

MEMORANDUM



TO: MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL
FROM: VICTOR CARDENAS, CITY MANAGER
SUBJECT: SHAWOOD LAKE UPDATE 2025
DATE: AUGUST 27, 2025

On October 10, 2024, a few staff members and I met with representatives from EGLE and DNR-Fisheries. The primary purpose of the meeting was to learn about the Bio-Health Pod system by Rigerio. We've been asking for a summary of the meeting from EGLE since last year and, thanks to Representative Breen, have finally received that summary. The personnel from EGLE and DNR shared "that Shawood Lake has been a shallow, vegetated lake at least since the 1940s and was/is part of a large wetland complex to the south of Walled Lake. They also discussed that there is nothing inherently wrong with shallow, vegetated lakes. Lily pads and other native emergent, floating-leaf, and submerged aquatic vegetation provide important functions and values. Abundant vegetation is extremely important in shallow lakes as the plants compete with phytoplankton (suspended algae) and promote clear water and provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Small, shallow lakes where large amounts of vegetation have been eliminated can flip to a turbid, algal state with poor water quality and little benefit to fish, wildlife, and people.

With respect to aquatic plant control, aquatic plant control measures that disturb the soil/sediment surface, such as dredging, EcoHarvesters, benthic barriers, weed rollers, muck blasters, etc. are all regulated activities and require a permit under Part 301 (Inland Lakes and Streams) and sometimes Part 303 (Wetlands Protection) of the Natural Resources and Protection Act. To-date, our team has not received any Part 301 applications from the city for aeration or other aquatic plant control measures.

Permitting of physical/mechanical control of floating-leaf and emergent species is a little nuanced and site-specific, depending on the situation. If you want to cut harvest floating-leaf species, a one-time, small-scale harvest would likely not require a permit (like cutting a small, homeowner-sized channel). Larger-scale and/or repeated harvests of emergent/floating-leaf species over a season would require a permit, as this could be a maintained use in a wetland.

A permit is generally not required from EGLE to control aquatic submerged vegetation in inland lakes by minimal harvesting (i.e., cutting plants above the lake bottom with no soil disturbance). Inconsequential or insignificant ("de minimis") vegetation removal done by hand (e.g., hand pulling, raking a few plants) does not require a permit. Small-scale removal of plants that are an aquatic nuisance as defined in Part 33 does not require a permit, if the removal is accomplished by hand-pulling (i.e., without the use of a powered or mechanized tool) and all plant fragments are removed from the water and properly

disposed of on land above the ordinary high-water mark. A permit is not required for hand-raking (i.e., without the use of a powered or mechanized tool) of lake bottomlands where vegetation is not present before raking, and where bottom lands are predominantly composed of sand or pebbles. Larger scale removal of aquatic plants requires a permit from the WRD, under Part 301, as mentioned above."

The summary reaffirms prior conversations that I and staff have had with EGLE, disturbing the environment of Shawood could risk flipping the ecosystem into a turbid, algae-dominated state with poor water quality. The current status of the lake reflects its natural condition. As requested, we'll continue to investigate lily pad treatment options with Savin Lake Services in conjunction with other homeowners in the area. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions regarding this development.

C: