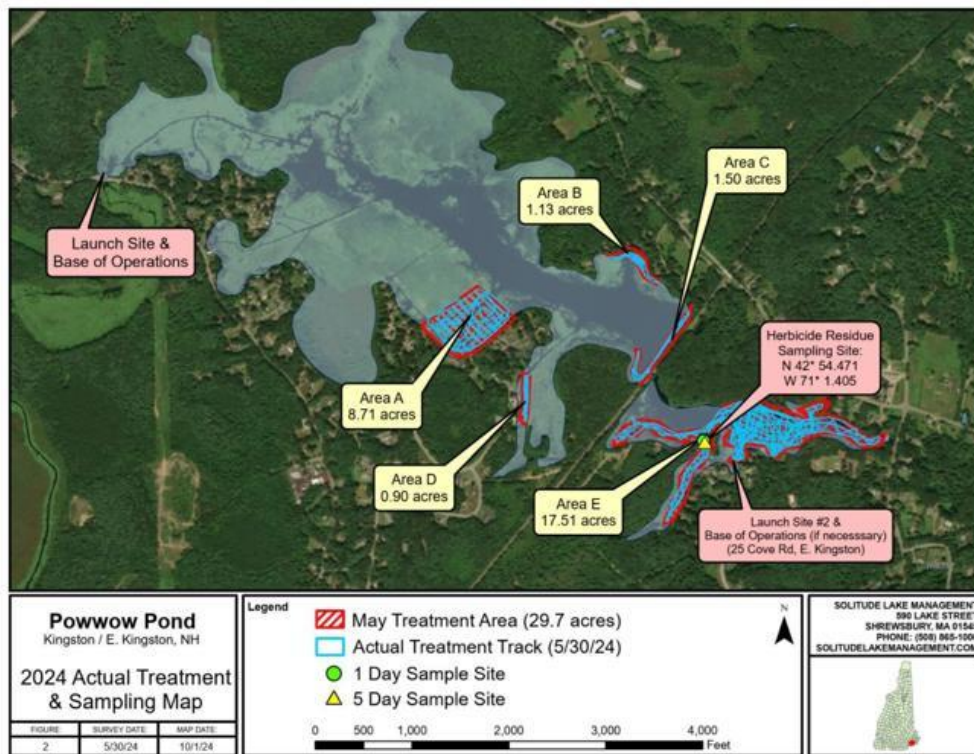


Milfoil control efforts yield results in Powwow Pond

- Matthew Allen East Kingston Conservation Commission
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Map shows the extent of milfoil mitigation in Powwow Pond.

Kingston Conservation Commission/Courtesy photo



Kayakers enjoy the solitude of Powwow Pond on a summer day

- Vicki Brown

EAST KINGSTON — Multi-organization and two-town efforts continue to prevent Powwow Pond from becoming infested with variable milfoil, a state-listed invasive aquatic plant that inhibits recreational use, disrupts the ecological balance of waterbodies, gets caught in boat propellers, reduces shoreline property values, and is difficult to control.

Variable Milfoil is an underwater aquatic plant composed of a central stem, with fine leaves circling the main stem. It can grow up to 15 feet from the bottom of a water body, posing a problem for shallow water bodies.

This particular species of Milfoil is not native to New Hampshire and lacks a native predator, according to NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES).

Milfoil is difficult to control once it becomes fully established. It spreads through seeds and fragmentation (pieces of the original plant break off and can re-establish in a new location). This ability, combined with a lack of natural predators, leads to rapid growth and habitat expansion.

Working with NH DES, the Powwow Pond Council has historically used several approaches to deal with the Milfoil problem.

In 2018 and 2019, the invasive plant was manually pulled out of the lake by individuals in canoes. When that proved too labor-intensive to be effective, removal efforts became a combination of Diver Assisted Suction Harvesting (DASH), where professional divers remove the plant at its roots, and human-safe herbicide treatments designed to specifically target the Milfoil.

In spring 2024, NH DES surveyed the East Kingston and Kingston sections of Powwow Pond, and recommended Milfoil treatment across 29.7 acres.

Solitude Lake Management applied ProcellaCOR EC on May 30. “The post treatment evaluation of the 30-acre target area found 100% milfoil elimination and no harm to native species,” said Russell Chute of the Powwow Pond Council, citing Solitude Lake Management’s yearend report.

Pond water quality and variable milfoil will continue to be monitored each year. The biggest obstacle with getting ahead of Milfoil growth is its resiliency. In addition to its fragmentation growth ability, Milfoil seeds are not affected by herbicides. This means that if there is a seed bank present in the lake-bottom sediments, Milfoil will continue to persist until all seeds have germinated.

Moving forward, Solitude Lake Management recommends continued herbicidal treatment to reduce the number of seeds produced by existing milfoil plants; and targeted non-chemical controls such as hand-pulling or DASH to remove scattered or lower density populations of invasive Milfoil regrowth.

The Powwow Pond Council and NHDES, with support from East Kingston and Kingston, continue to monitor and manage Milfoil, creating a map of locations in spring and arranging for treatment, to keep the pond a valuable recreational and ecological resource.