

Eurasian Watermilfoil in Prospect Lake

Eurasian watermilfoil (EWM) is a highly invasive aquatic plant that was first identified in Prospect Lake in 2018. It spreads rapidly in shallow water, forming dense underwater beds. Left unchecked, EWM will significantly affect lake health and has already become difficult to control.

- EWM crowds out native aquatic plants
- Degrades habitat for fish and wildlife
- Adds decaying plant material that reduces oxygen
- Favours cyanobacteria (commonly called “blue-green algae”), which can produce toxins
- Interferes with swimming, boating and fishing

WHAT IS THE EWM SITUATION IN PROSPECT LAKE?



Area: 59.8 hectares
Max depth: 14 m
Mean depth: 6.7 m
Shape: Long, narrow lake with extensive shallow shoreline habitat suitable for EWM growth
Status: 2026 drone survey shows EWM covers at least 50% of the shoreline & is present centrally

Action is critical to preventing further ecological damage.

HOW DOES EWM AFFECT LAKE HEALTH?



EWM spreads rapidly, crowding out native plants



EWM dies and decays, using more oxygen



Deep water loses oxygen, stressing fish & lake health



Stored phosphorus is released, adding nutrients to the water



More EWM, algae and cyanobacteria grow



Water quality declines, impacting wildlife & recreation



Conditions favour even more EWM, keeping the cycle going



WHAT HAS THE COMMUNITY DONE SO FAR?

RESIDENT MONITORING

PLPS volunteers have mapped the location, abundance and depth of EWM throughout Prospect Lake.



LAKE MAPPING

Drone surveys in 2025 and 2026 track the extent and spread of EWM. Macrophyte surveys monitor aquatic plants at 148 points throughout the lake.

BENTHIC MATS

Many waterfront residents have voluntarily installed benthic mats and participated in shoreline stewardship initiatives.



Benthic mat in place showing a channel where EWM growth is stopped

ONGOING MONITORING

We continue to monitor EWM and lake health indicators to track change and guide future decisions.

HEALTHY LAKES HAVE:

- Clear water
- Healthy fish habitat
- Balanced aquatic plants
- Oxygen throughout the water

The PLPS continues to work with residents, researchers, the District of Saanich, and other agencies to develop evidence-based solutions for protecting Prospect Lake.

Together we can protect Prospect Lake, today and for generations to come.



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