

EWM Question & Answer #4

Mechanical Harvesting Versus Chemical Treatment: Why Don't We Just Cut The Darn Stuff?



Both chemical treatment and mechanical harvesting have drawbacks, but here's how I see it:

*Owning & operating; leasing or hiring mechanical harvesting equipment is **expensive** because:*

- (1) The equipment is expensive.*
- (2) Labor is expensive.*
- (3) Our infestation sites are widely spread out (i.e. lots of shoreline).*
- (4) Like mowing the grass, harvesting EWM is an ongoing task.*
- (5) The harvested material must be hauled away and disposed.*

But, the bigger reason is effectiveness. Untreated EWM infestation sites expand and the plants get more established.

Harvesting Cuts Off The Top - But What Happens To The Plant?

It Fights Back!

Long term "containment" is the real objective.

Think of it this way: A lawn with dandelions that isn't treated ends up with more and more dandelions. Eventually there is more yellow than green. If the lawn is treated, the dandelions die and the lawn grasses fill in.

EWM that is cut digs in and expands.

EWM that is treated is often replaced with native vegetation.

***Mechanical
Harvesting Makes
Sense.....If You've
Lost The Battle
We Haven't!***

***If Treatment Is So
Good, Why Not Treat
The Whole Lake (or
Whole Bays)?***

Here again, it's a matter of cost and effectiveness. We treated Hunter's Bay when EWM was first discovered, but that's the only part of Bay Lake that is small enough for it to be financially viable and where most of the chemical wouldn't be wasted in deep water.

There are also regulatory restrictions and the simple fact that we don't want to be putting any more chemical into our lake than is absolutely necessary.

So, to summarize:

-Long term containment is the primary objective.

-Although harvesting provides short term relief, the infestation areas expand and the plants become more established.

-BLIA's strategy of targeted and rotating EWM treatment meets the primary objective while being financially affordable; in compliance with regulatory restrictions and minimizing the amount of chemical.

To learn more about EWM, our treatment strategy and how we could lose the fight, visit BayLake.com weekly. The series will last through September. And, please remember to send in your questions to ericksonpaulsue@aol.com.