

CENTER POND WEED PROJECT

Center Pond is a 125 acre Great Pond with public access at Becket's Town Beach. The Center Pond Weed Project (CPWP) is an independent grassroots non-profit. Mercedes Gallagher is the director. Contact: centerpondweedproject@yahoo.com

Aquatic Invasive Weeds

Eurasian WaterMilfoil, was first seen in Center Pond in the mid-1990's, and confirmed by an Aquatic Control Technology (ACT) survey in the fall of 1999. By that time the milfoil had spread throughout the littoral zone of most of the lake.

Chemical Treatments all with diquat (Reward) and performed by ACT: June 2000 – 62.5 acres; June 2004 - 8 ½ acres; June 2008 – 1.45 acres.

Curly-leaf Pondweed was found in the lake during the summer of 2002.

Hand-Pulling: The CPWP started hand-pulling with volunteer scuba divers in the summer of 2002, two years after the initial treatment when the milfoil had begun to re-grow. In 2003 we opened a bank account, received a permit from the Conservation Commission (an RDA), and did a press release calling for volunteers. This Project continued all-volunteer until October 31, 2004, when we began hiring our highly experienced dry suit divers in the early and late cold water seasons. During the summer season the project continues to train volunteer scuba divers, and relies upon volunteer skimmers and director all season. We have developed a method of foot-pulling in areas that are shallow enough to stand, which is done by volunteers.

Results - Eurasian WaterMilfoil: Center Pond's frequency of chemical treatments was every 4 years, and the area treated continually decreased (from 62.5 to 8.5 to 1.45 acres).

Detailed transect surveys done by ACT document the overall milfoil cover based on 78 data points throughout the lake. These have been done since 2003 in the fall. Results are as follows:

2003) 4.94%	2004) 1.17%	2005) 0.33%	2006) 0.55%
2007) 0.65%	2008) 0.63%	2009) 1.05%	2010) <0.1%

ACT's Fall survey report 2010: "...it would appear that the EWM population at Center Pond can be effectively controlled with an ongoing hand-pulling program." "EWM distribution and density was effectively reduced to the lowest levels that have been recorded since the current management program was initiated in 2003."

Results – Curlyleaf Pondweed: None were encountered during ACT surveys in most of recent years. We still have some each year throughout the lake, usually a minimal amount. These plants are annuals and can be controlled with or without scuba divers. (Please get our information sheet on management of curly-leaf.)

Additional Benefit: We have noticed a general reduction in algae growth in the lake. We are removing the entire milfoil plants from the lake, and the nutrients that are bound up in them, and this seems to be slowing or reversing eutrophication.

Annual Budget: Has ranged from \$500 in 2003 to \$11,650 in 2009. The amount spent in 2010 was \$8,282. Our projected annual budget for the next two years is \$5000, and we expect further significant reductions thereafter.

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Wetland Invasive Weeds

Purple Loosestrife was found in a wetland area near the Town Beach by our project in 2005. We received permission from the property owners and the Conservation Commission to hand-pull or dug them out. We placed the flowering part of the plant in a garbage bag and tied it closed prior to disturbing the plant to capture any seeds that may have already formed. Most of the plants we encountered had significant roots and a shovel was required. The following year, and subsequent years, the number of plants was about 1/3 of the original number and many could be removed by hand-pulling. In the last two years we've discovered some additional plants a distance from the wetland area. Some we've been able to remove and, if not, we clip all of the flowering stems and remove them so they will not spread any seeds. So far, these methods have succeeded to keep it in check and we intend to put a more concerted effort into getting the roots of all of these out next year.

Phragmites: There has been one stand of mature phragmites in a cove of Center Pond for some time. It was observed during an ACT survey that it had been treated although no permit for this had been granted. This apparently continued for several years. In August of 2009 we received permission to go on the property and cut them. Dave MacWilliams of Greenwater Pond came with his weed-wacker with a brush hog attachment and did the first cut, as well as pulled out some of the roots in the softer soil under shallow water. In 2010 we have hand-cut them on a monthly basis from May through October (and those in the lawn area have been cut with a lawnmower by the property owners). We have continued to pull out roots whenever possible in the softer soils. It appears that the entire stand has diminished in energy significantly at this point, and there are never any seed tassles to allow it to spread. We intend to continue this method with the goal of further reductions in the energy of the plants and the amount of regrowth.