

Weed Harvesting Program

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Aquatic Plants: Most of us call them weeds. "You got weeds by your place, we sure do. Especially if the wind is just right after a busy boating weekend or if that harvesting machine has been around." You can hear that bit of conversation in several places around Lauderdale from the middle of June to the end of September, because it's true we have weeds in Lauderdale.

There have always been weeds in Lauderdale, long before there were fish or people to who came to catch them. The weeds in the lake do the same for the lake as the vegetation on land does. Vegetation creates the air that we breathe and the weeds do the same in the lake. Vegetation on land is what we eat or is food for animals we eat. It's the same in the lake; vegetation is the basis for the life in the lake so we want the weeds in the lake. We don't want a dead lake. If it were dead, we'd have to add chlorine to it like a swimming pool to keep bad things from growing in it. That's the longish version of saying weeds are good.

The weed-harvesting program is not intended to get rid of all the weeds, just to keep the Eurasian Milfoil (EM), a non-native invasive weed that is crowding out our native plants, under control. Our worst infestations of the EM are in the Sterlingworth pond and DonJean Bay. So during the summer you will see the harvester in these two areas more than anywhere else. There are other areas that also have Milfoil and we harvest in those areas also. But we don't harvest every inch of weed bed on the lake.

We have vast areas of plants that grow as far down as 25 feet below the surface. The tops of these plants never reach the surface. The experienced fishermen know where these areas are. Some plants grow in 10-12 feet of water and sometimes reach within propeller depth of the surface. As the boats get bigger propeller depth gets deeper and that's why we see more weeds on Monday morning along the leeward shores.

There is a new company that is willing to help. **Turtle Cove Services 262/742-3453** will come and take your weeds away from your shoreline, or if you take them out of the Lake and want them hauled, they can do that. They also take grass clippings. Give 'em a try.

That's the long version of "we harvest weeds but we don't pick up weeds along the shore." In fact our DNR permit says we can only cut and pick up plants out side the dock line.

The same crew is back from last year and you can expect as good or better service that we gave you last year. In fact they have invented an addition to the harvesting equipment to help in picking up the floaters caused by the boat and those left over after the cutting by the harvester. The crew works hard to keep the Lakes in great shape for all of us. Give them a wave when you see them out there.