

The MLLA Environmental Committee and Board of Directors held Street Meetings in August to provide Riparians with information about the aquatic invasive weed issues facing our lakes and about establishing a Lake Improvement Board to be able to continue to manage the quality of our lakes. For those who were not able to attend one of these meetings, the following is a summary of the information presented.

- Overall status of our lakes
  - We have good water quality right now: It is clear and supports fish and aquatic plants.
  - But we do have invasive species and they are increasing.
    - Invasive species are plants that are not native to this area, overtake native vegetation and have no natural controls.
    - We have aquatic (submersed) invasive plants: Eurasian Milfoil and Starry Stonewort
    - We have emergent (at the edge of the water) invasive plants: Flowering Rush, Purple Loosestrife, Phragmites
  - The focus of the Street Meetings is on Eurasian Milfoil and Starry Stonewort
    - In 2010, Dr. Fusilier's lake study\* identified Starry Stonewort in only 2 locations in Maceday; none observed in Lotus
    - In 2015, our Lake Study\* by Restorative Lake Sciences (RLS) identified 10.5 acres of Eurasian Milfoil and 15 acres of Starry Stonewort
    - In 2016, our Exotic Aquatic Plant Watch (EAPW a volunteer study part of Cooperative Lakes Management Program CLMP) found 19 of 23 sites that have Starry Stonewort up from 14 in 2015. In Lotus Lake all sites sampled found Starry Stonewort.
- If nothing is done about the Starry Stonewort, we could see these impacts:
  - Bays and canals filled with Starry Stonewort and little else (fish, amphibians, native aquatic plants, people),
  - It can grow in deep darker water so it can and likely will spread to deeper parts of our lakes,
  - If/when it "crashes" it can lead to blue green algae (which is toxic),
  - Limits to watercraft access (especially in canals and shallow bays),
  - Reduction in fish spawning habitat & fishing,
  - Reduction in the quality of Maceday and Lotus Lakes,
  - Decreased property values.
- What can we do? Board and Environmental Committee members have researched options and attended conferences.
  - There are no cures available yet but we need to decrease and control the Starry Stonewort.
  - Current research is in process for solutions: herbicides that target only Starry Stonewort, peroxide-based treatments, benthic mats, harvesting, Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting, dredging, Laminar Flow Aeration and Bioaugmentation.

- Cost and effectiveness must be evaluated for any solution.
- Procrastination will be COSTLY.
- MLLA cannot effectively deal with these aquatic invasive plants without funds.
  - The RLS study explained several of the possible treatments currently known. They provided an estimate for the lowest cost option in 2016 (\$32k) and as the invasives increase it will go up every year we do nothing.
  - MLLA does not receive enough income from membership dues: \$45/year, 55% membership=\$10k.
  - The Board and Environmental Committee investigated several options and are recommending establishing a Lake Improvement Board.
    - “Improvement Boards are formal local government boards authorized by PA 451 of 1994, Part 308. The board's membership includes: a county commissioner, two township representatives, the county drain commissioner, and a citizen property owner. A board's project authority is fairly broad, and it has the authority to fund a project through creation of a special assessment tax. A project may be initiated by the local governmental board by resolution or in response to a petition from 2/3 of the freeholders owning land abutting the lake. Once formed the lake improvement board must retain a registered professional engineer to provide a feasibility report with project recommendations, an estimate of cost and a proposed assessment district to pay for the project. The Lake Board holds two public hearings, one to determine if the community supports the project and a second to determine the appropriateness of the special assessment district. If approved by the community the Lake Board must advertise for bids and sign contracts to complete the project.” (From “Lake Management in Michigan with a Lake Improvement Board,” September 2012 by Michigan Chapter North American Lake Management Society).
    - Currently there are 52 Lake Improvement Boards in Oakland County and more are in process of being set up. 12 of these are in Waterford and Independence Townships.

Many people signed the petition at the Street Meetings. If you did not attend a meeting and are ready to sign, please contact the MLLA Board of Directors or your Street Representative.

If you would like more information about any of this information please contact Marilyn Merit, Robin Erkfritz or the MLLA Board of Directors.