

## **EWM Update January 2021**

It is with sadness that we share with you the news that Mike Podmore passed away suddenly on Saturday, January 9. Mike will be remembered by the other members of the Working Group and all Drag and Spruce Lake property owners as a true steward of our lakes and the surrounding land and forests. He was a leader in our efforts to identify and control outbreaks of Eurasian Watermilfoil and will be missed by all.

Even though our two lakes are covered with ice and snow, activity related to identifying and controlling Eurasian Watermilfoil (EWM) on Drag and Spruce Lakes continues. Thank you to all who have already helped in any way with this important project and those who have volunteered to help as we continue our work during 2021 and beyond. Your EWM Working Group is busy preparing for the coming year's control activities and wanted to inform you of a few of the things we will be working on before summer arrives.

1. Our request for approval by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry to apply biodegradable matting over the 4 confirmed outbreaks on Drag Lake has been approved. This work must be performed between July 15 and September 30 to minimize impact on the bass and lake trout populations. We will begin our work in the spring by assessing the growth at the four locations using overhead drone photography, surface observations and underwater photography. This assessment will help us to prioritize our mat deployment and the funds in our Lake Stewardship Fund will set the limit on how much work is possible.
2. Donations by property owners during the summer and fall of 2020 rose to just over \$35,000. Since this amount is still short of our goal of \$50,000 we will continue reaching out to the half of all property owners who have not yet made a contribution. If you recognize yourself as a property owner who has not contributed, we urge you to consider doing so. The spread of EWM in our lakes will continue if we do not take steps to control it. Some of these steps, such as avoiding areas containing EWM and checking boats and trailers for EWM fragments, cost almost nothing. Others, such as deploying matting with diver assistance as we did last year, cost about \$10,000 per day.
3. Donations by businesses have been limited to a few at this point. We have compiled a list of roughly 100 Haliburton businesses and will begin communicating with them soon. Although many businesses have experienced reduced sales and revenue during the COVID-19 crisis, we have heard that residential construction, renovations and real estate transactions have continued at a higher-than-normal level. For that reason, our first approach to the business community will be in the construction and real estate sectors.
4. Donations by our municipal governments have been zero. We have not yet determined the best way to approach the two levels of municipal government but believe that a donation equal to potential tax revenue losses without EWM control would be a good starting point.

5. The beginning of a new year marks the opening of many grant programs for new applications. There are a few for which our association and project seem to qualify, and we are in the process of preparing our applications. Most grant programs require recipients to contribute significantly to the budget for their project. Some programs will award grants no higher than the funds already available within the recipient's organization. This means, among other things, that the success of our fundraising can have a direct impact on the size of grants available to us.

The Drag and Spruce Lakes EWM Working Group has made a good start at understanding and meeting the EWM threat, but we need everyone's help to continue this essential work. Whether that help comes by way of volunteering, donating, sharing information or other means it is important and appreciated. We will provide further updates as news arises. In the meantime, if you have questions or would like to add your name to the volunteer list, send an email to [DSLPOAEWM@gmail.com](mailto:DSLPOAEWM@gmail.com).