

What Cascade is doing about Eurasian Water Milfoil

Eurasian watermilfoil is an invasive, non-native, aquatic plant that occurs in waterways in the Northwest. Milfoil is a non-regulated weed in Pierce County and Cascade has no regulatory obligations to control milfoil in Lake Tapps. However, Cascade will continue to manage milfoil to the same level that was present when former owner Puget Sound Energy generated hydropower.

Cascade implemented a program to manage Eurasian watermilfoil in 2010 at Lake Tapps reservoir, and since then, efforts have included applications of EPA-approved, aquatic herbicides and diver hand-pulling. Cascade does not treat native, aquatic plants.

Lake Tapps reservoir is assessed annually to determine areas in greatest need of treatment. Cascade currently has all necessary permits to control milfoil under the 10-year Cascade 2015 Integrated Aquatic Vegetation Management Plan.

Diver Hand Pulling and Chemical Treatment:

Cascade has aggressively managed milfoil using diver hand pulling and chemical treatments since 2010 and will continue to do so. Visit www.cascadewater.org/milfoil for maps of areas treated in past years and for the current year plan (once available).

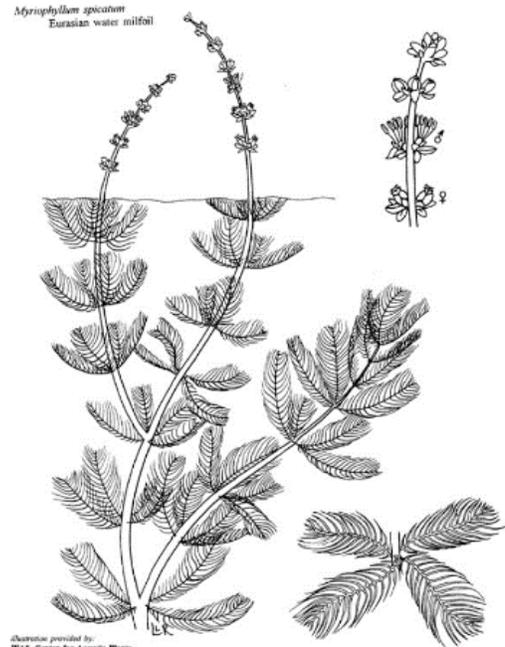


Illustration provided by IFAS, Center for Aquatic Plants, University of Florida, Gainesville, 1990

Eurasian watermilfoil drawing used with permission from University of Florida/IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants.



TappsWise Program:

Since nutrients from lawns and septic tanks can significantly increase aquatic vegetation, Cascade, in partnership with Tacoma-Pierce County Department of Health, has started the TappsWise Program. This program includes information and workshops provided throughout the year on natural yard care and septic system maintenance. The TappsWise Checklist is a guide to the most important actions homeowners can take to protect the reservoir. By completing the checklist, the property can be "TappsWise Certified" and homeowners will be eligible for special TappsWise incentives, such as discounts on septic system inspections. Start by signing up online at or calling 253.798.2856 for information on the program and to schedule a free Lake TappsWise certification visit.

Dry-land Herbicide Treatment Pilot Study:

In this pilot study, herbicides were applied directly to the lake bed while the lake level was down. Cascade applied herbicides in January 2018. Four plots of 50' by 50' sections in the southwest cove of Tapps Island were treated with different chemical combinations. Milfoil growth will be monitored in the following years to determine effectiveness.



Bottom Barrier Treatment Pilot Study:

Bottom barriers are a fabric or screen that covers the lake bed and inhibits plant growth (link to DOE page). In January of 2018, jute matting, a biodegradable fabric, was installed by the second hole of the golf course. In one section, two layers of jute matting were applied and in the other, one layer was applied. Effectiveness of the bottom barriers will be monitored over the following years.



Milfoil Research:

Some milfoil strains show resistance to herbicides over time. Cascade is working with Montana State University to sample milfoil in Lake Tapps Reservoir to identify the various strains in the reservoir and growth of these different strains over time, which would help determine the most effective herbicide. Sampling in 2017 showed eleven strains of milfoil, which will be monitored.