

Invasive Species – Questions and Answers

Otter Lake Municipal Office 819-453-7049

E-Mail: otter-lake@mrcpontiac.qc.ca

1) What are the impacts of invasive species in our lakes?

Invasive species are plants, animals and organisms, not native to the area, that harm the area where they are introduced. If decisive actions are not taken to prevent/control the spread of invasive species the consequences can be dire. For example:

- The activities we all enjoy such as fishing, boating and swimming will be adversely impacted
- Waterfront property values decline. This results in a higher property tax mill rate for everyone.
- Tourism declines which hurts local businesses.

In summary, almost everyone is adversely impacted. We must do whatever we can to prevent & control the spread of invasive species in our lakes.

2) Why were Farm Lake and Petite Lac Cayamant checked by the Biologist for Eurasian Milfoil?

In 2023 a councillor attended a conference on invasive species. The information provided identified that Eurasian Milfoil might be present in Farm Lake and Petit lac Cayamant. The municipality hired a Biologist to check both lakes. In November 2023 the Municipality received the Biologist report which confirmed that Eurasian Milfoil was present in the two lakes.

3) How does Eurasian Milfoil spread?

Eurasian Milfoil is a very aggressive growing perennial plant that spreads 3 ways 1) roots sprout multiple new shoots 2) each piece of the plant can become a new plant 3) seeds from the plants top flower develop into new plants. The plant can completely cover an area such that no water is visible. There are parts of lakes within 100 KM where people can no longer boat or swim. Also the fish die because of a lack of oxygen in the water.

A common way the plant spreads is when boats drive through an infected area & the motor chops it into pieces. Each piece then floats to another part of the lake and becomes a new plant.

4) How do you slow the spread of Eurasian Milfoil?

Once lakes are infected by invasive species they can never be completely removed. The most common ways to control the spread are:

- A. Place Buoys around the infected areas so boats do not drive through
- B. Hire Divers to pull out the plants.

This requires a permit from the Minister of Environment and is very expensive

- C. Place a jute tarp over the infected area & suffocate the Eurasian Milfoil.

This requires a permit from the Minister of Environment and is very expensive.

5) Why was a gate placed at Johnston’s public boat launch on Farm Lake

The biologist confirmed that 80% of the area at the Johnston’s public boat launch was covered with Eurasian milfoil. She recommended the best way to prevent the spread was by limiting boat traffic through the milfoil.

Also the stream that runs from Farm Lake to Hughes Lake, originates at the Johnston boat launch area. Limiting the boat traffic in the area will limit the spread of Eurasian Milfoil into Hughes Lake.

The limited access at the Farm Lake boat launch is a temporary measure until permission can be obtained from the Minister of Environment to install jute tarps & suffocate the milfoil in the launch area. It is expected to take 2-3 years to obtain the permits and install the tarps.

6) When can people launch their boat at the Johnston’s public boat launch on Farm Lake?

All taxpayers of the Municipality of Otter Lake are allowed to use the boat launch during the following hours:

May, June

Friday	4 PM - 8 PM
Saturday	9 AM - 12 PM, 4 PM - 7 PM
Sunday	9 AM - 12 PM, 4 PM - 7 PM

Additional hours

Monday, May 20	9 AM - 12 PM, 4 PM - 7 PM
Monday, June 24	9 AM - 12 PM, 4 PM - 7 PM
Monday July 1	9 AM - 12 PM, 4 PM - 7 PM

Outside these hours taxpayers can contact the Municipal Office at 819-453-7049 to arrange for the gate to be opened between the hours of 7 AM and 4 PM.

Taxpayers must present their boat wash card and a boat wash ticket to prove their boat was just washed.

Boaters are asked to respect the buoys that will be placed in the channel leading into the lake to minimize the spread of Eurasian Milfoil.

The Municipality will also monitor the milfoil levels in the channel to determine if alternate actions are required.

7) How will the milfoil within Farm Lake & Petit Lac Cayamant be limited from spreading?

The Municipality will follow the recommended practice of installing buoys around the infected areas and informing boaters to stay away from these areas. Additionally, the hiring of divers to pull the invasive plants will be investigated.

8) Why are gates not automatically placed at boat launches on all lakes

The Municipality does not own the land and does not have the authority to install gates at the boat launches of other lakes. Permission must be obtained from the landowners which include the MRC, the Quebec Gov't and private owners.

9) How is boat washing enforced at the lakes?

A designated person makes random inspections of boat launches & issues tickets to vehicles without a boat wash ticket.

Everyone who owns property around the lakes also should ensure no one launches watercraft from their properties without a boat wash ticket.

Alert the Municipality if you are aware of someone not following the mandatory boat washing By-law 02-09-2020.

10) When will other lakes in the Municipality of Otter Lake be checked for Eurasian Milfoil?

A Biologist has been hired to inspect the following lakes: Hughes, Little Hughes, Leslie, Clark, McCuaig and Otter Lake. The inspections will occur in the late summer of 2024 when Eurasian Milfoil is at or near the surface of the water.

If you are aware of Eurasian Milfoil areas on lakes in the Otter Lake Municipality, please let the Municipal office know.

11) What other invasive species are in the area that we need to be concerned about?

Zebra Mussels are in the Ottawa River including nearby Pontiac Municipalities. They also make the lakes non-swimmable and kill the fish population.

Zebra Mussels stick like glue to the bottom of boats and can be easily carried from lake to lake. The only way to prevent the spread is by thoroughly washing boats & trailers with high pressure hot water. The hot water is necessary to kill the zebra mussel eggs not completely washed off with the high pressure.