



September 9, 2024

To the property owners of the Lake Echo/Fourteen Island Lake area,

Subject: Important Information Meeting – Eurasian Watermilfoil

Greetings to all residents,

You have probably heard that our lake is affected by the presence of Eurasian watermilfoil, an invasive exotic plant whose spread was observed two years ago by the Lake Echo/Fourteen Island Lake Residents' Association (ARLEQ).

While not toxic, this plant can proliferate on the surface if left uncontrolled, and due to its density, can hinder (or even prevent) swimming, boating, and other recreational activities. Needless to say, if this were to happen, the value of our properties would be adversely impacted. We are not alone in facing this problem. In Quebec, about 200 lakes are invaded by Eurasian watermilfoil. Around 30 of them have implemented tarp covering projects with burlap or synthetic fabrics to slow down its spread. In about 20 lakes, the plants are also being removed manually.

Considered Solutions

ARLEQ has reviewed the two control measures currently used in Quebec, elsewhere in Canada, and the United States. The first is the manual removal and covering the plants with a tarp, and the second is the use of herbicides. We have chosen manual removal and tarp covering for reasons that will be explained at the meeting mentioned below.

Ongoing Work

Since 2022, ARLEQ has been working to map and attempt to control the Eurasian watermilfoil. To do this, an invasive species control firm (Fyto Inc.) was hired, and work has been carried out during the summers of 2023 and 2024. These efforts involved manually removing isolated plants and covering dense patches. Follow-ups were conducted in fall 2023 and during summer 2024, which showed both progress and the continued spread of the invasion, highlighting the urgency to implement a more comprehensive long-term control program.

Proposed Three-Year Program

To tackle the problem, ARLEQ, in collaboration with Fyto, has developed a three-year intervention program spanning 2025 to 2027. This program involves significant work in 2025 (to give a so-called "push" against the spread) and smaller-scale work in the following years. All of this work must, of course, be authorized by the appropriate municipal and provincial authorities.

Project Financing

The work done so far has been funded through various grants (municipal and provincial) and a fundraising campaign among residents. This funding method required significant effort from ARLEQ and is no longer sufficient. While we will continue applying for government grants, we must now implement a financing method that will allow us to achieve the desired results. To this end, a special assessment program has been developed in collaboration with the municipalities of St-Hippolyte and Prévost. This financing consists of implementing a special sector assessment, which would be collected by the municipalities during the years 2025 to 2027. The duration of the assessment corresponds to the work period outlined in the plan submitted by Fyto. The proposed assessment amounts are \$275 for waterfront property owners (including island residents) and \$135 for property owners residing across the street from the lake.

Survey by the Municipalities of St-Hippolyte and Prévost

Before implementing this special assessment, the municipalities must consult you via a survey. The question is simple: Do you accept this special assessment, which is to be dedicated exclusively to combating Eurasian watermilfoil in the lake?

According to the rules governing such surveys, a minimum participation rate of 50% is required. Additionally, a positive response must be received from at least 60% of respondents.

Information Meeting

To provide you with more details and to enable you to vote knowledgeably in the survey, ARLEQ invites you to an information meeting to be held on September 21, 2024, at 2:00 p.m. at the Roger Cabana Center (2060, ch. des Hauteurs, Saint-Hippolyte). During this meeting, representatives from ARLEQ, Fyto, and the two municipalities will present the project as a whole, as well as the workings of the financing program. They will also be available to answer your questions.

We look forward to seeing many of you at the information meeting and thank you for your attention to this project.



Tom Poitras

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