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Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program

Tuesday October 13, 2009

Greetings.

A notice concerning the recent discovery of hydrilla in Damariscotta Lake was sent to some (but apparently not all) of you on September 28 (page 2). Here are some updates on the situation. (For those of you who did not receive the earlier announcement, it is pasted to this message below the dotted line.) Our apologies for any duplication.

Damariscotta Lake Hydrilla Infestation Updates:

- DEP divers have installed benthic barriers on patches of hydrilla that have spread to the cove just outside of the infested lagoon. No tubers have been detected on the plants outside of the lagoon.
- The DEP is currently placing stone riprap across both entrances to the infested lagoon to create a strong physical barrier between the infestation and the rest of the lake.
- This week, DEP will begin the process of manually removing and disposing of the hydrilla in the infested lagoon.
- Roberta Scruggs has written an excellent article on the hydrilla infestation in the recent issue of the LEA Milfoil Update newsletter –To view the article on line please visit http://www.maine-lakes.org/documents/Milfoil%20newsletter%2009_09.pdf
- According to Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association's Alice Phillips, "Volunteers have come out of the woodwork to help survey the lake and help us determine if there are any other infested areas. Roughly 50% of the lake has now been surveyed. We are so appreciative of the help!"
- Forty individuals have answered DLWA's call for help. Members of the DLWA survey team include trained VLMP Invasive Plant Patrollers and others from the Damariscotta Lake area, plus a cadre of certified Plant Patrollers from" away." **To date no additional invasive plants have been observed.**
- This year's survey season is swiftly fading, but we may be lucky and get a few more days of prime survey weather. **WE ARE STILL LOOKING FOR TRAINED PLANT PATROLLERS TO ASSIST WITH THIS SURVEY.** If you think you can help, please contact Alice Phillips at DLWA (549-3836, dlwastaff@roadrunner.com).
- There are other ways you can get involved as well. Is your lake community actively working to prevent the spread of aquatic invaders? Do you have a "well oiled" system in place for detecting aquatic invaders as soon as possible after introduction? If the answer to either of these questions is no, please call the VLMP at 783-7733 or vtmp@mainevtmp.org today. We look forward to working with you!

Thanks again!

Roberta Hill

Program Director, Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program's Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants



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Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program

September 28, 2009

Dear Maine Lake Monitors:

I am writing to inform you of Maine's latest confirmed invasive aquatic plant infestation. Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) has now been confirmed in Damariscotta Lake. Hydrilla, often referred to as the "worst of the worst" invasive aquatic plant threatening aquatic ecosystems worldwide, was discovered in a small cove along the western shore of Damariscotta Lake, by Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association (DLWA) member and VLMP Invasive Plant Patroller, Dick Butterfield. There is no way of knowing at present, how widespread this plant may be in the lake, but a preliminary survey of nearby coves uncovered no additional invasive plants, providing hope that Mr. Butterfield may have detected the pioneer colony.

This is the kind of discovery that all Plant Patrollers train and practice for, but dread the thought of ever actually making. On the good side, this discovery provides clear and concrete evidence of the effectiveness and value of citizen based lake monitoring. Maine's early detection system, largely powered by trained and dedicated volunteers, is saving Maine lakes. Here is a brief summary of how things have unfolded to date:

September 20 – Dick Butterfield gathered his gear, slipped into his kayak and began the task of surveying the shoreline to the north and south of his property on the west side of the lake. At one point, he paddled into a small (0.3 acre) shallow cove, and was instantly alerted to something that "was not right." A dense carpet of plants filled the cove. According to Dick, the growth was so dense it looked "solid enough to walk on." Using the identification keys he received with his Invasive Plant Patrol training, Dick soon came to the realization that he may have come upon one of the invasive plants of concern. He carefully bagged a sample and sent it to the VLMP for confirmation.

September 22 - Dick's plant specimen is received by the VLMP, and its identification is tentatively confirmed.

September 23 - Maine Department of Environmental (DEP) and VLMP staff meet on site with Dick and partners from Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association to conduct a preliminary assessment of the infestation and to collect more samples for a confirmed identification.

September 24 - DEP divers install containment screens across the mouth of the infested cove to prevent hydrilla fragments from migrating into greater Damariscotta Lake. VLMP and DLWA begin to mobilize trained Invasive Plant Patrollers from Damariscotta Lake and elsewhere in the state to begin monitoring nearby coves to determine the scope of hydrilla in the lake.

This is where you come in . . . WE URGENTLY NEED YOUR HELP!! There are not many days left in the season to conduct surveys. Please call VLMP at 783-7733 or vlmp@mainevlmp.org or Alice Phillips at DLWA (549-3836, dlwastaff@roadrunner.com) *today* to learn how you can get involved.

Only one other water body in the state, Pickerel Pond in Limerick, is infested with hydrilla. In total, 31 out of Maine's 5,700 ponds and lakes are known to contain an invasive aquatic plant species.

Since the first Invasive Plant Patrol workshop was offered by the VLMP in 2001, Over 2000 individuals have been trained through the program. Trained IPP volunteers are responsible for the majority of all invasive aquatic plant screening surveys being conducted in the State of Maine. The VLMP's Invasive Plant Patrol Program is funded by boater participation in Maine's Lake and River Sticker Program and private donations.

Thank you all, for keeping your eyes on the plants.

Roberta Hill

Program Director, Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program's Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants