



Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor
Josh Kurtz, Acting Secretary
Allan Fisher, Deputy Secretary

March 26, 2024

Dear Deep Creek Lake Property Owner:

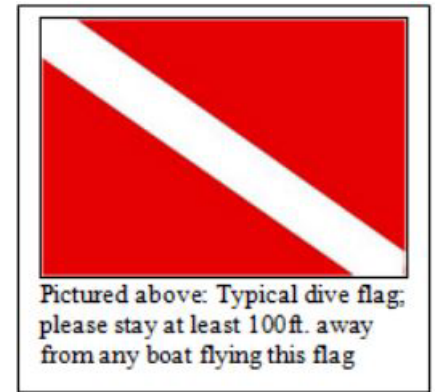
In 2013, [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](https://dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/western/deepcreeknrma.aspx) biologists discovered several small patches of hydrilla—a fast-growing aquatic invasive plant—in the southern portion of the lake. Due to hydrilla’s quick growth rate, ability to grow in deep water under low light conditions, and the concern that the plant would unbalance the lake ecosystem and negatively impact recreation, fishing, and boating, the department convened a nationwide expert panel to evaluate all potential hydrilla control strategies. The panel recommended a multiyear herbicide program in an attempt to eradicate the species from the lake. Since 2014, the department has contracted with a certified herbicide applicator to treat the affected areas several times a year with small amounts of herbicides to kill hydrilla. The treatments have been successful each year since, and no hydrilla has been observed in any of the treated areas by late summer. Plans are to continue the hydrilla herbicide treatments in 2022. For an overview of treatment locations and plans, including other information related to the treatment process, please visit dnr.maryland.gov/publiclands/Pages/western/deepcreeknrma.aspx.

The herbicide treatment for 2024 is scheduled to begin in June and are all weather dependent. **Those dates will also be posted online at the link above.** Because the dates are **weather dependent** and thus subject to change any updates to the aforementioned schedule will be delivered via the department’s automated email delivery system. Interested persons may sign up to receive email updates at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/MDDNR/subscriber/new?topic_id=MDDNR_64.

Boat traffic will only be affected on the above treatment days. On those days, Natural Resources Police and State Park boats will redirect boat traffic so as to maintain a safe distance from the herbicide application vessel. No boat traffic will be permitted in the treatment area when application is underway, but once treatment is complete, regular boat traffic may resume. If you are a resident of Hickory Ridge Cove, Windy Cove, or Arrowhead Cove, boating restrictions may be more difficult as the treatment area covers the majority of each cove. If you wish to operate your boats on the day of treatment, please be courteous of the Natural Resources Police, Park Service, and the applicator boat so as not to disrupt the application process. Please also refrain from coming out on your docks, swimming, or operating canoes and kayaks while the treatment is underway, as the applicator needs to maintain a safe distance. This could slow down or impact the effectiveness of the treatment process.

Aquatic Environment Consultants, Inc. (AEC) will continue to serve as the herbicide contractor. AEC has 25+ years’ experience with hydrilla management in the Delmarva region and has been contracted by the Maryland Park Service in 2022 to treat all of the infestations with Fluridone, trade name Sonar™. Fluridone is a systemic herbicide, applied in the form of a slow release, sinking pellet that is dispersed via boat. The pellet sinks to the bottom and slowly releases the herbicide which is taken up by the plant (hence the term systemic herbicide). Follow-up treatments with a contact herbicide may be used if new beds are discovered in 2022 or if existing beds aren’t responding successfully to the initial systemic herbicide treatment. The department has permits to use the following contact herbicide products: Diquat, Flumioxazin, Carfentrazone, and Komeen, should conditions warrant. A combination of these contact herbicides may be used to treat any plants that may remain, but in the case of a contact herbicide, the herbicide would be injected into the water with subsurface injectors. A certified herbicide applicator will conduct any and all herbicide applications.

During follow-up sampling, if any hydrilla is detected by divers, locations will be marked and the contact treatment will be administered as necessary. Between treatments, department biologists will be monitoring the effectiveness of the herbicide on the hydrilla, as well as water quality at the site, while also surveying other submerged plant communities in the treatment areas. No change in boat traffic will be necessary. However, most of these monitoring events will involve biologists snorkeling and scuba diving to conduct the surveys. According to state law, you must maintain 100 feet of distance between you and any vessel flying a dive flag (see adjacent picture) as vessels flying this flag are tending to underwater divers. Please respect this regulation to protect the safety of the biologists conducting the survey.



There are no recreational restrictions associated with any of the approved herbicides mentioned here, however, lake water should not be used to water gardens, lawns, or plants. Fluridone, the primary herbicide used, is a herbicide and as such it kills plants. It does this by being absorbed by the plant's roots and leaves. Watering your garden with lake water between the initial treatment date through the end of the treatment invites this risk. The water is safe for pets and swimming. The department has additional information on the aforementioned website related to herbicides, safety concerns, frequently asked questions, and how to responsibly clean your vessel in the presence of hydrilla as well as other non-native aquatic species. Please refer to these documents to educate yourself on hydrilla and to understand how you can help minimize the spread of this invasive species.

If you suspect your cove has hydrilla, please refer to the below photos or the Maryland Department of Natural Resources Bay Grass Identification Key at <http://dnr.maryland.gov/waters/bay/Pages/sav/key.aspx> to

determine if what you are seeing is hydrilla. If hydrilla is suspected, please contact the Deep Creek Lake Management Office immediately at 301-387-4112, with your name, a contact phone number, location of the suspected hydrilla (address, dock number or GPS location). If possible, please take a picture of the plant in question or place it in a zip-close bag. Please remember that hydrilla reproduces via fragmentation, so if you suspect you have seen hydrilla, try and refrain from boating in or around the area, as your propeller can cut plants into smaller pieces, which can then reproduce and spread the plant. The department is working hard to ensure the overall health of Deep Creek Lake and the safety of our citizens, as well as the economic benefit the lake provides to the community. We apologize for any inconvenience and appreciate your adherence to the above requirements. For any questions pertaining to the hydrilla treatment, please contact Mark Lewandowski at mark.lewandowski@maryland.gov. Thank you in advance for your cooperation, and we'll see you on the lake.

