

Davis Stream once again closed to boat traffic

Boaters on Damariscotta Lake attempting to travel upstream of the Jefferson Market along the Davis Stream may be confronted with the following message emblazoned across the navigational buoy mid-channel: "Area Closed."

This message, backed by a state order, is intended to ensure that boaters do not disturb and further spread an infestation of the invasive aquatic weed Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*), which was discovered there last September by attentive local resident Ray Hayes.

Hydrilla is a non-native, aggressive water weed which can clog up boating channels and degrade fish and wildlife habitat. It can re-grow in new locations from tiny fragments that may be produced if disturbed by boat propellers.

The site is Damariscotta Lake's second confirmed hydrilla infestation, although thanks to a

prompt response by the Dept of Environmental Protection (DEP), the first infestation has been successfully sealed off from the rest of the lake in an isolated lagoon. Extensive lakeshore surveys led by the Damariscotta Lake Watershed Association (DLWA) have revealed no further infestation sites to date.

Removal and containment efforts were made by both DEP and DLWA last fall at the Davis Stream infestation, and the DEP is set to begin an early season re-evaluation of the site on June 13.

Volunteers will be needed to assist in this effort, and to work with the DLWA in an on-going monitoring and hand-removal effort this growing season. Although hydrilla can grow uncontrollably once established, an aggressive response to this early-stage infestation may be sufficient to limit its spread.

A free, extensive workshop on invasive aquatic plant identification is also scheduled to be held at the DLWA office on June 19. Visit www.dlwa.org or call 549-3836 for more information and to become involved in this effort to preserve Davis Stream and the Damariscotta Lake.

