

Report to WLLID 2018 AGM, 2018 Apr 26

Plant Growth in Wasa Lake

The health of any body of water depends on many factors. Water quality in Wasa Lake continues to be very good. Pollution levels are generally low and temperature and turbidity levels remain well within acceptable levels. Factors that contribute to the health of the lake include the amount and variety of life forms present. However, presumed excessive plant growth can inhibit a number of recreational activities such as swimming and power boating, to name just two. Plant growth is increased by warm dry summer weather which tends to increase the water temperature, thus promoting growth. Coupled with an increase of nutrients due often to high water levels in the spring (which tends to flood septic systems) and the leaching of lawn fertilizers into the lake the level of plant growth can become a concern to residents and other property owners.

With that in mind the WLLID has been developing some strategies in order to manage the level of plant growth in an attempt to improve the overall experience for Wasa patrons. During the hot dry summer of 2014 increased plant growth was observed in a number of locations. This growth was subsequently identified as Native milfoil, not the invasive European strain. Measures were taken in an attempt to manage the growth but such measures quickly proved futile. Council then decided to try to determine the extent of the growth by taking an aerial survey (by use of a drone) of the growth at the end of the summer and subsequently at the beginning of the following spring. The fall survey was completed in 2017 October and the follow up this spring will be completed shortly. This should give us an idea of the scope of the growth during the summer and the subsequent die off over the winter. Based on that information approaches can be adopted in order to better manage plant growth.

A campaign has been introduced to encourage residents and lake users to assist in the management of plants. With the cooperation of the RDEK and Parks Dep't, some measures have been undertaken. Signs alerting boaters and others of the location and amount of plant growth will be posted at boat launch locations; brochures geared to both residents and recreational patrons outlining ways to reduce the amount and impact of plant growth have been prepared for distribution.

While a lake requires both plants and animals to remain healthy, excessive plant growth can be a deterrent to many activities users may wish to undertake. A balance between lake patrons needs and lake health is required. This balanced can be achieved with understanding and effort..