



December 12, 2013

Dear STOP MILFOIL Donor:

Re: 2013 STOP MILFOIL Progress Report

The purpose of this letter is to give you an update on the progress that was made this year fighting invasive milfoil in Great Meadow Stream and North Bay of Great Pond. But first we want to thank you for your financial support that has made this work possible.

This year, 137 repeat donors and 161 first time donors contributed a total of \$165,676 to the STOP MILFOIL Capital Fund. Thank you for this outstanding response. Because of your generosity, we exceeded our 2013 challenge goal of \$150,000. That means that we will earn the full \$150,000 matching gift grant that's being donated by a private Maine based foundation.

In total, \$315,676 will be deposited in our BLA STOP MILFOIL bank account this year. It will be used exclusively for milfoil mitigation work on Great and Long Ponds. Again, thank you very much for making this all possible.

What Was Actually Accomplished?

2013 was the second year of our 3-year very aggressive STOP MLFOIL action plan. By all measures it was another very successful year. The working partnership between the Belgrade Lakes Association and the Belgrade Conservation Alliance remains very strong, with the BLA raising funds and handling publicity and the BRCA managing the actual fieldwork.

Here are the results of the work that was completed this year:

1. 28,939 Gallons Removed – The divers from New England Milfoil and the 8-member BRCA STOP MIFLOIL crew removed almost 30,000 gallons of invasive milfoil from Great Meadow Stream and North Bay of Great Pond. That's about 60% of the amount removed last year with approximately the same number of work hours and effort. That's very good news. It means that as a result of our aggressive effort in 2012 there was much less milfoil to be removed at the beginning of this growing season. It suggests that we've turned the corner in this fight and that the infestation is being pushed back.

2. 90% Success – A year-end assessment of the infestation area was conducted on October 9, 2013, by Toni Pied, BRCA Milfoil Program Director, and John McPhedran, Maine Department of Environmental Protection Aquatic Species Director. They concluded that 90% of the invasive milfoil plants had again been removed from the infestation area this year. That should mean an even smaller infestation and more progress next year.

3. No New Outbreaks – Two members of the BRCA STOP MILFOIL crew spent the entire summer surveying Great Pond and Long Pond for new milfoil outbreaks. The good news is that didn't find any! At the end of the 2012 season invasive milfoil was found growing in three tributaries that flow into the north end of Great Pond. Those areas were repeatedly surveyed this summer with very positive results. After several searches no invasive milfoil was found at two of the sites, Rome Trout Stream and Swann's Brook. A few small plants were found in Robbins Mill Stream. They were repeatedly pulled and the area was covered with a benthic barrier.

4. Stream Closure – Great Meadow Stream, including the mouth of the stream in North Bay, was closed to all watercraft this year to provide a safer work site and to reduce plant fragmentation and the risk of spreading the infestation to other parts of the lake and into Long Pond. The Maine Warden Service patrolled the area on weekends and holidays to enforce the closure and help educate boaters about the milfoil infestation.

5. Adopt-A-Shoreline – Seventeen road associations on Great and Long Pond signed up for the Adopt-A-Shoreline program. A total of 121 individuals received plant identification training and are helping search for new outbreaks of invasive milfoil along 11 miles of shoreline that have been officially adopted to date.

6. Dock-to-Dock – Members of the BRCA STOP MILFOIL team made personal visits to 124 camps on Great Pond to talk about the milfoil infestation, report progress, answer questions and solicit donations.

7. Public Support – The strong STOP MILFOIL public awareness and education campaign continued in full force in 2013. And it appears to be working. In response to a survey sent out last February by the Town of Belgrade, as part of its Comprehensive Planning project, 85% of the respondents listed the lakes as Belgrade's most important asset and 82% said the Town of Belgrade should take more aggressive action to control milfoil on the lakes. In a written survey conducted by the Belgrade Lakes Association last March, the invasive milfoil in Great Pond was cited as by far the most critical issue facing the association, with 99% of the 204 respondents rating it "extremely" or "very" important.

What's the Outlook for the Future?

Our battle with invasive milfoil in Great Pond is far from over. In fact, it may never be fully eradicated. While we are making progress and may have turned the corner on pushing it back, invasive milfoil is a long-term problem that will require an ongoing mitigation and control effort and sustainable funding. But based on our success the last two years, we are more confident than ever that it can be managed so that it does not overrun our lakes and destroy our community.

The goal of the STOP MILFOIL Action Plan remains unchanged – keep it from spreading and taking over our lakes.

With this goal in mind, we will implement another very aggressive field action plan in 2014. New England Milfoil will be brought back and their divers will again be physically removing the plants from the infestation area along with the BRCA team.

We have already met with the commissioners of the Maine Departments of Environmental Protection and Inland Fish and Wildlife and they have agreed to keep Great Meadow Stream closed to all watercraft again next year. The wardens will be back out on the lake enforcing the closure.

This winter we are planning to build our own DASH boat (Diver Assisted Suction Harvester) to make the removal work for the BRCA team much faster and more efficient. This will also provide them with the equipment and experience they will need to manage and control the milfoil on a more cost effective basis for the long haul.

Finally, recognizing that public vigilance is the long-term key to detection of new outbreaks, the Adopt-A-Shoreline program will be expanded in 2014. If you are interested in joining its ranks, please call BRCA Milfoil Program Director Toni Pied at 207 215-2685.

Our lakes are the heart of our community. They are loved and cherished by all. And in the end, it's our responsibility to protect and preserve them for the future generations. That's our job right now and part of the legacy that we'll leave behind.

This is a fight we can win. Thanks to your ongoing support, this is a fight we will win.

With great appreciation,

Your STOP MILFOIL Task Force:

Charlie Baeder, Executive Director, Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance

Polly Beatie, Immediate Past President, Belgrade Lakes Association

Mel Croft, President, Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance

Pat Donahue, Belgrade Lakes Association

Adam Gardner, Belgrade Lakes Association

Mark Heuberger, STOP MILFOIL Task Force Co-Chair, Belgrade Lakes Association

Megan Loubier, President, Belgrade Lakes Region Business Group

Maureen Maslak, Belgrade Lakes Association

Lynn Matson, STOP MILFOIL Task Force Co-Chair, Belgrade Lakes Association

Phil Mulville, Belgrade Lakes Association

Dr. Phillip Nyhus, Colby College

Toni Pied, Milfoil Program Director, Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance.

Dr. Bruce Rueger, Colby College

Maggie Shannon, LakeSmart Director, Maine Lakes Society

Kathi Wall, Program Director, Maine Lakes Resource Center