



55 Years

# QUARTERLY

THREE LAKES ASSOCIATION

SERVING LAKE BELLAIRE, CLAM LAKE AND TORCH LAKE IN ANTRIM COUNTY, MICHIGAN

OCTOBER 2021

## Full Aquatic Plant Survey of Torch Lake

You can tell a lot about a lake by looking at the “seaweed” growing in it. Torch Lake, for instance, is home to many different species of aquatic plants. Most of them are native, and beneficial. But some of them are invasive, and unwanted. What exactly they all are, and where exactly they are all growing, is the subject of an Aquatic Plant Survey being conducted this fall on Torch Lake.

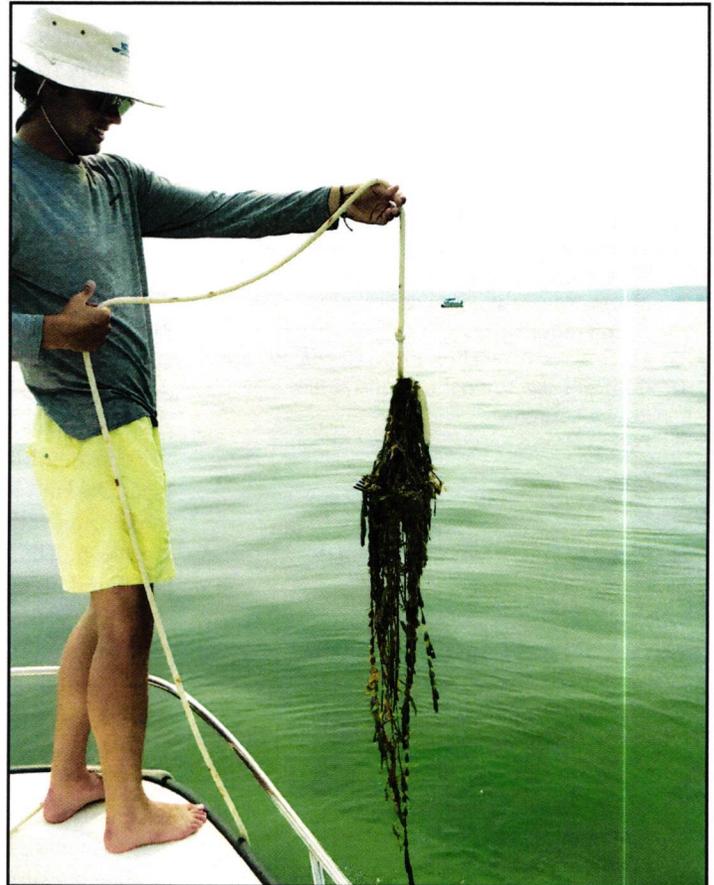
Thanks to a generous donation from the Dole Family Foundation, a joint team from TLA and TLPA have engaged Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council to complete this survey.

Water Resource Specialists from Tip of the Mitt will examine the entire circumference of the lake, looking for any and

all plants growing between the shore and out to a depth of about 30 feet. Patches of underwater vegetation are located using an aerial drone, and then followed up on by field workers in a boat taking actual plant samples.

As of late September, the team had already spent eight days on the lake and examined plant growth at 136 sample points. In general, plants were found in areas where the depth dropped off along the shorelines or near obstructions (for instance fish cribs, the old boiler, etc.). Most of the substrate on Torch Lake is not suitable for plants to grow, so it appears that obstructions and drop-offs provide a catch point for sediment and nutrients that help plants grow. An online mapping system is being utilized to document all observations including the species, location, and size of the plant bed.

So far, 17 different species of aquatic plants have been identified, most of them various species of native pond weeds and Chara. One unwelcome invader that has turned up on the list is Eurasian watermilfoil, or EWM for short. As we have previously documented, EWM is an invasive plant that has the ability to out-compete native plants and spread rapidly. It can quickly become a



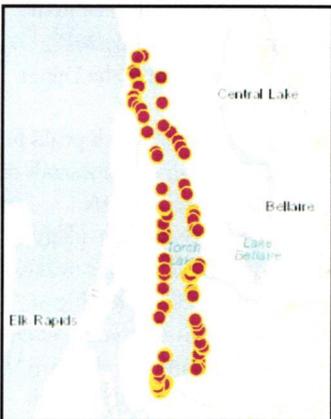
**Evan of Tip of the Mitt collecting aquatic plants on Torch Lake for the plant survey**

real problem, as it has in several other northern Michigan lakes.

Fortunately, only one previously-unknown colony of EWM has turned up as a result of the survey. This patch and three other known patches of EWM are being chemically treated this fall by PLM Land and Lake Management, a highly-respected company that has been treating EWM in the Chain of Lakes for years. A joint TLA-TLPA volunteer team

will then monitor these sites to see if additional or alternative treatment is necessary next year.

Meanwhile, the Aquatic Plant Survey work continues. The results of the survey will be a valuable addition to the common database of records being created to have a robust method of keeping track of our water quality measurements, aquatic plant life findings, our treatment actions, and how our water is changing over time.



**Map of survey locations**

*Sneak peek*

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