



Harvesting Program Announcement

FRIENDS OF CATHERINE AND CHANNEL LAKES SECURES APPROVAL TO IMPLEMENT HARVESTING PROGRAM

Permit allows for invasive plant species to be removed from the lakes in the spring and summer, thus reducing internal phosphorus loading from decaying plants

ANTIOCH, ILLINOIS – Friends of Catherine and Channel Lakes, a 501(c)(3) non-profit group focused on improving the water quality in two of Illinois' northernmost lakes, today announced that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources has approved the group's request to implement a mechanical harvesting program in 2020 to help manage and control Eurasian Water Milfoil and Coontail, two invasive plant populations currently found in the lakes.

This permit allows Friends of Catherine and Channel Lakes to hire and manage a mechanical harvesting contractor to harvest up to 70 acres of the lakes once in the spring and once in the summer from 3-12 feet depths of water. The permit requires that the organization prioritize the densest growth areas first.

Among other things, the permit requires that Friends of Catherine and Channel Lakes:

- Measure and report to the IDNR on all harvesting activities on an ongoing basis
- Educate constituents around the lakes about caring for the lakes
- Measure fish populations on a biennial basis
- Enhance native aquatic vegetation in certain areas

“The primary goal of Friends of Catherine and Channel Lakes is to return these two beautiful lakes to pristine conditions. One way we can do this is by reducing the invasive plant species in the lakes,” said Amy Littleton, president of Friends of Catherine and Channel Lakes. “We are grateful for the IDNR's support in this effort, and we look forward to creating a sustainable program that improves the overall quality of lake life for residents and visitors as well as aquatic flora and fauna.”

Specifically, the permit states:

"The stated and apparent purpose of this proposed action is to manage EWM and Coontail populations in Lake Catherine and Channel Lake by mechanically harvesting the species and disposing of materials to reduce nutrient inputs into the lakes in Antioch Township, Lake County. Annual observations determining the densest growths of the non-native invasive EWM and the aggressive Coontail will be documented on a map and used to prioritize harvest areas. Harvesting shall be performed mechanically by a qualified, licensed contractor or by FCCL [Friends of Catherine and Channel Lakes] if at some time during this agreement FCCL has the requisite license(s), equipment, and liability insurance. Harvesting shall occur in spring and summer seasons based on the peak growth of EWM and Coontail to achieve maximum effectiveness in reducing the densest cover during lake usage season. The harvester will be launched in and out of the lake at any number of boat launches located nearest the targeted harvesting areas. The machine will be removed and stored out of the water between workdays or securely moored in a commercial boat slip at one of the marinas on Lake Catherine or Channel Lake. Harvested materials will be sufficiently dewatered and hauled offsite by trucks to be disposed of in upland farm fields with owner permission; disposed of at an appropriate composting, waste disposal, or landfill facility; or may be sold for use as a natural fertilizer and a means to fund the proposed aquatic vegetation management practices. The weights of harvested materials and the areas covered by the harvester shall be recorded in a database to ensure no more than 70 acres in the spring season and 70 acres in the summer season shall be harvested in any given year. FCCL will work with the Department's Fisheries Biologist and local lake residents to prevent aquatic herbicides or other chemicals from being applied to areas scheduled for harvesting. No herbicide application will occur from May 1 through July 31 of each year to maintain vegetation for fish spawning and refugia. Proposed aquatic vegetation removal activities may result in the crushing of mature, juvenile, fry, and/or eggs of; and/or noise and vibration disturbance to the Blackchin Shiner, Iowa Darter, and Starhead Topminnow.

Total estimated area of invasive aquatic vegetation growth and potential impact due to mechanical harvesting within species habitat is 200 acres, aquatic vegetation removal shall not exceed 70 acres in the spring season and 70 acres in the summer season, annually. The Department concurs that the take of Blackchin Shiner, Iowa Darter, and Starhead Topminnow that could result from the proposed project is not the purpose of FCCL's activities but is incidental to the carrying out of an otherwise lawful activity."

More information about the harvesting program can be found on the Friends of Catherine and Channel Lakes website, <https://catherineandchannellakes.org/>.

The Department of Natural Resources Incidental Take Authorizations can be found here: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/conservation/NaturalHeritage/Pages/Incidental-Take-Authorizations.aspx> (#199).

###

About Friends of Catherine and Channel Lakes

Friends of Catherine and Channel Lakes' mission is to maintain the sanctity of Lake Catherine and Channel Lakes, to continuously improve and maintain the lakes' ecosystem, and to establish and implement value-enriched programs to enhance the overall quality of lake life.

Our goal is to return Lake Catherine and Channel Lake to pristine condition by eradicating invasive plant species, reducing pollution and increasing awareness about how to care for the lakes. We are doing this through the implementation of a detailed [Lake Management Plan](#).

For more information, visit us at <https://catherineandchannellakes.org/>.

