**From:** Jim Scharl
**Date:** August 8, 2024 at 3:07:49 PM CDT
**To:** James P. O'Neil, John Zimdars
**Subject:** **Townsend Lakes - 2024 & beyond update**

﻿

Good afternoon, Jim & John;

Thanks again for working with us this season.  I’m sorry I’m unable to attend your meetings this year.  In place, below is a summary of what’s going on with your waterways, the management planning, and looking long term for large-scale EWM control.

The Inland Lakes Protection & Rehabilitation District and Townsend Flowage Protection District oversee a large group of connected waterways.  Both Districts have worked cooperatively to better manage the waters for recreation, health, and invasive species control through multiple management plan updates, targeted invasive species control, WDNR grant applications, and more.  Aquatic plant management plans are an important part of lake management for each District as they update the conditions of the lakes, review and assess past management, guide and plan harvesting operations, and set the path for future management.

Aquatic plant management (APM) plans are recommended to be updated every 5-years by the DNR.  This is an involved process with public input, user surveys, whole-lake aquatic plant surveys, data review, mapping, and assessments.  The last APM for the Townsend Lakes was approved in May, 2020.  To not have any gap years the Districts have begun the process to update their plan and prepare for 2025 and beyond.

In fall, 2023 the Districts applied for and were awarded a WDNR grant to help fund up to 75% of the costs for their APM plan update.  In fact, their grant was one of the highest scoring grants for AIS planning in 2023!  As part of the process, the Districts are working cooperatively with the WDNR, University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, and Wisconsin Lake & Pond Resource to complete the plan update.  The WDNR and UWSP are completing the field-sampling portions of the plan, including in-depth aquatic plant surveys on all District waters.  The surveys should be about wrapped up by now.  Wisconsin Lake & Pond Resource will be using this data draft the plan and engage public input throughout the way.  As part of the planning process there will be some upcoming informational meetings, a lake user survey, and plan review.

All while the APM plan update is going the Districts are also planning for a potential large-scale Eurasian water-milfoil (EWM) control for 2025 and beyond.  The 2020 management was successful to control high populations of EWM for multiple years.  However, growth has returned and is again reaching near whole-lake management levels.  Overuse of the same management method, such as herbicide active ingredients, can lead to populations of plants that become increasingly tolerant (aka resistant) to that approach and removes that tool from an aquatic manager’s already limited toolbox.

Instead of chasing around only certain areas of EWM for many years at a time it can be better to give the population time to get to large scale growth, then address the entire population at one time.  This results in longer-term results and helps reduce the chance and reduces the chance of management tolerance.  Future, targeted EWM management is likely to use a different approach than the 2020 whole-lake fluridone application.  As in the past, the Districts are seeking to apply for grant funding to offset costs for EWM management in 2025 or beyond.

A grant application is anticipated to be submitted to help EWM management for the districts.  A few key items and dates for the grant application are as follows:

1. Eligibility Determination – Sept. 15, 2024:  Any AIS management project through the DNR grant program must be an action in a DNR approved management plan.  This step confirms the Districts desired EWM control is part of their existing plan and allows them to proceed with a grant application
2. Draft grant application – Sept. 15, 2024:  A draft is submitted to the DNR to allow for a thorough review, collects comments and edits, and help the Districts score the best and be as competitive as possible.  Not all grant applications get awarded, so every point counts!
3. Final grant application – November 15, 2024:  Any edits/comments from previous steps are addressed and the grant is submitted to the DNR.
4. Grant award (hopefully!) – February/March, 2025:  DNR releases the awarded projects lists.  It’s our hope that work on EWM management on the Lakes can begin here!

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out to James Scharl, Wisconsin Lake & Pond Resource, at (920) 872-2032 or jim@wisconsinlpr.com

Thank you!!!

Jim