

WIXOM LAKE BOTTOMLAND MANAGEMENT PROJECT SECOND QUARTER 2024 UPDATE

PREPARED FOR:

WIXOM LAKE IMPROVEMENT BOARD
GLADWIN & MIDLAND COUNTIES, MI

The bottomland management project on Wixom Lake focuses on the control and removal of nuisance woody plant growth with the select use of herbicides and mowing and/or mulching of remaining biomass. The program is administered by the Wixom Lake Improvement Board. Management efforts are coordinated with the Four Lakes Task Force and the Wixom Lake Association to avoid redundancy and ensure proper timing and sequencing of efforts. The current project is being financed mostly through funds collected from special assessments as approved during public hearings in September of 2023. Below is a list of frequently asked questions along with a summary of activities during the second quarter of 2024.

Who oversees the plant control program?

Plant control activities are coordinated under the direction of the lake board's environmental consultant, Progressive Companies. Biologists from Progressive Companies use drone and ground-based GPS-guided surveys of the lake bottom to identify problem areas, and detailed treatment and mowing maps are provided to the plant control contractors. Follow-up surveys are then conducted to evaluate treatment effectiveness and the need for additional treatments and/or mowing.

Who conducts the herbicide treatments?

Herbicide treatments of the Wixom Lake bottomlands are conducted by PLM Lake & Land Management.

Who determines when and where treatments and mowing will occur?

The timing and scope of treatments is based on the most appropriate management during the target plants growth cycle. The ultimate goal is to have the bottomlands management work completed immediately prior to refilling of the lake.

What plants are targeted for control?

The bottomland plant control program on Wixom Lake focuses on nuisance woody species and invasive plants, such as *Phragmites australis* (common reed) and purple loosestrife. Invasive plant species have the potential to spread quickly to adjacent wetland areas if left unchecked.

Is a permit required?

In Michigan, a permit must be acquired from the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), before herbicides are applied to inland lake bottomlands. The permit lists the herbicides that are approved for use, dose rates, use restrictions, and indicates specific areas of the lake where treatments are allowed. In addition, a federal permit under the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). The NPDES permit is also administered through EGLE. Permit requirements are designed to protect public health and the environment.

Can I apply herbicides myself?

If you have a permit from EGLE, you can treat your own shoreline, but we don't recommend it. In most cases, it is best to have herbicides applied by a licensed professional applicator rather than attempting to apply herbicides yourself. If applied improperly, herbicides can do more harm than good.

For more information visit the Wixom Lake Improvement Board website at www.wixomlakeimprovement.info.

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In the second quarter of 2024, the Wixom Lake Improvement Board (WLIB) formed a mowing committee to discuss options for mowing the bottomlands of Wixom Lake in the most efficient and expedited manner while maintaining control and oversight of the project. The committee recommended that the WLIB contract with the Wixom Lake Association (WLA) after consultation with an attorney to determine the legality of this process according to provisions of Part 309 (Inland Lake Improvements) of Act 451 of 1994, as amended (The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act). The WLIB and WLA are currently finalizing this contract.

How will this process be implemented?

An updated drone survey of Wixom Lake's bottomlands is being conducted by Progressive Companies to provide the most recent condition of the bottomlands. This data will be used to identify areas of the lake needing additional work (either mowing or in some cases herbicide treatments followed up with mowing). Follow-up surveys are then conducted to evaluate treatment/mowing effectiveness and the need for additional treatments and/or mowing.

Once areas are determined, who does the mowing?

A map of the areas to be mowed under contract with the WLA will be presented to a representative of the WLA and they will visually inspect the area to be mowed and determine a cost of mowing based upon consultation with the WLA's mowing sub-contractor(s). The mowing will then commence once the cost is agreed upon by the WLA and the WLIB. Following mowing, the area mowed will be inspected and payment recommendations will be made based upon a review of the daily log forms (completed by the mowing sub-contractor) and a visual review of the work areas and the completed work done.

What is the prioritization for determining areas to be mowed and/or treated?

Accessibility and equipment types needed to achieve the end result will be the primary determining factor for selecting areas for mowing and or treatment. Secondary prioritization will be the most problematic areas that may need multiple uses of different techniques in order to achieve desirable results. Final prioritization will be determined by EGLE's fill permit requirements. The EGLE fill permit is required to refill the lake once the dam construction has been completed and inspected. Again, the ultimate goal is to have the bottomlands management work completed immediately prior to refilling of the lake.

For more information and updates on the project, visit the Wixom Lake Improvement Board website at www.wixomlakeimprovement.info.