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COMO LAKE

Make a difference



Como Lake Herbicide Treatment Planned in Spring 2020

Capitol Region Watershed District (CRWD) is committed to improving water quality in Como Lake, a beloved water resource in Saint Paul for over a century.

Despite efforts to address the water quality in the lake over the years, decades of stormwater runoff and pollution have made a new Como Lake plan necessary.

Como Lake Plan

The biggest challenge facing Como Lake today is too much phosphorus, a pollutant carried to the lake through runoff in storm drains. Over time, high levels of phosphorus—three times higher than Minnesota standards—have led to algae blooms that choke the oxygen from the lake and lead to fish kills. While CRWD and its partners have already worked to reduce phosphorus levels by 20% in the past two decades, water quality in the lake remains poor.

The other main concern in Como Lake is an invasive aquatic plant known as curly-leaf pondweed. The plant is dominating Como Lake's ecosystem, making it difficult for native plants to survive. Decaying curly-leaf pondweed adds more phosphorous to the water when it dies off, so management is key to achieving CRWD's water quality goals.

CRWD, with guidance and support from the City of Saint Paul, Ramsey County and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have outlined the new Como Lake Water Management Plan implementing the industry's best practices, science and technology. The Como Lake plan identifies strategies to address the water quality issues, which includes treatment of the water over the course of several years, beginning in the spring of 2020 with herbicide and alum treatments.



About the Treatment

An herbicide will be applied to Como Lake this spring to target the overgrowth of an unwanted aquatic plant called curly-leaf pondweed.

Many studies have shown that herbicide treatments are the most effective solution for reducing curly-leaf pondweed, and similar treatments have been successfully used on a number of metro area lakes in the past decade.



Frequently Asked Questions

Is it necessary to apply herbicides to Como Lake?

Yes, curly-leaf pondweed has overrun the ecosystem, reducing recreation on the lake and making it difficult for native plants and aquatic life to survive. Herbicide application is the only option for addressing an infestation at this level.

How are the herbicides applied?

A licensed contractor will be hired, and the application plan will be reviewed and approved by the MN DNR. The exact plan for where and how herbicide treatments will occur on the lake is still being developed and will be finalized by the end of 2019.

When will this happen at Como Lake?

The herbicides will be applied in early spring to target curly-leaf pondweed before native plants begin growing.

How will lake visitors and users be impacted?

Visitors will see the lake being treated this spring, and access to the lake for recreation may be restricted at times. Because this will occur in early spring, there will be very few recreation activities occurring on the lake, and signs will be placed to alert people visiting the lake during the time of application.

Are herbicides safe?

When applied at the correct dosage and time of year, herbicides present little concern to human health. These herbicides target plants only and have not been shown to have adverse effects on fish, birds or muskrats.

Monitoring will occur to determine the effectiveness of treatment each year.



How can I learn more?

Visit capitolregionwd.org to learn more about the Como Lake plan and see how you can participate.

Public meetings will be held in March of 2020 to discuss project plans in greater detail. Look for details on Facebook.

Signs will be posted to alert people visiting the lake during the time of application.



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