

# Invasive Plant Monitoring and Response

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## Response to Possible Invasive Plant Infestation

### Watchic Lake Association Rapid Response

Activities are led by the chair of the Environmental Committee (2020: Steve Lajoie), and if not available the chair of the Quality Committee. The committee will keep the WLA board apprised of the infestations via email or phone and update as needed (via emails or at board meetings).

If suspected invasive is found its best to review [LSM detailed reporting requirements](#). But in general, and within 48 hours of spotting the suspicious plant, the WLA lead will:

- Note the location (or locations) as accurately as you can.
- Note the date of the observation.
- Take photos the plant. Carefully remove just a small sample, place in water in a white container, include something to show scale (e.g. a penny).
- As soon as suspected, submit the above info to LSM at [stewards@lakestewardsme.org](mailto:stewards@lakestewardsme.org) and [Christine@lakestewardsme.org](mailto:Christine@lakestewardsme.org)
- Also send the info to Nate Whalen at PWD and John McPhredan at DEP

Be prepared to provide DEP and LSM support/access to the lake ASAP.

The WLA lead will then follow Maine DEP's lead on rapid response.

Once the situation is better understood, the WLA will update WLA members via email.

Lake users spotting a suspicious plant should fill in the [Suspicious Plant Reporting form](#) found on our website.

### Maine DEP Invasive Aquatic Species Program

Maine DEP will take the lead in helping address a potential invasive infestation using their Rapid Response program.

- Generally, DEP is informed of the infestation by the Lake Stewards of Maine (who reports all suspicious plants to DEP).
- DEP will come out within a 2-3 days to confirm the identification.
- Assuming it is invasive, DEP will start eradication very quickly
  - DEP divers remove what they can.
  - Eradication is generally DEP divers pulling out the plants.
  - DEP may do this work for 2-3 years IF they think it's helping.
  - As of 2019, there is no charge to the lake association or town.
- If DEP thinks more aggressive long-term management is needed, they essentially hand that back to the lake association and property owners.
- DEP suggests using an OSHA certified invasive management firm (e.g. <http://www.newenglandmilfoil.com/>) or volunteers. Hiring non-OSHA certified firms can be problematic (liability risk during dives).

For more info on the Maine DEP Rapid Response Plan see the link below. It's a long, but very informative.

[https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/invasives/rrp\\_part1final.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/invasives/rrp_part1final.pdf).

### Key Contacts:

- **Christine Guerette and Topher Castenada**, Invasive Species Program at Lakes Stewards of Maine. [Christine@lakestewardsme.org](mailto:Christine@lakestewardsme.org) and [Topher@lakestewardsme.org](mailto:Topher@lakestewardsme.org)
- **John McPhredan**, Biologist in the Invasive Aquatic Species Program at Maine DEP. [John.McPhedran@maine.gov](mailto:John.McPhedran@maine.gov) and (207) 215-9863. Very helpful and knowledgeable.
- **Karen Hahnel**, Invasive Aquatic Species Program at Maine DEP [Karen.A.Hahnel@maine.gov](mailto:Karen.A.Hahnel@maine.gov) and (207) 215-9270
- **Denise Blanchette**, Maine DEP. [denise.l.blanchette@maine.gov](mailto:denise.l.blanchette@maine.gov); 207-215-5040.
- **Nathan Whalen, Water Resource Specialist at the** Portland Water District. [nwhalen@pwd.org](mailto:nwhalen@pwd.org) and (207) 774-5961 Ext. 3338.

More info from Maine DEP here: <https://www.maine.gov/dep/water/lakes/contact.html>

## **WLA Overall Invasive Goals**

- Keep invasive plants out of the lake!
- Very rapidly respond to any invasive species suspected or found.
- Ensure Lake Stewards of Maine (LSM was VLMP) certification
- Engage Watchic Lake property owners – member and non-members alike (but ideally encourage membership).

## **WLA General Approach**

- Ensure programs in place for ongoing monitoring and responding to risks.
- Be prepared to respond quickly to possible invasives. See section below.
- Report on invasive monitoring activity at monthly board meetings and to members via the website and newsletters.
- Stay closely aligned with Lake Stewards of Maine (attend classes, keep certified for IPP).
- Understand and communicate what is normal on the lake to help problems jump out.

## **Ongoing Invasive Reporting Activities**

- Ensure at least four WLA board members are Lake Stewards of Maine certified Invasive Plant Patrollers.
- Do an annual mid-summer inventory of current plants in the lake. WLA board members and volunteers kayak/canoe/swim to half dozen locations to collect and/or photograph plants, then document plants in the lake.
- Submit annual inventory report to LSM.
- Report annual inventory status to WLA members via our website
- Invasive Plant Patrollers should do occasional (monthly) check and report anything suspicious.
- Ongoing lake user education via our website, newsletters, annual meetings, signs, etc.