

2023 Lake Puckaway Aquatic Plant Management Plan Update

October 15, 2023: Lake Puckaway Protective and Rehabilitation District (LPPRD) would like to share the following communication from Ted Johnson with the Wisconsin DNR as an update for progress on the APMP/LMP. Ted has approved sharing of this communication.

The Aim of Sharing this communication is to keep members informed of conversations and collaboration taking place for a lake management plan(s) to be fully executed.

LPPRD remains committed to ensuring an LMPM/LMP approved plan is in place ASAP.

From: Johnson, Ted M – DNR

Sent: Friday, October 6, 2023 3:32 PM

To: Lance Paden; Dustin Esselman; Willy Stalker; John Harter; Madeline Wergin; Jaimes Johnson; Brandon Oberleitner; Monica Gunderson

Cc: Kolasinski, Christopher E – DNR; Hudak, Andrew J – DNR

Subject: RE: 2023 Lake Puckaway APMP/LMP

The aquatic plant management (APM) program is a regulatory program and is responsible for the review and permitting of proposed APM activities. I need to be careful to not be overly prescriptive in what I recommend to the district. With that said, here are some requirements along with general recommendations for both your APM plan and aquatic invasive species (AIS) control grant.

Minimum Requirements

1. Your APM plan and grant application need more specificity regarding what the goals are for herbicide use on Lake Puckaway. Adaptive management principles can still be used, but there should be some stated goals for the next three years.
 - a. Some example goals could be:
 - i. Target the densest EWM stands near shore to provide navigational opportunities to the lake stakeholders.
 - ii. Consider picking a general area to treat in the deepest part of the lake to create a recreational zone for people to potentially use over time to waterski, recreate, etc. Again, you would only treat the densest EWM areas. A recreational zone could be split into different sections with only one section being treated per year.

- iii. Establish clear success versus failure criteria. How will you evaluate the effectiveness of any herbicide treatment? What monitoring methods will be used to evaluate effectiveness? How many years should EWM be controlled for to constitute success?
 - iv. Capacity. If a multi-year treatment plan is the goal, how will it be funded?
2. **Buffalo Lake has 4 harvesters** running on a 14-mile-long lake. Currently they harvest about **284 acres**. The travel distances to unload aquatic plants after being cut is far longer on Buffalo than Puckaway. Consequently, harvesting on Puckaway should be more efficient and thereby more effective. As we've discussed, you likely will need to have 3-4 harvesters to effectively harvest the lanes and potentially top cut some EWM on the lake. Even if the EWM treatments are effective, coontail and other native plants will be present which may make navigation difficult. The SePRO representative said that you would need to implement mechanical harvesting in combination with ProcellaCOR, given the large size of the lake and current extent/density of plant growth.
- a. What is your timeline / plan to initiate an effective harvesting program? How will you acquire at least three harvesters (financial capacity)? How long will it take?
 - i. For example, in the future when people call to complain to me or the board that they can't get around on the lake what are we going to tell them? The plan should provide a timeline such that the public will have some assurance that a plan is in place and that it is actively being worked on etc.

Recommendations

The ruling principle for aquatic plant management is Integrated Pest Management (IPM). Here is the definition of IPM from our grant code.

Taken from NR193.65(1): Integrated pest management is an ecosystem-based management strategy that focuses on long-term suppression of pests or their damage and considers all of the available pest control practices. Integrated pest management projects shall be informed by current, comprehensive information on pest life cycles and the interactions among pests and the environment. A project that employs an integrated pest management strategy shall include more than one management practice.

I recommend not to put all or most financial resources into any one management technique. Herbicide use is one tool, but over time it will not provide enough navigational opportunities to meet the needs of the lake stakeholders. Again, there needs to be BALANCE between harvesting and herbicide use such that reasonable and realistic goals can be met for both management techniques.

A good example of why herbicides cannot provide adequate navigation are the campgrounds on the north side of the lake. They have been losing a lot of money due to fewer boat rentals. Herbicide use may provide some limited navigation relief in about 7-10% of the west end of the lake. How does herbicide use alone allow a boat on the

Northshore to travel all the way to the south shore or the Fox River? How easy will it be to navigate in the herbicide treatment areas if they fill in with native plants (coontail, water celery, elodea, etc.)?

Lastly, if only one harvester is to be used on the lake, we need to be very realistic about our expectations for this practice. I would recommend that you pick an area no bigger than 30-60 acres and focus harvesting efforts within this one area. It would be a better to evaluate what it looks like to harvest one area well versus too large of an area infrequently.