



Aquatic Vegetative Control aka Weeds Harvesting for 2021

1. What will services for weed harvesting look like in 2021?

On Tuesday, 6/1 the team that decides on locations and times will begin reviewing several things (including current water levels assessed and were bench marked this past week, access, historic weed densities and potential flow opportunities, etc.) to begin to determine a schedule for 2021. The schedule is based on weekly reviews of several considerations.

Our program is restricted to begin harvesting in most waterways until after 6/15 each year due to Fisheries Guidelines for NYS. The program is going to be touch and go as it is a low water, drought year which drives weed growth as well as density. Weeds that only grow-24-36" will be visible because the water is that low in certain areas.

The schedule is posted and updated live on the District's Websites as we maneuver a low water year. <https://waynecountynsoilandwater.org/calendar/>

2. When and where will the crew access the waterfront?

Each embayment is a different ecosystem and has a different management style based on the vegetation and types of fisheries that live there. It is a balance between vegetation control for water flow to mitigate algal bloom and access to deeper water for recreation.

Sodus Bay

In a regular season, Sodus Bay has 9 access points we work out of. This year, it has already determined that 5 of the 9 areas are too shallow to off load weeds to our conveyor. This limits us access at Margareta Boat Launch, Coast Guard Station, South End with private partners, Southeast side with private partners and North LeRoy Island bridge with private partners. The last two weeks, the program has been getting underway to address the Margareta Launch and South shore areas before the water drops any further and there is no potential management for these areas this entire season. The week of 6/21, the Crew was working on the North end to address the western portion of Crescent Beach, sand bar and small areas of north of Grieg Street. Monday, June 28th, the Crew will be North of LeRoy Island Bridge and the Eastern side of Crescent Beach to address some Eurasian Milfoil, Curly Pond Weed and Magnus beds that are creating traps as a second growth.

Port Bay

In a regular season, the crew of 4 team members works out of the North and South Fishing Access Sites and the Bay Front Marina when possible. This year due to the closure of the South Fishing Access Sites for safety improvements the crew will be working out of:

1. The Bay Front Marina
2. Port Bay Marina & Campground
3. North Fishing Access Site

The Harvesters will be arriving at Port Bay just post-Independence Day weekend and will likely be on the Bay for two weeks.

East Bay

The one north end launch at East Bay will be used Monday-Thursday for one week at the end of July post the service of Port Bay. This is being tracked and discussed with the EBIA to determine need as they continue to provide chemical treatments each year due to their ability to close the channel in the fall for water level management.

Blind Sodus Bay

On 6/14, an assessment was completed on Blind Sodus Bay. The single stand of weed, better known as Magnus is an early season growing weed that usually matures at 27" tall. This year several areas around Blind Sodus Bay are lower, thus why it is showing through the bay. The algal feathering on the plant is an indicator of weed die-off. This usually creates a nutrient return to the bay substrate just before the Bay will turn over. While there are stands of weeds and natural algae present, this individual stand of weeds will be dying off in the next two weeks depending on temperature. Once the weeds, mature and break off, they can be pull onto the bank to dry and compost or with a good southern wind they will blow out into the Lake. At this time there is not access for the harvesters to get into Blind Sodus Bay. Future access will be reviewed with the Holiday Harbor property launch. There will not likely be services in 2021.

Maxwell Bay

There will have no services in 2021 to manage the stand of water chestnuts due to water levels and access. Hand-pulling is appreciated. If you have an interest or a need for community service and like to paddle, there is an opportunity here.

3. Why doesn't the program do more?

Wayne County Soil & Water Conservation District is not a Wayne County Department but a government agency that is provided a contract by Wayne County to provide these services. We provide services to over 3250 acres of waterfront across 5 embayments.

Due to funding cuts from budget management during COVID, the program runs Monday – Thursday from 7:30 – 3:00 and a ½ hour each end to travel to and from the work site and *paperwork documentation and a ½ break for lunch.

*If the crew has a breakdown or other mechanical issues there may be maintenance that will have to occur during this working time as well. Also on days of bad weather or wind events that are not safe for the employees, they will be removed from the water.

*The crew documents and tracks weed types, weather conditions, environmental anomalies and other comments for each area of work. We have a mapping system we use to compare this information going back to the 1980's.

4. How do you decide where to go?

The District has a harvesting policy. <https://waynecountynysoilandwater.org/avc-policy/>

As previously indicated, the District relies on several factors when making the decisions for how to address aquatic vegetation control for invasive species. Much of the time, since 2010, we factor in weather patterns and water quality to try and mitigate potential cyanobacteria blooms.

5. What can I do to address my water quality and vegetation issues?

Wayne County waterfronts are fortunate that there embayments are always changing and have a lot more native species which lend to fish food and habitat that invasive species. It is important to know what the differences are to keep a balanced waterbody. Dock structures and boats or watercrafts that are not in regular use impeded water flow and deplete oxygen reintroduction into the water column. A few items that can be done to manage this is:

A. Remove watercraft that are not in regular use either by a lift or out of your slips

B. Hand rake or pull vegetation in your area and let them dry out over 3 days on land and compost them for use on flower beds or reseeding of lawn area.

*Some areas have a muck like bottom as a substrate, periodic floater management can be a big help even if you cannot pull actual growing weeds.

C. Attach bubblers or fountain to your dock. This has a HUGE impact as the additional o2 will bring in the fish, which will then take up residence and eat the vegetation. It also helps prevent floaters from gathering in your docking areas and around boats.