

# Eurasian Water Milfoil

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Does Cascade have a legal obligation to control milfoil?

No, Cascade has no regulatory obligation to control milfoil or other aquatic plants in the Lake Tapps reservoir except for regulated noxious weeds. The Pierce County Noxious Weed Board no longer lists milfoil as a regulated noxious weed (<http://piercecountyweedboard.org/index.php/watermilfoil>).

### What does Cascade do about milfoil?

Since 2010, Cascade has aggressively surveyed and treated milfoil. 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. Below is a summary of Cascade's efforts to manage milfoil; for more details, see [www.cascadewater.org/milfoil](http://www.cascadewater.org/milfoil).



- **Diver Hand Pulling and Chemical Treatment:** Since 2010, Cascade has managed milfoil growth with diver hand pulling and chemical treatments.
- **TappsWise Program:** Since nutrients from lawns and septic tanks significantly increase vegetation, Cascade has initiated the TappsWise program ([www.tpchd.org/TappsWise](http://www.tpchd.org/TappsWise)), a partnership with Tacoma-Pierce County Department of Health, to promote natural yard care and septic maintenance to keep Lake Tapps clean and healthy.
- **Pilot Studies:** Cascade conducted two pilot studies in 2018 and 2019 on controlling milfoil with bottom barriers and dry-land herbicide treatments. Results will be shared once they are available.
- **Research:** There are multiple strains of milfoil, some resistant to herbicides. Cascade hired a research team to sample and identify the various genotypes in the reservoir and eleven strains were found.

### What can homeowners do about milfoil?

If property owners plan to remove aquatic plants from Lake Tapps in front of their property, by hand, using bottom-barriers, or otherwise, they must follow rules outlined in Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's "*Aquatic Plants and Fish: Rules for Aquatic Plant Removal and Control*" at <https://wdfw.wa.gov/publications/01728>. Homeowners must also obtain any necessary permits from appropriate agencies, such as Bonney Lake, Pierce County, and Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Nutrients from lawns and septic tanks significantly increase vegetation, so reducing fertilizer applications and keeping septic tanks maintained and working properly will reduce growth. Residents are encouraged to participate in the TappsWise program at [www.tpchd.org/TappsWise](http://www.tpchd.org/TappsWise). For more detailed information on what homeowners can do about milfoil visit [www.cascadewater.org/milfoil](http://www.cascadewater.org/milfoil).

**Cascade operates the reservoir differently than Puget Sound Energy. Does that alter its regulatory obligations to control noxious weeds?**

No, regulatory obligations are not altered due to different operations.

**Is this vegetation similar to what a homeowner would typically encounter in a similar Northwest water body?**

Yes, Cascade surveys and treats milfoil, and the levels are similar to that which would typically be found in a similar Northwest waterbody.

**Is swimming in Lake Tapps safe?**

All swimmers do so at their own risk. This is included in the 1954 deeds each homeowner holds. Aquatic vegetation is typically found in Northwest lakes regardless if they were raised and lowered. Cascade has done much to reduce aquatic plant levels to an amount similar to that found in other lakes. Cascade also informs homeowners on the frigid temperatures of the lake and warns about hypothermia.

**Do Lake Tapps residents pay for the work Cascade does on Lake Tapps?**

No, Cascade does not receive or use any Pierce County property taxes, nor resident dollars. All projects are paid for by Cascade members: the cities of Bellevue, Kirkland, Issaquah, Redmond and Tukwila; and Sammamish Plateau Water and Skyway Water and Sewer District.

