



# SOUTH WASHINGTON WATERSHED DISTRICT

## Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) FAQ

### **Where can I learn more about Eurasian watermilfoil?**

The Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) provides resources on AIS species

Eurasian and Hybrid Watermilfoil - <https://maisrc.umn.edu/watermilfoil>

### **How did Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) get into District Lakes?**

It is unknown how EWM got into each District lake but it is possible that they were introduced by recreational use of the lakes. Shallow productive lakes like those in the District are ideal habitat for aquatic invasive species to thrive and outcompete native species.

### **Is it necessary to apply herbicides to District Lakes?**

Yes. Eurasian watermilfoil has overrun the aquatic ecosystem in several District lakes, reducing recreation and making it difficult for native plants and aquatic life to survive. The goal is to keep abundance in check and allow native aquatic plants to better compete, however, complete eradication of Eurasian watermilfoil is unlikely. Herbicide treatment is the next viable treatment approach.

### **Why herbicide treatment vs harvesting?**

Harvesting can unintentionally cause invasive species to spread by breaking plants up into smaller fragments that can then take root elsewhere in the lake. Due to that concern and the abundance of EWM, herbicide is the only feasible control method. Several studies have shown high effectiveness of herbicide for the control of EWM and the strategy has been successfully used on several lakes in the Twin Cities metro. Hand harvesting is a viable strategy for lakes with small, isolated pockets of watermilfoil and is used where feasible.

### **How is the herbicide applied?**

Herbicides are applied by a licensed contractor to the lake at a low concentration.

- ProcellaCOR, used for slow-moving lakes, is applied at a dosage of approximately 7 parts per billion; the equivalent to 1 ounce in a standard swimming pool. The herbicide is a liquid that is applied to the water surface via boat.
- Fluridone, used for lake wide treatments, is applied to achieve a concentration of 4 parts per billion and maintained for 60 days. The herbicide is applied from a boat over the course of one day. An additional treatment may be needed in order to maintain desired concentration.
- Diquat, used for partial treatments, is applied at a rate of 2 gallons per treated acre. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reviewed, approved and issued a permit to proceed with the application of herbicide.

**When will the treatment happen?**

Treatment will occur in fall 2024 and will continue as needed as long as treatment is proving effective. Complete eradication is unlikely. However, effective treatment will decrease the abundance of the aquatic invasive species and lead to more abundant native plant communities.

**Are herbicides safe?**

When applied at the correct dosage and time of year, the herbicides present no concern to humans or pets. The herbicide targets plants only and has not been shown to have adverse effects on fish, birds, or mammals in the lake, such as muskrats. Monitoring will occur throughout the treatment and the weeks following to maintain safe concentrations and to determine the effectiveness of the treatment. While safe for recreational contact, some herbicides do come with recommendations to limit consumption during treatment. Signage will be placed at any existing lake access points during treatment notifying lake users of those recommended contact restrictions.

**Will further herbicide treatments be needed in the future?**

It is likely that additional herbicide treatments will be needed to further reduce the EWM population so native plants can thrive. SWWD has a seven-year variance with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to perform herbicide treatments for aquatic invasive species, though it will never fully be eradicated from the lakes. SWWD will continue monitoring the aquatic plant community in treated lakes to determine what measures are needed to manage invasive species and support the native plant communities.

**For more information contact:**

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