management District (WLMD)  
6419 Heg Park Road  
Wind Lake, WI 53185

## **WIND LAKE MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (WLMD)**

6419 Heg Park Road  
Wind Lake, WI 53185

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

### **VISIT [WLMD.ORG](http://WLMD.ORG) FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- Meetings, schedules, agendas, and minutes
- Information about who to contact for various activities
- Links to other lake-related sites
- The latest lake depth map of Wind Lake
- Important Notices

### **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:**

Ron Mayer – Chairman	(414) 614-5859
Jeremy Sauld – Secretary	(262) 391-7044
Todd Flunker – Treasurer	(414) 510-5446
Ralph Schopp – Town Representative	(414) 531-6020
Joe Bellante – County Representative	(262) 895-6694
Jim Marks – Commissioner	(414) 810-9526
Mike Bluemel – Commissioner	(262) 895-2502

Commissioner's meetings are usually held the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of every month, with the November and December meeting combined. Meetings begin at 7pm at the Norway Town Hall. All residents are welcome to attend, but please note that meeting dates are subject to change. Always refer to our website for the latest up-to-date information.

### **QUESTIONS?**

Email us at [info@wlmnd.org](mailto:info@wlmnd.org)