

Lakes Advisory Committee Meeting

11/17/2025

Shared by Kurt Zipp

We are an advisory committee that is a voluntary, unpaid group of citizens with relevant knowledge and interest in the health of our lakes. Members were appointed by the city council after being interviewed. The key functions of our committee are: research critical issues, public engagement, policy development, direct assistance from city staff, and provide recommendations for city council consideration.

The primary goal of the committee is to deal with the cattail invasion and it remains a clearly defined focus. As a committee we have become local experts on how to move forward with our lake improvements.

The City of Whitewater had two recent studies completed on the current quality of the lakes; a storm water plan and a water quality plan. The plans combined cost of over \$200,000 was well spent to provide an independent professional evaluation and guidance to move forward. The water quality plan highlighted that the cattail invasion reduced our open water shoreline edge by over 40%. The shoreline must be recovered. There are many ways to accomplish this goal. The lowest cost and most effective way is drone spraying of the cattails in mid to late August. This has been completed on a small scale on Trippe Lake with outstanding results. An acre of cattails produces over 2.5 tons of organic matter into our lakes every year. Decomposing cattail vegetation produce high releases of methane gas. We have over 50 acres of cattails where they do not belong.

In 2025 the city council of Whitewater decided not to create a Trippe and Cravath Lake district for proper management of the lakes. The responsibility of saving and improving the lakes remains on our committees shoulders. We will continue to provide direction to the city council to allow them to meet their stewardship and fiduciary responsibilities of our natural resource.

Managing cattails with water level control

by [Wisconsin Wetlands Association](#) | Nov 2, 2018 | [For landowners, News](#)

Three types of cattail are found in Wisconsin—one native and desirable, and two aggressive and invasive. Broad-leaved cattail (*Typha latifolia*) is the “good guy.” Narrow-leaved cattail (*Typha angustifolia*) is one of the “bad guys.” The other bad guy is created when the two other types cross-breed, creating the hybrid cattail (*Typha x glauca*). Hybrid cattail is aggressive and needs control. Both narrow-leaved and hybrid cattail take over wetlands, and unfortunately, they are becoming more pervasive in Wisconsin and the Midwest. So much so that it is very difficult to find a true stand of native cattail.

If you have large stands of cattail taking over your wetland, you likely have one of the invasive cattails, and you should consider actions to control the cattail in order to make room for native plants in your wetland. The winter is a good time to use the “cut and flood” technique for cattail.

This technique works best if you can control water levels in your wetland: Late summer/early fall is the time to lower water levels in your wetland via your water control structure. (You don’t want to alter water levels after about mid-October, because frogs and salamanders may be living in the mud and lowering the water levels may expose them to freezing temperatures.) Once your wetland is dry (or frozen, if it doesn’t dry out), mow or cut the cattail plants low to the ground (or right to the ice surface). In the spring, set your water levels high to flood your wetland, covering the cut cattail stems.

Use this technique if you cannot control water levels in your wetland: Once your wetland has frozen for the winter, mow or cut the cattail plants as close to the ice as you can. In the spring, melting snow and spring rains should flood the wetland, covering the cut cattail stems.

With either technique, the water that over-tops the cut stems in spring will seep into the roots through the cut stems, ironically drowning this water-loving plant.

Read more about invasive cattail and techniques for its control [on the Southeastern Wisconsin Invasive Species Consortium’s website.](#)