WAYNE COUNTY
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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Aquatic Vegetation Mechanical Harvesting Policy

Updated May 2011

Criteria which determines when and where aquatic vegetation is to be harvested includes:

1.) **Climate**: Increased light, high water temperatures and low water levels associated with the harvesting season increase the likelihood of excessive plant growth. Harvesting operations will be delayed if environmental conditions jeopardize the safety of the crew members and equipment.

2.) **Funding**: Securing funds from multiple agencies and municipalities determines the duration of the harvesting season and prioritizes areas to be harvested.

3.) **Plant Species**: Although native plants have the potential to cause congestion of navigable water, the removal of invasive plant species is important to a healthy balanced ecosystem. Areas with excessive non-native plants will receive precedence.

4.) **No-Cut Areas**:

a.) **Native Plants** – These areas have significant populations of beneficial or protected native plants. Native plants are encouraged to spread into areas where invasive plants have been removed. These areas are the most difficult to determine because of constantly changing climate and environmental conditions.

b.) **Machinery Hazards** – These are areas of rocky structure, submerged cribs, ruins and shallow areas where harvesting equipment cannot operate due to potential damage to equipment. These areas include in between and around docks.

c.) **Undeveloped Shoreline** – These are undeveloped areas where constant access is not needed.

d.) **Sensitive Habitat** – These are important fish spawning and juvenile fish cover areas and sanctuaries for various turtle species indentified by the NYS DEC.

The SWCD staff will perform regular reconnaissance surveys in order to evaluate areas and determine when and to what extent mechanical harvesting is appropriate. Mechanical harvesting effectiveness is dependent on access location for the programs shoreline conveyors and dump trucks. The closer the access point, the more effect the harvesting operation can be.