



Dear Resident,

The City is coordinating mechanical harvesting of aquatic vegetation in Mill Pond again this year, as it has since 1980. Although aquatic vegetation provides many water quality and wildlife benefits, it can degrade the aesthetic appearance of and impede recreational access to the creek when vegetation becomes dense. The City works with residents and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to find a balance between these values.

Harvesting aquatic vegetation creates open areas of water for recreation. Mechanical harvesters are large machines which cut and collect aquatic plants. Cut plants are removed from the water by a conveyor belt system and transported offsite. The process is analogous to mowing a lawn.

Each year there are many questions about the harvesting operations on Mill Pond. We've compiled some frequently asked questions and their responses. We're also asking you to participate in a brief survey related to the service and value of harvesting aquatic vegetation in Mill Pond so that we may better serve you.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at jvanderwerff@EdinaMN.gov or 952-826-0445.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Van Der Werff".

Jessica Van Der Werff
Water Resources Coordinator

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

7450 Metro Boulevard • Edina, Minnesota 55439
www.EdinaMN.gov • 952-826-0371 • Fax 952-826-0392



Mill Pond Aquatic Vegetation Harvesting

Frequently Asked Questions

The Pond has patches of aquatic vegetation after harvesting. Why isn't all the vegetation removed?

Aquatic vegetation is important for maintaining a stable pond environment. It helps provide food and shelter for fish and waterfowl, improve water quality and clarity, and protect shorelines and lake bottoms. Many of the things that we enjoy most about the pond are directly linked to aquatic vegetation.

In Minnesota, the state is the owner of aquatic vegetation growing in public waters (M.S. 84.091). The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) regulates the harvest, transplanting, and destruction of aquatic plants in public waters through a permit program. The purpose of the DNR permit program is to protect the beneficial functions of aquatic vegetation while managing invasive species and allowing property owners to obtain reasonable access for recreation. DNR permits may not be issued for aesthetic reasons alone.

How are harvesting areas determined?

The DNR permit allows for harvesting of a navigation channel and up to 50% of each property owner's shoreline. The overall area of aquatic vegetation harvested cannot exceed 50% of the Pond. Additionally, some areas may not be harvested because they are too shallow for the harvester equipment to operate or they may contain DNR protected plants, like water lilies, which have harvesting limitations. Each year is unique and adjustments are made where necessary.

Can a chemical treatment be used to manage the vegetation?

Minnehaha Creek flows through Mill Pond. DNR permits restrict the use of chemical treatments in flowing water because they don't remain in place long enough to work and can have impacts downstream. If chemical treatment were allowed, it would be limited to 15% of the area; whereas mechanical treatment allows for up to 50%.

How many times will the vegetation be harvested?

Mill Pond is typically harvested twice per year; in early summer (about June) and late summer (about August). The contractor uses professional judgment to determine the optimum time to conduct harvesting.

Is the harvesting work paid by the hour?

Harvesting work is paid by the acre, not the hour.

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What is causing the dense aquatic plant growth?

Mill Pond contains several varieties of native plants and two non-native species; Eurasian water milfoil and curly-leaf pondweed. Both non-native species grow prolifically and can out-compete native plants.

Another major contributor to algae and aquatic vegetation growth is excess nutrients, namely phosphorus. Common sources for phosphorus include grass clippings, leaves, car wash soap, and some fertilizers.

As a homeowner, what can I do to limit nutrient additions to Mill Pond?

Small actions can make a big difference.

- Keep grass clippings and leaves from getting into the street and into the storm drain. Water, and the pollution it picks up on its path to the storm drain, enters the Pond untreated. If you're interested in protecting the storm drains in your neighborhood, contact Jessica Van Der Werff (jvanderwerff@EdinaMN.gov or 952-826-0445) to learn about the storm drain stenciling program.
- Many detergents used for car washing contain phosphorus. Consider washing on your lawn or at a car wash facility where water can be treated.
- Avoid using any kind of fertilizer that contains phosphorus, especially near the shoreline.
- Natural shoreline plantings can protect waters from pollution and erosion. They are also a relatively easy and cost effective method for deterring waterfowl from using your shoreline as a bathroom. If you're interested in a shoreline planting or other planting project, you may be eligible for grant funding available through the Minnehaha Creek Watershed District (<http://www.minnehahacreek.org/>).

What is the City doing to reduce nutrient additions and other pollutants to the Pond?

The City performs street sweeping during critical times in early spring and fall to keep pollutants from entering storm drains and ultimately ending up in nearby waterbodies. During other times of the year, volunteers can help to build awareness and local stewardship for storm drains in their neighborhoods through the storm drain stenciling program. The City also monitors construction activities and enforces common-sense erosion control practices.

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Mill Pond Aquatic Vegetation Harvesting Survey

Please complete and return the survey in the included postage-paid envelope by **September 1, 2015** to Edina Public Works, 7450 Metro Boulevard, Edina 55439.

1. What are your primary activities on Mill Pond? Check all that apply.
 - viewing water/wildlife
 - swimming
 - socializing/entertaining
 - canoeing/kayaking/boating
 - fishing
 - other: _____

2. Over the past two years, the average annual cost for harvesting has been about \$180 per property. How would you rate the overall value of the service compared with the price paid?
 - poor fair good very good excellent

3. How would you rate the quality of the harvesting work over the last two years?
 - poor fair good very good excellent

4. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the overall aquatic vegetation management strategy in Mill Pond over the last two years?
 - very dissatisfied dissatisfied neutral satisfied very satisfied

5. How would you rate your level of satisfaction with the overall contact between you and the City of Edina regarding management of Mill Pond over the past two years?
 - very dissatisfied dissatisfied neutral satisfied very satisfied

6. Which of the following levels of service would you be in favor of?
 - paying more to get an additional cutting (for a total of three cuttings per year).
 - maintaining the current strategy of harvesting twice per year.
 - reducing the frequency of harvesting to one time per year.
 - discontinuing mechanical harvesting.

7. If you have any other comments, please include them in the space provided. You may also use the back of this page.

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