**Search for Eurasian Water-milfoil on Black Oak Lake 2013**

Susan Knight October 2013

On October 2 and 3, Walt Bates, Bob Pierce, John Annin, Dirk Meyer and I searched for Eurasian water-milfoil (EWM), curly-leaf pondweed and purple loosestrife. The weather was particularly spectacular for the search, starting with calm water on the morning Oct 2 with a very slight chop developing later with little wind and sunny skies. I used the viewer some of the time and was generally able to see the bottom when the water was less than 12’ deep. The viewer allows me to see deeper, and more clearly into the water, but I see a much smaller area of the bottom than I can when looking down from above. With such good visibility, I feel confident we would have found something, had it been there.

We followed our grid of points to thoroughly cover the western end of the lake. As in other years, we found some EWM look-alikes, including water marigold and alternate-flowered water-milfoil in the west bay. Later, Walt and I canoed part of the west and north bays where the water is especially shallow to be sure we did not miss any part of the lake. Although it is very unlikely EWM could grow in such shallow water, it is a good idea to scout these shorelines since any EWM growing out in the lake is bound to fragment and float in towards shore, where it could root. As in other years, it was striking how much of the west bay was completely devoid of any plants. These sediments are very loose and unconsolidated possibly making this area unsuitable for plant growth.

We did several passes along parts of the south shore with the pontoon boat. We used the grid to crisscross the northeast end of the lake. After a day and a half of searching the entire lake, we found plenty of native northern water-milfoil and other native plants indicating a healthy plant community. We did not find any EWM, curly-leaf pondweed or purple loosestrife.

It is critically important that everyone involved in the Clean Boats Clean Waters and the Vigilante program remain alert to invasive species throughout the open-water season. Remember to watch for EWM along the shoreline as well as in the water, since EWM, should it ever occur, will likely fragment and wash up on shore. With so many eyes watching, invasive aquatic plants are much less likely to slip in. If anyone finds anything suspicious, I hope they will bring it to me to identify. It is far better to examine a number of suspicious-looking plants and learn they are actually native plants, than to have even one invasive plant escape notice and begin to colonize the lake.

See you next year!