

WAYNE COUNTY



SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

AVC Questions & Answers 2022

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Questions & Answers sheet documents questions that have been asked specifically of the program and answered by the technical staff that collect the data and the crew that are on the water. This sheet is designed to answer specific science based questions that is general knowledge for the community.

March 18th, 2022

Question: What are the specific things that impact selection of harvesting sites and the order the program goes in each year?

Answer: The program has a policy that is geared to address and manage several components of water quality. The policy is reviewed and updated annually to ensure that it still holds true to the mission of mechanically and selectively harvesting areas of in the embayments of Wayne County. The policy is posted after approval at the June Board Meeting for 2022.

The vision of the program is: the management of critical aquatic invasive species, where impact to the environment and potential spread impedes access, uses, and overall water quality; and to address in-flow areas of the tributary streams to promote water circulation and aeration.

May 17, 2022

Q: What will be the biggest struggle moving forward for the “weed harvesting” program?

A: Access, access, and access. Having an offloading site as close as possible to the area being harvested can increase productivity four-fold. Longer travel between offloading and harvesting is a boon on diesel fuel. Good partnership with public and private landowners for both access to the waterfront for off-loading harvesters, and sites for off-loading dump trucks is necessary for keeping this program going for years to come.

May 25, 2022

Q: When does the program start for this year?

A: The program’s first date of operation for 2022 will be June 13th and will start on Sodus Bay at the Town of Sodus boat launch at Margaretta Rd. Harvesting will take place in the areas north of the launch, toward the marinas, and southward to Sills’ Cove area. The District’s website has a calendar that shows a tentative schedule of harvesting locations, and will be updated weekly based on current conditions.

June 10, 2022

Q: What does the term flow mean to the AVC program?

A: 1) Water Circulation- Mechanical harvesting promotes water column circulation throughout the areas where aquatic vegetation is removed. Dense plant growth and surface mats trap nutrients and create stagnant areas. They can also trap heat, raising the temperature of surface water. These situations increase the possibility of Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs, Blue-green algae).

2) Tributary outlet flow- Dense aquatic vegetation at the outlets of creeks act as curtain, abruptly stopping stream flow and trapping nutrients and sediment in a confined area. This creates a new, hyper-fertile substrate that is easily colonized by invasive species. Removal of aquatic vegetation at the creek outfalls allows these areas to act more as a filter by more evenly dispersing incoming nutrients and sediments. Mechanical harvesting also removes nutrients that are in the plant material from the waterbody that would otherwise be recycled back into the bay through decomposition.

June 13th, 2022

Q: What materials does the program focus on?

A: Invasive species- Mechanical harvesting is very efficient for selective removal of certain invasive species, such as water chestnut. By removing the floating rosette of water chestnut before it can disperse its fruit/nut (this can occur between mid-summer through fall), we are preventing future seed beds. Significant water chestnut populations have been located in Sodus Bay (mouth of Second Creek and Ridge Rd. bridge) and Maxwell Bay/Creek. There are small population throughout Sodus Bay, and there have been a few plants spotted in both East and Port Bay.

With invasive species like Curly-leaf Pondweed, Eurasian Milfoil, and Starry Stonewort, mechanical harvesting is more affective at relieving a nuisance biomass problem than controlling the spread. Mechanical harvesting for these species is best performed just prior to peak biomass (Curly-leaf Pondweed = mid-June, Eurasian Milfoil = August, Starry Stonewort = mid- to late-August).

June 14, 2022

Q: Sodus Bay makes up 70% of the waterways in Wayne County. It would be expected that service for the harvesting program would be 70% and we have not seen a single harvester working on the Bay. Weeds are growing fast. When is the program starting?

A: The District's harvesting program will begin on Monday, June 13, 2022. We begin work at this time for two reasons, 1.) We partner with NYSDEC for permitting in the waterways and NYS has an in water work restriction through middle of June; and 2.) Early-season weed growth accelerates once water temperatures reach mid-60s. Generally, we do begin work in non-sensitive nesting and spawning areas for public access to protect the local economy.

June 17, 2022

Q: How does the weed harvester manage with creatures in the water and weeds?

A: The Crew Members are sensitive to creatures and if they see them on the conveyor back them off or pick them up. The full time crew members (3 of them) and 2 part time members

are have long term experience working on the harvesters and addressing fish, turtles and amphibians. They are Conservation and Creature Conscious.

June 22, 2022

Q. Why doesn't the weed harvester clear cut when they first come in an area?

A. The Crew doesn't come into an area and clear cut but works through pathways in the water to allow the creatures time to "move out." It also give them time to assess if there are any new obstructions, what type of weeds are in the area and if there is any Cyanobacterial Blooms beginning so they can notify the office so the District can contact DEC, Lake Associations and do outreach.

June 30, 2022

Q. What can't the weed harvester come to my area?

A. There are many reasons a weed harvester may not work in a specific area.

1. There are certain areas in each bay that are No Cut Zones. Please see the "goal" slides to see your Bay's map.
2. It may be because we are too far away from an off loading access point. We are always looking to partner with new landowners to use a side yard to unload for a day or two. Over the year's we try and get as close to a cove or stretch of land to be able to harvest, unload and harvest, Not harvest, drive, unload, drive, harvest.
3. Other considerations are depth: Loaded harvester needs 3 feet of water.
4. Other considerations are Native Weeds verses Invasive Weeds.

a. If you would like to receive a copy of a FREE Invasive Weed Guidebook to help identify what is in your water. Please call the office at 315.946.7200 Leave your name, number and address and we will mail or drop it off if we are in the area.

July 8, 2022

Q. Why do you need more local access and cannot dump the loads in the center of the Bay in deeper area?

A. The weeds that are collected contain nutrients that will feed the nutrients available in the water column. The nutrients available are what make new weeds grow faster and stronger. Also many of the weed types float, that is what occurs during a break off. They will break off and float to another area, collect and deposit which introduces new weed types to new areas. By removing the weeds (and nutrients) from the bay it reduces the nutrients in the water which mitigates, new weeds, obstructions for boaters, and algal blooms, both natural and bacterial.

The District's program removes a significant amount of nutrient non-point source pollution from the open waters each year to reduce strengthening of invasive species that out compete native species, better flow which increases oxygen in the water for fisheries and other plant/animal neighbors and healthier water quality for all to enjoy.

July 14, 2022

Q. Why is water chestnut such a problem?

A. Water Chestnut (*Trapa natans*)

- Aquatic annual floating plant
- 1 seed can produce up to 20 rosettes
- 1 rosette can produce up to 20 seeds
- The seeds can survive up to 12 years.



Recreational use hampered:

- Dissolved oxygen in the water decreases which affects all other life in the waterbody
- LOTS of organic pollution after death, which provides fertilizer for new plant growth from the fallen seeds.
- Boats/people get tangled up the up to 8 foot root system
- Sports fish populations decline
- Dense mats slow water flow & Water temperatures increase
- Plant mats can block up to 95% of sunlight
- Fish kills & Water fowl deaths due to trying to eat the spiny seedpods
- No local animals or fungus to prey upon/control them
- **This plant will take over an entire area and kill the ability to grow anything else by choking out the oxygen. Can add to Algal Blooms and Cyanobacteria Blooms.**



How YOU can help?

- Hand pulling them when you see them in the water
- Proper disposal off shore by composting or bag and let sit in the sun before disposal
- Cutting the rosettes

July 29, 2022

Q. How do water fountains, bubblers or stirring of the water improve weeds?

A. Water movement or “flow” helps introduce new oxygen concentrations which encourage native weed growth which bring fish populations and other creatures into an area to keep weeds down. Areas with more oxygen tend to be better balanced, less murky and a significantly reduced change for algal blooms.

Invasive species tend to grow in areas where other native species lack key environmental factors like oxygen. Help your wildlife neighbors by turning on some air in-between docks and they will come help you by picnicking in your area.