

Public Notice for a Category B Project Evaluation

Class Environmental Assessment for MNRF Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects

Proposed invasive species control in the Trent-Severn Waterway

The **Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), Peterborough District**, is inviting public comment on the proposed control of the invasive aquatic plant water soldier (*Stratiotes aloides*) in the Trent-Severn Waterway (TSW). Water soldier is a prohibited invasive aquatic plant, native to Eurasia that was first observed in the Trent River in the fall of 2008.

Water soldier is an “evergreen” perennial plant resembling aloe vera or spider plants, with sharp, serrated leaf edges. It forms dense mats of floating and submersed vegetation that can aggressively out-compete other aquatic plants and negatively impact the biodiversity of aquatic ecosystems. Water soldier also poses a threat to navigation and recreation. The population of water soldier in the TSW is one of only two known wild occurrences in North America. Since 2008, a number of research, control and management strategies have been undertaken to better understand the biology and management of this invasive plant. Taking action to control aquatic invasive species is consistent with Ontario’s Biodiversity Strategy, Ontario’s Invasive Species Strategic Plan, and the Fisheries Management Plan for Fisheries Management Zone 17. In 2016, water soldier was regulated as a prohibited invasive species under Ontario’s *Invasive Species Act, 2015* to prevent further introductions and spread to new waterbodies in the province.

An inter-agency working group (MNRF, Parks Canada-Ontario Waterways, Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters (OFAH), Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP), Trent University, Lower Trent Conservation, and Invasive Species Centre) was formed to help coordinate research, monitoring, control and prevention strategies. Extensive monitoring is underway within the TSW from upstream of County Road 30 downstream to below the dam at Glen Ross (Figure 1) to identify and map populations of water soldier.

The working group has recommended the implementation of a large-scale control project to be implemented in the fall of 2019. Water soldier remains actively growing throughout September and October, while other native aquatic plants have gone dormant. This characteristic makes fall an optimal time to conduct herbicide treatment with minimal impacts to other aquatic plants.

Due to the size of the infestation, control efforts have been undertaken over several years, with a focus on addressing the source populations and preventing further downstream dispersal of the plants. The working group has identified the importance of an integrated management approach that utilizes a variety of control tools, including both physical removal and herbicide treatment. As part of this project, the use of the herbicide Reward® (active ingredient - diquat) is proposed to control the water soldier populations throughout the infestation area.

The OFAH will be hosting Public Information Centres to discuss details of monitoring and proposed control efforts, which the public is invited to attend at:

Wednesday, August 28, 2019
Campbellford Resource Centre
65 Bridge Street, Campbellford
Open House: 3pm - 7pm

Thursday, August 29, 2019
Trent Port Marina
15 Creswell Drive, Trenton
Open House: 4pm - 7pm

The proposal is being evaluated in accordance with a Category B project under the Class Environmental Assessment for MNRF Resource Stewardship and Facility Development Projects. A Notice of Completion will be provided only to parties who have provided input or requested further notice. If no concerns are identified, MNRF may proceed to implement the project without further general notice.

You are invited to direct any inquiries or comments regarding the proposed control of water soldier in the Trent-Severn Waterway to Holly Simpson, Management Biologist, Peterborough District MNRF (705) 755-2001 or via email (FishPTBO@ontario.ca).

Comments must be received within the comment period, which expires on September 23, 2019.

Comments and personal information regarding this proposal are collected under authority of the *Environmental Assessment Act* and the *Pesticides Act* to assist MNRF in decision making. Comments not constituting personal information, as defined by the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, will be shared among MNRF and others as appropriate and may be included in documentation available for public review. Personal information will remain confidential unless prior consent to disclose it is obtained.

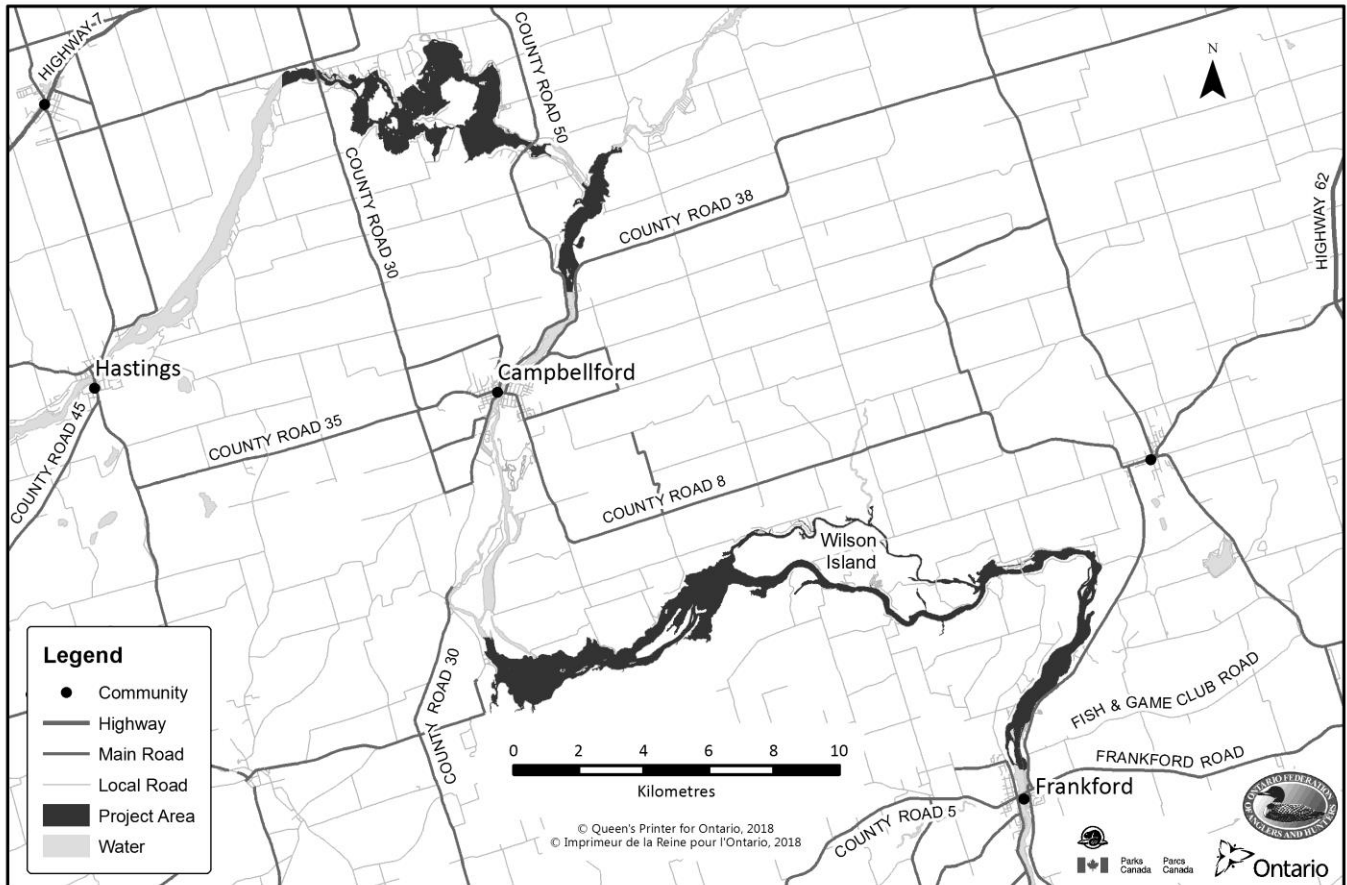


Figure 1. Project Areas – water soldier monitoring is underway within the defined project areas to determine the present extent of water soldier colonies. Proposed herbicide control of the identified colonies would occur in the fall of 2019.

Before proceeding with proposed herbicide treatment, waterfront residents will be directly notified if the herbicide is to be applied adjacent to their properties. There may be specific considerations for adjacent property owners that draw water directly from the Trent River for household use. **If landowners have a water intake adjacent to their waterfront, they may advise MNRF by email at FishPTBO@ontario.ca.**

For more information on the project, to submit comments or to request further notice, please contact:

Holly Simpson, Management Biologist
 1st floor, South Tower, 300 Water St.
 Peterborough, ON K9J 8M5
 (705) 755-2001
FishPTBO@ontario.ca

To report sightings of water soldier please call the O.F.A.H./MNRF Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711, or visit www.invadingspecies.com for more information.

Copies to:

- Project File
- MECP Regional Office (for Category B or C)