

Lake Harvesting Operations

Peppermill Lake Aquatic Plant Harvesting – What You Should Know

Our lake's mechanical weed harvesting is a volunteer-led effort organized by the Peppermill Lake Management District (PLMD) to help keep our lake healthy and enjoyable for everyone who lives, visits, and recreates here.

What We're Aiming For

The primary goals of our harvesting program are to:

1. Control Invasive Plants – Especially Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM).
2. Support Safe Recreation – Keep key areas accessible for boating, swimming, fishing, paddling, and other activities.
3. Protect the Ecosystem – Encourage a healthy mix of native plants that help stabilize sediment, reduce algae blooms, and support fish and wildlife.

Why We Don't "Clear It All"

We know some residents would love to see wide-open water throughout the lake. But aquatic plants are part of what keeps our lake functioning—especially in a shallow, nutrient-rich lake like ours. These plants:

- Prevent sediment from getting stirred up on windy days
- Provide food and shelter for fish, frogs, and turtles
- Compete with algae for nutrients, helping keep the water clearer

That's why both PLMD and the Wisconsin DNR focus on *management*, not total removal. Our work is guided by a WDNR-approved permit and a harvesting plan developed by the PLMD board specifically for Peppermill Lake.

When and Where We Harvest

We typically begin harvesting in **May**, once EWM is tall enough to cut but before it surfaces. Harvesting continues through **September** on an as-needed basis, weather permitting.

- **Normal Harvesting Days:** Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday
- **Factors That Determine Exact Timing and Location:**
 - Plant growth stage
 - Wind and weather conditions
 - Equipment readiness
 - Volunteer availability
 - WDNR permit guidelines
- While we don't operate on a fixed weekly schedule, we do aim to avoid peak weekend activity and target problem areas first, especially where invasive plants are thickest or navigation is restricted.

The Equipment

If you see a bright **orange harvester** on the lake, that's us! It's a slow and steady process, but it makes a real difference.

Let us know if you have questions, concerns, or want to get more involved. This is a true community effort, and we appreciate your interest and support in keeping Peppermill Lake healthy and usable for generations to come.

—The Peppermill Lake Management District

