

SOSLA EWM Comprehensive Update September 2024

The discovery of Eurasian Water Milfoil (EWM) in Stone Lake in the summer of 2023 prompted the Shore Owners of Stone Lake Association (SOSLA) to begin a comprehensive effort to effectively confront this non-native invasive plant. The Town of Stone Lake (Town) is partnering with SOSLA to control EWM. Thanks to our generous donors and volunteers!

The following report summarizes the steps taken by SOSLA from the discovery of EWM, actions taken to date and a look forward to 2025 and beyond.



Eurasian Water Milfoil chokes a lake in eastern Minnesota.

2023

- July 25-Bill Hartz reports the finding of a single suspicious plant off his south shoreline. It is confirmed by the DNR as EWM on July 29.
- July 30-SOSLA Board of Directors forms a EWM committee to study and address the issue.
- August 12- Melissa Sunderland reports the sighting of EWM on the northeast shore-adjacent to the railroad tracks.
- SOSLA receives DNR approval to mark the EWM area with buoys, purchases three DNR approved buoys and employs them on the northeast shoreline of the lake with signage

requesting that boaters avoid the area. New signage is posted at the boat launch requesting that boaters avoid



- SOSLA contracts with Matt Berg-a plant biologist- to conduct a survey of Big Stone, Little Stone and Avery Pond designed to confirm areas of EWM found by SOSLA members. Berg completes his report confirming a large patch of EWM on the northeast shoreline, and also finds and removes a small area on the northern end of Little Stone. A single plant was identified and removed on the west shoreline. None were found in Avery.

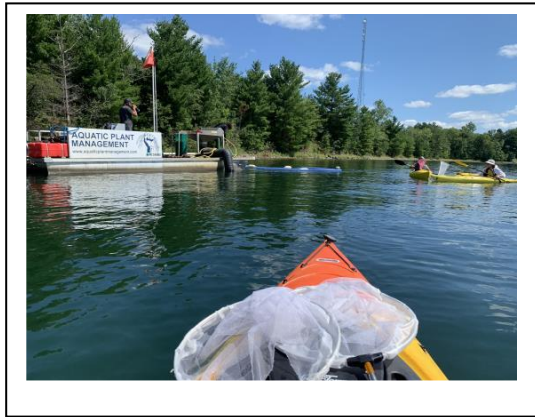
- SOSLA contracts with Aquatic Plant Management (APM), a DNR approved service provider based in Minoqua, Wisconsin, to remove EWM. APM conducts one day of hand pulling (August 28) and one day (September 14) of Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH) resulting in significant removal of EWM(more than 600 pounds) along the northeast shore. Numerous SOSLA members volunteer and collect fragments during the removal.



- SOSLA in conjunction with the Town of Stone Lake Board of Supervisors submits an Early Detection and Response Grant application to the Wisconsin DNR forecasting \$44,000 in projected costs for 2023, 2024 and 2025 to address the EWM issue. The DNR approves the grant application and commits to funding \$25,000 to the project with the requirement that SOSLA funds the additional \$19,000 through cash/ volunteer hours contributed. The grant is designed to cover costs associated with EWM removal, education and planning.
- The SOSLA Board appoints an AIS Fund Raising Committee to begin a campaign to add to the AIS Contingency Fund that SOSLA had established several years ago and will be required to address the ongoing EWM removal and control effort. The AIS Contingency Fund was instrumental in enabling the SOSLA board to take immediate and decisive action in 2023 when EWM was first discovered and prior to the DNR agreeing to cover a portion of the cost.

2024

- The AIS Fund Raising Committee reports that over \$50,000 is committed to the AIS Contingency Fund by SOSLA members and local businesses and organizations – nearly 70 donors in all!
- In the Spring, SOSLA/Town of Stone Lake contracts with Matt Berg to conduct a Point- Intercept Plant Survey in Fall 2024. The DNR requires the survey for future grant applications. It is designed to provide a comprehensive survey of all plant life in Stone Lake (good, bad, native and non native).
- In the Spring, SOSLA/Town of Stone Lake contracts with Sara Hatleli, Aquatic Plant Management Services LLC, to create an Aquatic Plant Management Plan. This planning exercise is also required for future grants and has several facets. They include a public planning meeting (to be held on May 17,2025) open to the public to review the findings of the Point Intercept Plan Survey, and identify and develop broad goals for the management of aquatic plant management moving forward from 2025-2030. Upon finalization in 2025, the plan will be approved by SOSLA and the Town Board of Stone Lake and submitted to the DNR for review and approval.
- The DNR approves a permit to place warning buoys along the northeast shoreline. Buoys are again set out along this area adjacent to the railroad tracks.
- Additional signage is placed at the landing to remind boaters of the Washburn County Ordinance requiring all boats entering the lake are required to use the decontamination station.
- In mid May shore owners report areas of EWM remain along the northeast shoreline.
- APM returns to Stone Lake in early July and conducts one day of DASH on July 8. Bad weather somewhat hampers the effort however a large amount of EWM along the northeast shoreline is successfully removed. APM recommends that they return to complete the removal. SOSLA members volunteer and collect fragments during the DASH procedure.
- Matt Berg completes the Point -Intercept Plant Survey in late July, earlier than originally scheduled. Berg confirms both the EWM area on the northeast shore line and on the north shoreline of Little Stone. Berg also states that likely due to the mild winter and early ice out plant growth (good and bad) in many area lakes has been much more extensive this summer than in past years.
- Meanwhile, an “army” of SOSLA members begins regularly inspecting the shoreline around the lake, identifying a small number of mostly single plants and following proper removal technique, removing those plants they observe. Special thanks to Nancy and Paul Andraschko and Ann and Tim Guhl for your work!



- APM returns to Stone Lake in early August and conducts four days of DASH removal (August 5-8) covering the northeast shoreline, a small area in the direction of the channel into Little Stone and a small area just southeast of the boat launch. They report that they believe the effort successfully removed the EWM located on the northeast shoreline. SOSLA members again volunteer and collect fragments.

- Nancy Andraschko reports some EWM still remains in this area but the amount is significantly reduced.
- In late August Rolf Thompson, CJ Jacobson Mary Grau and Allan Rosenwald remove EWM located in shallow water on the north end of Little Stone by hand.



2025 Plans

- An Aquatic Plant Management Plan prepared and submitted to the DNR by Sara Hatleli. Its approval is a prerequisite for future AIS Control grant. This process includes conducting two public meetings. The first is the Public Planning Meeting on May 17, 2025, 10:00-noon at a Stone Lake location to be determined. SOSLA members are encouraged to attend. It will provide SOSLA with guidance on how to effectively proceed with a goal of controlling the spread of EWM and ultimately eradicating EWM.
- EWM removal (hand pulling and DASH) will be scheduled as needed.
- A follow-on grant application will be submitted to the DNR to cover any anticipated expenditures in 2026 and beyond. These grants are oversubscribed and very competitive.

Summary

The SOSLA Board of Directors, the EWM Committee and the AIS Fund Raising Committee working closely with the Town Board of Stone Lake, the DNR, professional consultants and our members have been working diligently to address the presence of EWM in Stone Lake.

With the support of our membership we were able to move quickly in 2023 when EWM was first observed and initiate the effort to remove and control the spread of EWM in our lake. After consulting with other lake associations and professionals we are learning that in all likelihood, complete eradication of EWM is difficult, if not impossible. However control of EWM is effective in minimizing the impact to lake quality. Shore owners continuing to work together as we have already demonstrated will improve our chances of effectively meeting this challenge.

SOSLA will continue to provide periodic updates on this issue. And we encourage you to raise any questions or concerns that you have. Thanks for your continued support.

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