

**Topic:** Notes from DNR Visit to Van Vliet Lake

**Visit Date:** Wednesday, September 28, 2011

**Attending :**

Kevin Gauthier	Lakes Mgmt Coordinator	WI DNR
Sandra Wickman	Water Resources Mgmt Specialist	WI DNR
Ronie Jacobsen	President	VVLA
Tom Olson	Board Member	VVLA
Paul Specht	Treasurer	VVLA
Jeff Burke	Board Member	VVLA
Mike Czarny	Board Member	VVLA

**Purpose of Visit :**

1. Circumnavigate lake and provide WI DNR representatives with first hand view of potential high weed areas, which might be interpreted as areas of impaired navigation and/or nuisance conditions.
2. Develop insight and better understanding as to future paths forward, in concert with filing-review of recent Van Vliet APMP.

**Notes from Visit:**

1. The tour itinerary circumnavigated Van Vliet Lake, starting at the south boat landing.
2. Primary focus of the tour was on three areas:
  - a. Area 1 -- Montgomery Bay / Olson Point / Novak Island [South]
  - b. Area 2 -- Lemberg Bay / Novak Island [North]
  - c. Area 3 -- Birch Bay
3. Tour Commentary for three areas was provided by individuals below:
  - a. Area 1 -- Tom Olson
  - b. Area 2 -- Jeff Burke
  - c. Area 3 -- Ronie Jacobsen
4. Primary messages conveyed for all three areas:
  - a. Major changes seem to have occurred since 2007 (low water years).
  - b. Aquatic plant density seems to have significantly increased in these three areas, particularly in the 3-10 ft levels.
  - c. Large masses of floating vegetation seem to be increasing, not only in the shallow areas, but are now emerging in deeper areas of the lake (10-15 ft levels).

- d. Several lake shore property owners have voiced concern over several years about aquatic plant related observations:
  - i. Difficulty accessing residences via boat
  - ii. Loss of swimming areas
  - iii. Fishing areas now becoming weed choked
  - iv. Boaters are not observing no-wake rules in an attempt to clear navigation channels and are cutting and dispersing weeds by this practice
  - v. Floating mats of weeds including roots (tubers) and dirt clumps do not enhance the value of the lake for the fishery or recreation

5. Preliminary (non-binding) Feedback from DNR at end of Tour

- a. Kevin/ Sandy indicated we did not appear to have any invasive issues, in agreement with findings from 2008 PITLC survey.
- b. Kevin “roughly categorized” his observations on growth to be at a mid-range of other similar lakes he has observed in the past.
  - i. Weather and water level cycles cause changes in weed growth. Potentially, we could see changes in coming years in terms of increase or reduction of nuisance weed.
  - ii. Generally: clear water = more plants, less algae. Less clear water = fewer plants, more algae.
  - iii. Kevin suggested that landowners need to stay diligent on conserving and maintaining shoreline buffers.
- c. Kevin pointed out that any disturbance of an ecosystem (like cutting of plants) requires a good awareness / assessment of risks –
  - i. Potential to create more favorable conditions for establishment of other species – invasive or natural.
  - ii. Potential to decrease water clarity which might increase algae blooms.
- d. In general, the DNR is not a proponent of weed cutting but recognizes nuisance issues and might approve of navigational cutting.
  - i. Kevin estimated the cost of a selective cutting plan could run in the thousands of dollars. The need to be done each year would depend on results and weather and water levels.
  - ii. Having a permit to cut does not require cutting to occur if the conditions do not warrant it.
  - iii. There are no grants for cutting of navigational channels in a lake with no invasive species.
  - iv. Removal of all harvested waste, thus limiting the amount of drifting debris, would be the contractor’s responsibility. Removal is never 100%.

e. Kevin indicated WI DNR will no longer be addressing individual landowner weed issues with individual cutting permits. Rather, they will be managing all future efforts in concert with the recently filed APMP for Van Vliet Lake. This APMP contains the two guidance documents for plant management by the WI DNR:

- i. Appendix H - AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY Northern Region WDNR (Summer, 2007).
- ii. Appendix F - Chapter NR 107 AQUATIC PLANT MANAGEMENT

N.B.

- The 2011 PITLC driven APMP for Van Vliet highlights weed concerns and establishes an active goal to manage areas of impaired navigation and/or nuisance conditions as outlined in Northern Region WDNR APM Strategy Document, if required.
  - The Van Vliet lake survey, completed in 2004, included a line-transect based aquatic plant survey. That study also recommended managing impaired areas and suggest weed cutting (circle and spoke) as a potential solution, if required.
- f. Kevin indicated all lake-wide DNR approved cutting plans are developed in concert with the APMP and resident input. Plans and contractor execution are now GPS based.

## 6. Next Steps

- a. Maintain contact with PITLC and Kevin's office to discuss funding, scope, and timing for round 2 APMP.
- b. Develop "rough estimate" of costs and scope of a possible cutting plan.