

Star Lake Report – UPDATE 2005

Submitted by the Friends of Star Lake (FOSL)
a committee of the Mount Holly Community Association

The Friends of Star Lake committee was established in 2001 to evaluate the invasive growth of Eurasian Milfoil in Star Lake, and to identify potential solutions. With assistance from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, and our consultants, it was concluded that the most effective method to eradicate the Milfoil was to treat the lake with the herbicide “Sonar” and then to follow this treatment with hand pulling, bottom barriers, and/or spot chemical treatment in subsequent years. FOSL submitted this strategy as its five year management plan to the State.

In order to fund the costs of this plan and treatment, FOSL conducted a community fund raising effort and received an overwhelming response. In addition, FOSL applied for and has received two grants from the State for approximately one-third of the cost of the treatments.

A whole-lake treatment was undertaken in accordance with the permit during the summer of 2004 and a survey in September, 2004 revealed that the Sonar treatment program effectively managed the Milfoil without adversely affecting the non-target plants. No milfoil was observed.

However, evidence from other lakes in Vermont that have been treated with Sonar have indicated that some grow back of Milfoil is to be expected in the first year, and that follow-up hand pulling is an important year-two treatment measure. This was FOSL’s plan for the summer of 2005.

In the case of Star Lake, however, we were delighted to observe no evidence for Milfoil regrowth during our weekly monitoring throughout the summer, therefore no lake treatment was performed. The lake was clear and beautiful, and once again residents could enjoy all recreational activities.

This absence of Milfoil was confirmed as late as September 9, 2005 in the biological survey conducted by Lycott Environmental, Inc. (FOSL’s consultant), but the first evidence of Milfoil was observed in a survey conducted by the VT DEC on September 26, 2005 -- some “slight regrowth” of Milfoil was noted. Although this was disappointing, we had expected regrowth even earlier in the season, and indeed, the results of the Star Lake Sonar treatment are the best yet seen in any treated lake in Vermont.

In preparation for year three, a survey will be conducted in May 2006 to determine the extent and location of the Milfoil re-growth. The use of alternative management techniques (either hand pulling and/or bottom barriers) will be considered for implementation after that survey.

We would like to thank the many residents and friends for their dedication, assistance and financial support of our efforts. We still have much to do to keep our Lake and beach area a wonderful place to relax, but we are we delighted with the dramatic success of our initial treatment.

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