



Sand Dam Reservoir Association Newsletter

Winter Work Updates - March 4, 2021

LAKE DRAWDOWN & REFILL: Goal of killing invasive milfoil in shallower waters not achieved; weather uncooperative in meeting required conditions. **Lake refill will be initiated March 8th.**

Many thanks to Mike, Rico, Teri Lyn & Art!

PROBLEMS: MILFOIL & MONEY

- 22 acres of milfoil mapped last September in locations all around the lake; equal or greater amounts anticipated by June. Herbicides are now essential. Contract is being awarded to Solitude to treat as many acres as possible with the newer, more effective, much pricier product, Procellacor (\$825/acre); will also likely need to apply Diquat as well (\$215 /acre) because of insufficient funds to treat all areas with Procellacor.
- The revenues typically achieved through our popular Bella's fundraiser could not be conducted last year nor this year - totalling about **\$9000 not earned** because of coronavirus.
- **FUNDRAISING EFFORTS & RESULTS TO DATE:**
 - Outreach to membership (November) yielded \$2770
 - Profit from note card sales \$ 180
 - Appeal to Gloucester Town Council - no \$ obtained; possibility that Budget Committee will hear our request
 - Seeking State level support; multiple initiatives
 - **If interested in a more comprehensive look at ideas & actions proposed in pursuit of local & state assistance, please see the letter that follows to Town Councilman Arnold & its attachment.**
- Currently available funds for treatment of milfoil with herbicides, including all donations targeted in recent years to this lake management strategy: \$12,500
- **UPCOMING FUNDRAISING EVENTS:**
RAFFLE - prize is one hundred \$5 lottery tickets!
DINING/TAKEOUT EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE: EARTH DAY April 24th - a community-wide cleanup effort

Special Notice: Approved Minutes of previous SDRA Meetings are now available to current/paid SDRA members via the SDRA website: sanddamreservoir.com All Minutes are Password Protected.

If unable to read the minutes after following the instructions, please contact Cleo or Elaine.

A note of appreciation to all who have made donations and to our hard-working members & friends! It will require commitment from all to save our lake. Please participate fully in upcoming fundraisers, make a donation now, especially if you have not already done so, or make an additional one if you can

Statewide Issues for Lakes Facing the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS)

Dear Councilman Arnold,

Your interest in the plight of RI's lakes pertaining to invasive species is encouraging and appreciated. Leadership on this matter is greatly needed. Your voice and commitment have the potential to bring the concerns of lakes to the forefront of attention with local, regional and state-level elected officials. We applaud your initiative and thank you for it.

Following is a draft document that I, along with several Sand Dam Reservoir Association Board (SDRA) members, drafted two months ago and just updated regarding the need for a stronger state role. It captures a bit of background re: invasive species - generally referred to in the literature as AIS (*aquatic invasive species*). We humbly share this with you, hoping that the information presented will be helpful.

Please do not hesitate to contact Judy Colaluca or me with questions or if you need our help in any way. Judy not only represents SDRA's Community Outreach initiatives but is also President of Save The Lakes (STL) - an Association of Lakes across the state. In Judy's statewide role, she has access to lake associations beyond our immediate area who have a keen interest in this pursuit. In addition, the Statewide Lakes Survey, recently initiated by us and distributed electronically by Elizabeth Herron of URI's Watershed Watch, is yielding names of individuals with deep concerns regarding AIS who might also be willing to help. Perhaps their local leaders and legislative representatives would be willing to join forces as you and our own legislative leaders seek to move this agenda forward.

Our contact information is as follows:

Judy Colaluca: 486-8414; colalucajudy@gmail.com
Janice Baker: 578-2308, neverneverlandjb@hotmail.com

With great appreciation,

Janice Baker
President, SDRA

Judy Colaluca
Outreach Coordinator, SDRA

STATEWIDE ISSUES & STRATEGIES Re: VARIABLE-LEAF MILFOIL (2nd draft, 02/20) (prepared by the Sand Dam Reservoir Association/SDRA)

Problem Statement:

- SDR & lakes across the state are facing significant problems from the presence & continuing rapid spread of variable-leaf milfoil (VLM).
- Lake Associations, typically all-volunteer & non-profit, have insufficient resources to combat this problem; their fundraising efforts cannot keep pace with the spread of this invasive species.
- Boat ramps, especially those allowing motorised vessels, foster the endless hitchhiking of VLM from lake to lake.
- If left unchecked, VLM will kill our lakes - for fishing, swimming & boating.

Brief Background:

- Professional studies have shown that **treatment with chemicals is an essential component of any lake management plan to combat aquatic invasive species such as VLM.**

- **Many States provide financial support** to lakes to help save their lakes, often via a state tax on boats that is set aside for this purpose or via the establishment of a support program.
- **Boat ramps enable AIS hitchhiking - and the State-installed boat ramps play a significant role;** however, the State does not provide financial help to lakes to fight the invasives, especially milfoil which spreads rapidly.
- **DEM conducted a comprehensive study about RI's freshwater lakes & ponds focused on AIS & water quality** concerns, & made significant recommendations to financially support & assist lakes to achieve quality Lake Management Plans & Practices. **No action occurred to help lakes financially.**
- **RI's 237 named freshwater lakes occupy more than 18,000 square miles and have more water shoreline than ocean shoreline.**
- While funds are allocated to the ocean shoreline, **no funds have been allocated to protect fresh water bodies.** These bodies of water are an integral part of the water system that feeds into RI ocean waters.
- **Sand Dam/Smith & Sayles Reservoir provides just one example where invasive milfoil continues to proliferate despite using all treatment options:** annual drawdown, hand pulling, suction harvesting and herbicides (when volunteer residents contribute and can raise additional funds to put toward this problem). Many RI lakes are struggling to save their lakes - before invasive species take over and kill them.

A Few Statewide Facts, per above report issued in 2012:

- 42% of the 130 bodies of water had VLM.
- 59% had invasive species.
- 29% have State boat ramps, & of that group, 74% had invasive species, with VLM hugely dominating.

We Need Help to Save Our Lakes:

- **Legislative initiative:** to develop, promote and attain the passage of a bill to support RI lakes in their struggle against VLM & other invasive species. Such legislation would require establishment of a process to seek/access funds, on a partnership basis, with Lake Associations.
- **Development of an on-going funding source**, such as a State Boat Tax; this concept was discussed in the 2012 DEM Report: *"Rhode Island Freshwater Lakes and Ponds: Aquatic Invasive Plants and Water Quality Concerns; A Report to the Governor and Rhode Island General Assembly"*.
- **In lakes where invasive species exist, local volunteer efforts are beyond their capacity, and State financial support is not forthcoming, close those State ramps for a period of not less than 3 consecutive years.**

What the State of RI Can Do:

- **Provide funding to support lakes fighting invasives through an allocation of State funds, a bond referendum, a boat sticker tax program or some other means.** (CT & NH have good models)
- **Designate a DEM professional, on a full or at least part-time basis, to focus on & assist LAKES.**
- **Provide monitoring support from DEM at all boat ramps, especially those allowing motorized boats and having an invasive species presence, especially variable -leaf milfoil.**
- **To stem the spread of invasives, if funds are not available for treatment, or not available in a timely manner, IMMEDIATELY CLOSE THOSE BOAT RAMPS FOR A PERIOD UP TO 3 YEARS.**