

Monterey, MA

20 February 2017

To: Select Board

From: Lake Garfield Working Group

Re: Short-term steps to mitigate milfoil in Lake Garfield

Dear Select Board

We, the Lake Garfield Working Group, after multiple meetings and deliberations considering all known options for milfoil control, recognize that **milfoil cannot be eradicated, but can be managed**. We are convinced that proactive steps should be taken now to slow the spread of milfoil in the short-term, complimented by precautionary strategies to prevent further spreading and even reduce the amount of milfoil over the long-term. Taken together, these are important steps to help sustain the overall health of the lake.

We therefore recommend to the Select Board that a Request for Proposals (RFP) be sent out as soon as possible for milfoil mitigation via suction harvesting with hand pulling to be carried out in the late spring and early summer. We recommend that this work be financed by a Warrant at the May town meeting. For informational purposes, we have obtained a preliminary estimate of the scope and cost of the work and have attached that letter. We have also attached Emily Stockman's scientific report and recommendations.

Suction harvesting with hand pulling is recommended by Emily Stockman and the Working Group as the best short-term mitigation measure. Instead of addressing the dense patches with suction harvesting (which would become quite expensive), we recommend focusing on the "non-dense" areas surrounding dense patches, as well as "less dense" areas identified by the 2016 survey (see attached). The work would involve diver-assisted hand pulling with use of suction assistance when needed. We also recommend "roping off" the dense areas to motor boats and using curtains to prevent further fragmentation and spread of the milfoil as suggested in the attached letter.

The rationale for this recommendation is as follows: As Stockman has stated, with no effort to manage milfoil, it is likely to continue spreading to all areas that it is able to grow (the drawdown has proven helpful in mitigating milfoil in shallow, shore areas, while milfoil growth is not of significant concern at depths greater than 20 feet; the plant requires sunlight to grow and is decreasingly present at depths greater than 12 feet). Milfoil grows very densely, so it will take over areas between those depths, eliminating native plants. Large areas of dense "mats" of milfoil will interfere with boating and swimming.

Although herbicides are the most cost-effective method for reducing the size of large dense patches, the Working Group feels that herbicide use is currently too "charged" an issue in town and we are sensitive and respectful of that sentiment. Even if there was greater support from town residents, we are not unanimous on the use of herbicides. Other options, such as benthic barriers and the introduction of

weevils, are not recommended at this time by Emily Stockman or the Working Group due to prohibitive costs and other factors.

Finally it is very important for the Select Board and all full time and part time town residents to understand that the ultimate goal of the Working Group is sustaining a healthy lake. This will require **special precautionary strategies**, including:

- 1) Mitigation of weed growth factors like phosphate coming into to the lake (this includes detergents, leakage from failed or failing septic systems, and fertilizers used for lawns and plants).
- 2) Mitigation of storm water run-off through lake side landscaping and planting.

The current research being conducted by Ken Wagner through the 604b grant will inform us as to where we need to focus our attention regarding these and related issues. When we have more information, we can apply for a 319 grant to help fund mitigation efforts. Furthermore, Town regulations can be developed to support these efforts. We will continue to address these issues and seek collaborative solutions. It is important to bear in mind, however, that no combination of the above measures is a "cure" for eradicating the milfoil in the lake, but rather part of a multi-year management initiative that will require yearly funding.

For the reasons set forth herein, we respectfully request the Select Board move forward with an RFP as soon as possible for milfoil mitigation to be carried out in the late spring and early summer and financed by a Warrant at the May town meeting. We remain at your service to offer any requested feedback on the wording of the RFP.

Sincerely,

The Lake Garfield Working Group

By Steve Snyder, Chairperson