

MILFOIL IN GREAT POND ... THE ONGOING BATTLE

by Lynn Matson

This season marks the fourth year in our aggressive fight against invasive milfoil in Great Meadow Stream and North Bay of Great Pond. While great progress has been made, much work is yet to be done.

Last year 12,900 gallons of invasive milfoil were removed from the stream and North Bay. That's 55% less than was removed in 2013 and 73% less than was pulled out in 2012. It means that the very aggressive action that we've taken over the last three years has significantly reduced the size of the infestation.

But we can't stop now or all the headway we've made against this fast growing invader will be lost.

Our 2015 STOP MILFOIL Action Plan again calls for removing 90% of the remaining invasive plants. This will make it easier to control in the future and help reduce the risk of it spreading to other parts of the lake and into Long Pond.

The BRCA STOP MILFOIL team will use their DASH boat (Diver Assisted Suction Harvester), which was first put into service last year, to do most of the plant removal work. We'll also contract with New England Milfoil to remove plants for 2 weeks in early June, 1 week in July and 2 weeks in September.

As a result of finding scattered invasive milfoil plants growing in North Bay outside the original infestation area, we'll significantly increase our survey work this season. Scuba divers will be pulled behind slow moving boats in grid patterns to search the entire bay area.

We'll also conduct nighttime surveys using a boat equipped with floodlights. This technique will allow us to cover large areas more quickly and means that more sections of the Great Pond and Long Pond can be surveyed more often.

Great Meadow Stream, below the Route 225 bridge and out to the "Area Closed" buoys in North Bay, will be closed to all motorized watercraft again this year. Note that this area will be open to non-motorized watercraft, like kayaks and canoes.

The Adopt-A-Shoreline program will be expanded. In 2014, volunteers searched 23 miles of Great Pond and Long Pond shoreline for new outbreaks. If you are interested in participating, please call Toni Pied, BRCA Milfoil Program Director, at 207 215-2685. Thank you.



The Dash boat. Photo courtesy of Dr. Alex Wall



Prevention is the best way to control the spread of milfoil. Check your boat and support our courtesy boat inspectors.

It should be no surprise that all this plant removal and survey work is expensive. Our 2015 fund raising goal is \$100,000. In March voters in Belgrade approved \$20,000 for the STOP MILFOIL Capital Campaign and voters in Rome approved \$10,000. We'll reach out to private donors to raise the additional \$70,000.

If you'd like to contribute, please send a check made out to "BLA – STOP MILFOIL" to BLA, PO Box 551, Belgrade Lakes, Maine 04918. Or make a contribution at www.belgradelakesassociation.org. Every dollar donated will go into a dedicated STOP MILFOIL bank account and be used only for fighting milfoil on Great Pond to keep it from spreading. Thank you.

The battle against invasive milfoil on Great Pond is going well. The community has really responded to the threat.

We're beating it back. It's a battle we can win. With your ongoing support, it's a battle we will win.

Thank you for your concern, your vigilance and your financial contributions. Be sure to inspect your watercraft, trailers, boating and fishing gear this summer. Prevention is still the best way to stop new infestations from getting started.