

Interim Report on Milfoil Handpulling
August 3, 2006
By Ted Fiust

At this point we have pulled over 133,728 milfoil plants. We have concentrated on removing milfoil from areas where it has reached the surface, then "public" swim areas such as Mansion Beach, Priscilla Path, and Rocky Point. We have also handpulled in some areas near the shores of areas where swimmers have been observed. We have used the DPA \$14,000 allocated and have 17 hours left on the \$4900 currently allocated by the WSWQC.

With regard to milfoil on the surface, there remain an estimated two acres near the outlet where milfoil has reached the surface in patches. There is also about an acre area just to the Northeast of Dudley Point that has milfoil on the surface in patches and we are currently working to remove it and the surrounding area of that cove. The weevils went in last week in two areas, which we have avoided. When I spoke to Bob Hartzel the day he put the weevils in, he said he would designate a control area near the outlet and email me what the area was so we could avoid that as well.

As anyone who has gone out onto the pond can see, there remains a great deal of milfoil. It is very patchy in its distribution. There is some good news in that areas where it would be expected that milfoil observed earlier in the year would have reached the surface still have little or no milfoil on the surface. There seems to be something holding the milfoil back a bit. In some cases there are stems near the surface with little or no leaflets on them. It is not known at this time what is causing this. Another piece of good news is that the najas and chara plants covering so much of the bottom of the pond now appear to be holding back the proliferation of milfoil stems. However, it should be noted that najas is considered an invasive species itself, so it may become problematic sometime in the future in the shallower areas of the pond.

Even if WSWQC locates the additional \$2300 next week when town accounting office staff return from vacation, it will only allow us to remove some of the larger patches. Though we have pulled 133, 728 milfoil plants, which is three times the 46,000 plants we pulled last year, and that was four times the 12,000 plants pulled in 2004, the milfoil appears to grow exponentially. That means it seems to grow about ten times more each year. We will continue to attempt to keep milfoil off the surface, prevent areas from growing out of control, and keep some swimming areas as milfoil free as possible.