



## Lake Tapps milfoil meeting draws big crowd to North Tapps Middle School

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More than 120 Lake Tapps residents packed into the North Tapps Middle School multi-purpose room March 31 to hear Cascade Water Alliance's plans for helping to rid their lake of eurasian milfoil, an invasive species of plant that is clogging beaches and coves from one end of the lake to the other.

"You have it and it's a problem" said Harry Gibbons, a senior limnologist for Tetra Tech, a consultant group hired by Cascade Water Alliance.

The plan announced by Gibbons and Cascade

calls for a multi-year approach that combines several measures to try and completely eradicate milfoil from Lake Tapps.

The standing room only crowd listened as Gibbons explained necessity of removing the invasive weed from the lake as well as the options being considered.

Gibbons compared milfoil in the lake to a tumor in the body.

"Your best hope is to grab that tumor and get it out of your body before it spreads," he said, calling the weed a "game-changer" in a lake.



Harry Gibbons of Tetra Tech explains the Eurasian milfoil eradication plan to Lake Tapps residents at a meeting March 31 at North Tapps Middle School.

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“With the invasives like eurasian (milfoil), you can’t play nice,” he said.

Gibbons listed six options, ranging from doing nothing to bio controls to manual controls to chemicals, though he said several had no applicability to Lake Tapps.

“‘No action’ is just going to cost you money in the long term,” he said. “I don’t think this is an option and that’s why we’re here today.”

Other options, such as drawdown of the lake have also proven to be ineffective in Lake Tapps, primarily because winters in this area are not cold or dry enough to kill off the plant.

Gibbons also said biocontrol measures (“Biocontrol means ‘is there something out there that eats it?’” Gibbons explained.) such as use of a milfoil weevil or grass carp are not applicable to Lake Tapps either because of the difficulty in getting permits due to fisheries downstream from the lake.

Gibbons said the plan for Lake Tapps combines three techniques: drawdown, manual control and chemical control, though Gibbons said the chemicals used would be bio-friendly, though any short term negative effects would be countered by the long term viability after the milfoil is removed.

The timeline for implementation of the milfoil plan states that Cascade will finish mapping the lake for the weed this month, draft a management plan in May and begin to implement in June.

Though there will be activity this summer, Gibbons said a second round of mapping and checks will be necessary this year to check effectiveness and eradication efforts would continue for up to five years.

Gibbons said there should be no effect on recreational uses and that residents would be informed 30 days prior to any chemical treatment.

Cascade Water Alliance has estimated an initial cost of \$250,000 for milfoil treatment, according to Capital Projects Director Jon Shinoda.

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"We are ready to spend a substantial amount to fix this," he told the residents.

Several residents at the meeting said they were pleased to see Cascade "stepping up" to deal with the issue of milfoil, which according to the agreement signed with the Lake Tapps Community Council is the corporation's responsibility.

"We're very pleased with their attitude and their willingness to step up," said Council vice president Leon Stucki, adding that cascade has gone "above and beyond" on their efforts.

"I'm happy they're taking an aggressive approach," said Dave Little, who lives in the Church Lake section of the lake.

Little called milfoil a "terrible problem" and said in the summer months he takes half a garbage can's worth of the weed out of the lake each day.

Gibbons urged residents to take preventive measures, such as education about the dangers of milfoil and to take care to make sure boats being put into the lake are clean of the plant, which can start a new colony from a few simple bits of leaf.

He also urged residents not to buy any fertilizers with phosphorus and to use sparingly the fertilizers they do buy.

For more information on the meeting visit [Cascade's Community Meetings](#) page.

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