October 2026

WALTERS LAKE

PLANT CONTROL SUMMARY

PREPARED FOR:
WALTERS LAKE IMPROVEMENT BOARD
OAKLAND COUNTY, MI

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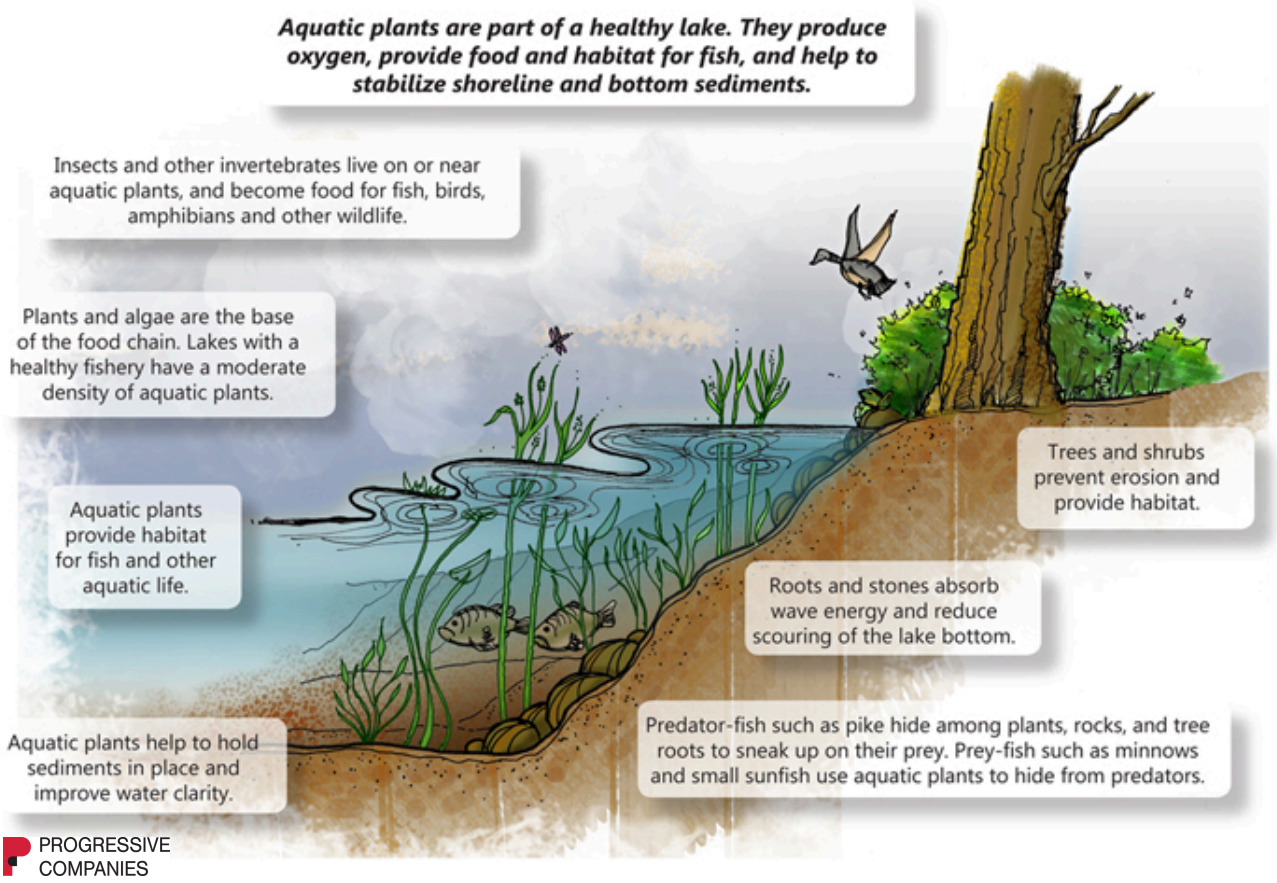
MECHANICAL HARVESTER

Oakland Harvesters, LLC



PROGRAM SUMMARY

A nuisance aquatic plant control program has been ongoing on Walters Lake for many years. The primary objective of the program is to prevent the spread of invasive aquatic plants while preserving beneficial native plant species. This report contains an overview of plant control activities conducted on Walters Lake in 2026.



Aquatic plants are an important component of lakes. They produce oxygen during photosynthesis, provide food, habitat and cover for fish, and help stabilize shoreline and bottom sediments. There are four main aquatic plant groups: submersed, floating-leaved, free-floating, and emergent. Each plant group provides important ecological functions. Maintaining a diversity of native aquatic plants is important to sustaining a healthy fishery and a healthy lake. Invasive aquatic plant species have negative impacts on the lake's ecosystem. It is important to maintain an active plant control program to reduce the establishment and spread of invasive species within Walters Lake. Plant control efforts in 2026 consisted of seven aquatic plant surveys, three aquatic herbicide applications, and two mechanical harvest events.

PLANT CONTROL

Plant control activities are coordinated under the direction of an environmental consultant, Progressive Companies. Scientists from Progressive conduct GPS-guided surveys of the lake to identify problem areas, and georeferenced plant control maps are provided to the plant control contractor. GPS reference points are established along the shoreline and drop-off areas of the lake. These waypoints are used to accurately identify the location of invasive and nuisance plant growth areas.



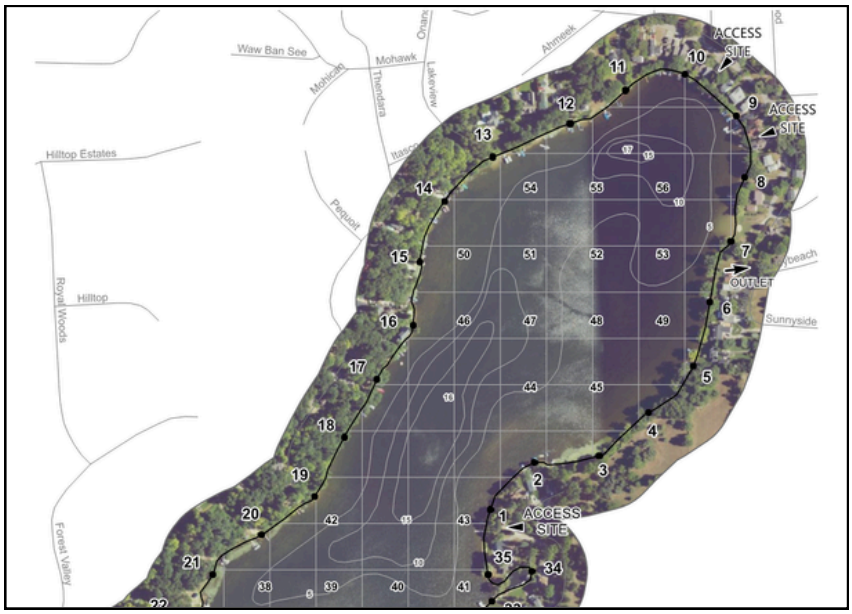
Eurasian milfoil
Myriophyllum spicatum



Curly-leaf pondweed
Potamogeton crispus



Starry stonewort
Nitellopsis obtusa



Primary plants targeted for control in Walters Lake include Eurasian milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed, and starry stonewort. These plants are non-native (exotic) species that tend to be highly invasive and have the potential to spread quickly if left unchecked. Plant control activities conducted on the lake in 2026 are summarized in Table 1.

In Michigan, an Aquatic Nuisance Control (ANC) permit must be acquired from the Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) before herbicides are applied to inland lakes. The permit lists the herbicides that are approved for use, maximum dose rates, use restrictions, and indicates specific areas of the lake where herbicides may be applied. Permit requirements are designed to protect public health and the environment. The contracted herbicide applicator on Walters Lake, PLM Lake and Land Management Corp, holds the ANC permit for the lake.

PLANT CONTROL

TABLE 1. WALTERS LAKE 2026 PLANT CONTROL ACTIVITIES

Date	Work Type	Plants Targeted	Acreage
May 4	Survey	NA	-
May 14	Herbicide Treatment	E. milfoil, curly-leaf pondweed	16.25
June 1	Survey	NA	-
June 2-6	Mechanical Harvesting	Nuisance native plants	25.00
June 6	Harvest Inspection	NA	-
June 29	Survey	NA	-
July 9	Herbicide Treatment	Nuisance native plants, starry stonewort, algae	31.25
July 27	Survey	NA	-
August 11	Mechanical Harvesting	Nuisance native plants	16.50
August 14	Harvest Inspection	NA	-
August 26	Survey	NA	-
August 31	Herbicide Treatment	Starry stonewort, algae	8.50
Total			**97.50**

An increase in Eurasian milfoil growth was observed compared to previous seasons. Due to the increased growth, contact herbicides were used to provide short-term control and allow available funds to be used toward mechanical harvesting.

For long-term management, a full-lake fluridone treatment is recommended in 2027 to reduce the Eurasian milfoil population and provide extended control in subsequent years. Fluridone has previously been utilized in Walters Lake and has provided effective systemic control for approximately 3–5 year intervals.

An increase in native pondweed was also observed throughout the lake. Mechanical harvesting provided limited control due to the pondweed's rapid regrowth. If favorable growth conditions continue into 2027, a third mechanical harvest should be considered to help manage navigable areas and reduce biomass accumulation within the lake.

PLANT INVENTORY SURVEY

In addition to the surveys of the lake to identify invasive plant locations, a detailed vegetation survey of Walters Lake was conducted on August 26, 2026 to evaluate the type and abundance of all plants in the lake. The table below lists each plant species observed during the survey and the relative abundance of each. At the time of the survey, 12 submersed species, one floating-leaved species, and eight emergent species were found in the lake. Walters Lake maintains a moderate diversity of beneficial native plant species.

TABLE 2. WALTERS LAKE 2026 PLANT INVENTORY DATA

Common Name	Scientific Name	Group	Percentage of sites where present
Chara	*Chara* sp.	Submersed	100
Richardson's pondweed	*Potamogeton richardsonii*	Submersed	66
Wild celery	*Vallisneria americana*	Submersed	57
Starry stonewort	*Nitellopsis obtusa*	Submersed	23
Variable pondweed	*Potamogeton gramineus*	Submersed	23
Sago pondweed	*Stuckenia pectinata*	Submersed	20
Eurasian milfoil	*Myriophyllum spicatum*	Submersed	20
Illinois pondweed	*Potamogeton illinoensis*	Submersed	11
Thin-leaf pondweed	*Potamogeton sp.*	Submersed	6
Coontail	*Ceratophyllum demersum*	Submersed	6
Brittle-leaf naiad	*Najas minor*	Submersed	6
Elodea	*Elodea canadensis*	Submersed	3
White waterlily	*Nymphaea odorata*	Floating-leaved	77
Lake sedge	*Carex lacustris*	Emergent	43
Cattail	*Typha* sp.	Emergent	37
Pickerelweed	*Pontederia cordata*	Emergent	26
Phragmites	*Phragmites australis*	Emergent	14
Purple loosestrife	*Lythrum salicaria*	Emergent	9
Bulrush	*Schoenoplectus* sp.	Emergent	6
Iris	*Iris* sp.	Emergent	3
Swamp loosestrife	*Decodon verticillatus*	Emergent	3

Exotic invasive species