

2026 MILFOIL ACTION PLAN

Building on Progress in 2025

Last year, members adopted [Watercraft Guidelines](#) designed to reduce the spread of milfoil by directing boats away from infested areas. We expanded our supply and use of yellow buoy markers to direct watercraft traffic away from milfoil beds. Post implementation observation indicated a noticeable decline of watercraft travel through milfoil beds. [Survey results](#) also showed strong community support and a clear intention among the vast majority of residents to follow the **Guidelines**. Continued adherence to these practices, supported by ongoing outreach, remains one of our most effective and immediate measures.

Context: The Cost of Eradication

Experience at a comparable lake in Quebec illustrates that milfoil eradication is not possible: the weed always comes back. But measures can be taken to drastically reduce the amount of milfoil but they are expensive.

Residents at Lac des Abénaquis reportedly invested approximately **\$185,000 per hectare** over five years using mats and hand-pulling by divers followed by maintenance costs (\$20,000/year). With approximately 51 hectares of infestation at Lac Notre-Dame, a similar approach would cost \$9.4M and a sustained commitment. At present, such funding is not available. It is clear we need to follow a different path for now.

Large scale treatment interventions would require provincial authorization. Permitting processes for aquatic treatment beyond 75m² are complex, resource intensive and require substantial documentation. Community consensus and financial backing would be essential prerequisites.

A small group of interested lake residents discussed the proposed Milfoil Action Plan for 2026.

Feedback on the proposal

Consensus that the pilot project is a good idea with several potential locations for the pilot discussed.

The need for a longer term (5 year) plans was discussed.

It would be great to have more people involved... Suggestions include regular (social?) gathering of residents to create more interest.

Locate and reach properties that are frequently rented to target specialized communications to the owners to ensure renters are aware of the buoys, Watercraft Guidelines, etc.

Inventory possible sources of funding including the La Pêche Green Fund from which the Association has already received some funding.

A couple of anecdotes were shared from 2025 which reinforces the need for education and best practice for those who choose to remove milfoil from their property shoreline and docks.

2026 Strategy - Immediate Actions within Community Control (The Near Term)

Our proposed path is built on a **two-phase** approach.

First, we propose to focus on controlling milfoil, including:

- Expansion in our supply and deployment of buoys marking infested areas.
- Door -to-door canvass to re-engage residents on the merits of following the ***Watercraft Guidelines*** and respecting the buoys
- Renewed education campaign regarding milfoil prevention and spread including:
 - Production and distribution of a short video explaining buoy placement and navigation expectations.
 - Educational programming on safe removal and disposal near docks.
 - Information on best practices for cleaning boats and preventing inter-lake spread of invasive aquatic species.
- Continued outreach and communication with other lake associations facing the same milfoil challenges as Notre Dame and Usher lakes.

Targeted Pilot Project

We are also proposing a pilot project using benthic mats on the lake bottom in an area where milfoil beds are typically dense. The purpose of this pilot would be to assess the feasibility, environmental effects and cost/benefit before considering broader application of this approach.

Benthic mats have been used on other lakes with great effectiveness. Much like covering a weedy garden bed with black plastic, by covering a milfoil infestation with the lake bottom blanket for approximately 6 weeks, the weeds are deprived of sunlight and die off. Benthic mats are found to be more effective and much easier to install than burlap. They require four people to install. The proposed location of the pilot is off of Manor Point (attach map). The success of the pilot program will be evaluated at the end of the season and the results shared with the membership.

As physical intervention that exceeds an area larger than 75m² requires one or more permits from the provincial government, this pilot project would not exceed this limit. The pilot project would be informed by the experiences of neighbouring lake associations and input received from a local biologist. Four (4) volunteers would assist with the installation, moving and storage of the mats.

The longer-term Review

If the benthic mat pilot is successful, the Association can apply to the Government to exceed the 75 m² area limit and lay down more mats. A long-term Plan is a standard provincial requirement for authorizations/permits. While we develop a longer term plan, we will continue to review emerging research and control methods. A comprehensive literature review concerning milfoil and other invasive aquatic plants currently being conducted by Carleton University will inform future considerations.