

## **LAKE MANITOU HYDRILLA FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources recently adopted a rule which regulates the aquatic plant hydrilla, 312 IAC 18-3 (LSA #06-447(E)). The rule makes it unlawful to possess or transport hydrilla and gives DNR the authority to implement steps to prevent the dissemination of hydrilla from an infested body of water to other waterways. The rule regulating hydrilla can be viewed at <http://www.in.gov/nrc/nrc/emrules.html>

### ***HOW DID HYDRILLA GET INTO LAKE MANITOU?***

Until now, hydrilla has never been confirmed in a body of water in the Midwest. While it will probably never be known for certain, the most likely way hydrilla made it to Lake Manitou is through the transfer of plant fragments from another infested water. It appears the lake contains monoecious hydrilla which is the form usually found in northern states. In this region of the country, monoecious hydrilla is reported from North Carolina and up the east coast to Maine. Dioecious hydrilla is very prevalent in the southern states. Therefore, the form of hydrilla found in Lake Manitou probably came from watercraft that visited an infested east coast waterway and transferred plant fragments to Lake Manitou. Both forms of hydrilla are exotic to the United States; the species is native to Asia, Africa, and Australia.

### ***WHAT MAKES HYDRILLA SUCH A THREAT TO INDIANA WATERS?***

There are many characteristics of hydrilla that make it such a dangerous invasive species. Hydrilla can grow at far lower light conditions than other submersed aquatic plants. This low light tolerance allows hydrilla to colonize deeper water that has traditionally been weed-free. Under optimal growing conditions, hydrilla can grow an inch a day which allows it to quickly grow to the surface. Hydrilla can reproduce by four different methods: seeds, fragmentation, turions, and tubers. Seeds are a very minor form of the plants reproduction. Fragmentation is a method of long distance dispersal. Just a half inch sprig of hydrilla transferred to another body of water can form a new population. Turions are dormant buds that form on the stems of the plant and then drop to the sediment. Tubers form on the roots. Both tubers and turions can remain dormant in the sediment for a few years before germinating. If left unchecked hydrilla can displace native aquatic plants, change the ecosystem, reduce recreational opportunities, and cause property values to drop. For all of these reasons, hydrilla has been declared a federal noxious aquatic plant.

### ***WHAT ARE THE DETAILS OF THE USER RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED AT LAKE MANITOU?***

Only those people with owned or rented pier space may launch watercraft in Lake Manitou. Trailered or carry-on watercraft of those who do not own or rent pier space is not allowed on Manitou. Once a watercraft has been launched in the spring, it will remain on Lake Manitou until (a) repairs are needed to the watercraft in which case the watercraft may be removed, repaired, and returned to the lake, (b) the watercraft is sold to someone that does not own or rent pier space on the lake, or (c) the watercraft is removed for the remainder of the season. At the beginning of the season, watercraft owners will have to decide whether they want their watercraft on Lake Manitou all season or do they want to have the ability to recreate on other lakes through the season. If the latter, the owners should not launch their watercraft onto Lake Manitou since once it is removed it is not allowed back on Manitou for the remainder of the year.

The City ramp will not be used to launch or recover any recreational watercraft due to the presence of a large population of hydrilla in this area. The City ramp may only be used for emergency response situations.

Any equipment leaving Lake Manitou will have all plant fragments and sediment removed prior to leaving the access ramp area. This is to be done no matter whether the equipment is going to dry-dock winter storage or could be used on other waters in the near future.

If an individual uses a business to launch, install, or recover watercraft, lifts, or piers, it will be the business' responsibility to clean the equipment of all plants and sediment. Only businesses with a signed compliance agreement

with the DNR will be able to provide this service. A business that does not comply with all points in the compliance agreement risks the agreement being revoked which would negate their ability to conduct their business.

For individuals that launch and recover their own watercraft, the Lake Manitou Association will announce times when the DNR owned ramp will be available to launch or remove watercraft. A Lake Association inspector will be present at all times the ramp is available for use and will inspect all equipment that has been in or on the lake. An individual must sign a permission form allowing their equipment to be inspected for plants and sediment. If permission is not granted, the equipment may not be removed until permission is given. Inspectors will inspect all parts of the watercraft trailer, interior and exterior of the watercraft, and the exterior of the tow vehicle.

### ***WHY DID THE DECISION TO CLOSE LAKE MANITOU NEED TO BE MADE WITH SUCH URGENCY?***

Due to the ease of spread of this plant through plant fragments, coupled with the ecological, recreational, and economic damage this plant can cause, there was a clear need to act quickly to stop the threat of the potential spread of this plant. Unfortunately, the closure beginning in the fall will immediately impact some Lake Manitou users, mainly anglers and waterfowl hunters. DNR regrets restricting any water recreational activities but in this situation it is warranted.

### ***WHO WILL ENFORCE THE HYDRILLA REGULATION AND USER RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON LAKE MANITOU?***

Conservation Officers with the Department of Natural Resources will be the main enforcement authority. For the Lake Manitou hydrilla containment plan to be successful each individual must watch for unauthorized watercraft being launched on the lake and for watercraft or equipment exiting the lake that has not been fully cleaned of all plant material and sediments. If a violation is observed, citizens should immediately contact a Conservation Officer through the North Region Law Enforcement headquarters at 765-473-8092 or through the Fulton County Sheriff's Office.

### ***WHAT IS TO PREVENT USERS OF LAKE MANITOU FROM TRANSPORTING HYDRILLA TO OTHER BODIES OF WATER?***

It is mandatory that all watercraft and other equipment used on Lake Manitou have all plant material and sediment removed immediately after being removed from the lake. Watercraft being removed must allow for weed inspection and removal of all plant material. If permission is not granted to inspect the watercraft, trailer, or exterior of the tow vehicle, access to the ramp will not be allowed and the equipment may not be removed until permission is granted.

### ***HOW LONG WILL THE USER RESTRICTIONS REMAIN IN PLACE ON LAKE MANITOU?***

It is unknown how long the current use restrictions will need to remain in place on Lake Manitou. Vegetation surveys will occur as chemical eradication efforts proceed. The success of those treatments will help determine whether the current use restrictions remain or if they could be relaxed.

### ***WITH THE TREATMENT THAT OCCURRED IN SEPTEMBER WHICH APPEARED SUCCESSFUL, WHY CAN'T USER RESTRICTIONS BE POSTPONED UNTIL NEXT SPRING?***

The treatment performed in September focused on the control of plant material in the two most heavily infested areas, near the city boat ramp and in the Poet's Point area. The treatment indeed was successful as it reduced hydrilla biomass, lowered the fragmentation threat, and stopped any further tuber or turion production in these areas. Scattered hydrilla plants have been found in other areas of the lake. Therefore, the threat of transport of hydrilla fragments has been reduced by the September treatment, but not eliminated.

### ***WHAT ARE THE FUTURE STRATEGIES TO CONTROL HYDRILLA AT LAKE MANITOU?***

Those plans are still being formulated. DNR is working with other states, federal agencies, and aquatic herbicide companies who have been dealing with hydrilla to formulate a plan to eliminate hydrilla from Lake Manitou. Contrary to some beliefs, hydrilla can be completely eliminated. Complete elimination should not be expected in one year, rather

multiple years of treatment will be necessary to completely deplete the dormant tuber and turion populations in the sediment.

***SINCE I DO NOT OWN OR RENT PIER SPACE AT LAKE MANITOU, WHAT OTHER WATERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ME TO GO TO?***

To find public access locations, please visit the Division of Fish and Wildlife's website (<http://www.in.gov/dnr/fishwild/>) and navigate to the where to fish section of the fishing guide. No matter what waters you have been to or where you plan to go, standard procedures should be to remove all plant material immediately after removing watercraft from the water. You should also check over your equipment immediately before launching watercraft and disposing in the trash any plants observed.

***HAS HYDRILLA SPREAD TO OTHER BODIES OF WATER IN INDIANA?***

Since the discovery of hydrilla in Lake Manitou, all lakes with public access sites within approximately a half hour of Rochester have been surveyed. Hydrilla has not been detected at any of the waters surveyed. Due to the difficulty in detecting a low level population, it cannot be stated with absolute certainty that hydrilla has not been spread. Surveys will continue at nearby lakes in the future to monitor for the presence of hydrilla. Hydrilla has been detected in Mill Creek immediately below the Lake Manitou dam. Further surveys will be conducted to determine whether the plant has spread into the Tippecanoe River.

*For additional information, contact:*

*Doug Keller*

*Aquatic Invasive Species Coordinator*

*317-234-3883*

*dkeller@dnr.in.gov*