

To: All Carter Lakes Residents

One of the things I campaigned on was to try to get an understanding of the 2016 Aquatic Vegetation Management Plans for Carter Lake. The plan was vetted through a joint meeting in December of The City of Carter Lake, City of Omaha, Iowa DNR and Nebraska Game and Parks Commission representatives. Iowa DNR has taken the lead on the 2016 Plan. I have had several additional discussions with Chris Larson, Iowa DNR Southern Iowa Regional Fisheries Supervisor, about the plan and here is my attempt to reduce it to writing. It is also important to understand the Plan is evolving as more information about controlling aquatic vegetation becomes available.

While there are many different aquatic plants in the lake, during the last several years four plants have dominated the lake. They are: Curlyleaf pondweed a non-native invasive plant which usually starts growing in April, Eurasian watermilfoil a non-native invasive plant which usually starts to grow 2 to 4 weeks after the Curlyleaf pondweed, Narrowleaf pondweed and Coontail two native plant species which typically start growing late May to early June. All four of these plant species are sensitive to water temperature. Because it is impossible to predict the weather it is very difficult to predict when each plant will begin to grow and how fast they will grow.

All four of these aquatic plants are relatively fast growing plants. Carter Lake is a very shallow lake, all of these can reach

the surface and create the dense mats recreational lake users hate.

I think it is important here to say the DNR's primary focus is on three things. The first and most important is the overall health of the lake. This is followed by the wildlife which lives in and/or use the lake and recreational users.

Here is my understanding of the 2016 Plan.

1. In early April the City of Carter and hopefully City of Omaha and the Iowa DNR will start to monitor the water temperature and plant activity.
2. The Curlyleaf pondweed typically starts to grow first in late March to Early April. Because the shallow water close to the shore will warm first, the Curlyleaf pondweed may reach the surface in the water 2 ft. to 5 ft. deep. The Plan calls for the city, if we can get the harvesters in the lake, to start mowing when the Curlyleaf pondweed is within 3 ft. of the surface in the main channels of the lake. There is very little power boating during this time because of the cold water temps. Mowing does a few things, some not so good for the recreational lake user but good for the health of the lake. Not all of the cut plants are picked up by the harvesters before they start decomposing and sink, they float around on the surface: clogging up boat engines and props, jet skis intake manifolds and are not much fun to run into when you are swimming. Most of the cut plants are picked up by the harvester and removed from the lake.

By removing the cut plants it prevents them from decomposing in the lake and adding unwanted nutrients to the water column which will help the overall health of the lake and would grow more plants.

3. The Iowa DNR will monitor the lake to determine when the Eurasian watermilfoil starts to grow.
4. At the appropriate time the Iowa DNR will treat the entire lake with the chemical Fluridone. Again, there are different things that may happen. The good news is they are going to, for the first time in several years, treat the entire lake instead of just portions of the lake. If the harvesters are able to keep the Curlyleaf pondweed below the surface, the application of Fluridone should burn-back the Curlyleaf pondweed and hopefully kill the Eurasian watermilfoil. If the time between when the Curlyleaf pondweed begins to grow and the Eurasian watermilfoil starts to grow is over 2 to 3 weeks the Curlyleaf pondweed may reach the surface.
5. In an attempt to eradicate the Eurasian watermilfoil, not just burn it back, the Iowa DNR will monitor the concentration of Fluridone in the water for 30 days. If need be the Iowa DNR will add additional Fluridone to keep the concentration of Fluridone at 8-10 ppb. This concentration for 30 days should kill the Eurasian watermilfoil, but because the Curlyleaf pondweed grows from underground tubers it will only knock back the Curlyleaf pondweed for a year or two.

6. There are no further chemical treatments scheduled by the Iowa DNR at this time. Any additional plant control will have to be achieved through mowing with harvesters.
7. Later in June, after the Fluridone has worn off, Coontail and Narrowleaf pondweed may start to grow. Again, depending on the water temperature it may or may not reach the surface. During the last two years the Coontail has reached the surface during the summer. The city will continue to run the 2 harvesters in an attempt to keep the lake open for recreational boating and swimming.
8. The Iowa DNR will continue to monitor the lake.

Another unknown for 2016 is the fact an organization, Race Omaha, is planning to hold a triathlon later in the summer. The swimming portion will be held in Carter Lake on the Nebraska side. I have been told Race Omaha organizers have been given permission to put several additional chemical treatments in the lake to control the aquatic plants and ensure the water is open for the swimming portion of the triathlon.

If anyone has any questions I will be more than happy to try to answer them either at a Council Meeting or give me a call at 712-847-0257. You can also call Chris Larson at his office anytime M-F 8am-4pm at 712-769-2587.