



Northern Rhode Island Conservation District

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PRESS RELEASE

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In an effort to improve the quality of lakes in Rhode Island, the Northern RI Conservation District (NRICD) worked with state and federal agencies, a private consulting firm as well as community organizations, to develop two comprehensive lake management plans for Bowdish Lake and Smith & Sayles Reservoir in Glocester, RI. These plans address the problems associated with aquatic invasive plants, water quality concerns, and future land uses in the watersheds surrounding these lakes. Lake management plans provide guidance to local stakeholder groups who wish to manage lake activities and effectively address issues of concern. The plans produced for this project will also serve as templates for further development of lake management plans for other lakes throughout the state.

In May 2009, ESS Group, Inc. was selected via bid process to develop two lake management plans in the state with the guidance of RI Department of Environmental Management Office of Water Resources, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Sand Dam Reservoir Association (for Smith & Sayles Reservoir), Bowdish Lake Association, and Save the Lakes. Both Smith & Sayles and Bowdish Lake struggle to control aquatic invasive plant species which impede recreational activity like fishing, boating, and swimming. It is also a deterrent to the native plants and animals that call these lakes home.

The nuisance species **variable leaf milfoil** (*Myriophyllum heterophyllum*) is present at both lakes. This exotic



Variable Leaf Milfoil,
Myriophyllum heterophyllum
Picture: www.maine.gov

has been present in New England for over a decade and is a threat to native biota throughout the region. Variable leaf milfoil is a perennial weed that grows to the surface of the water and then spreads out to form a thick mat, shading out sunlight and out competing native aquatic plants. Bowdish Lake also has a small infestation of **Fanwort** (*Cabomba caroliniana*), which has negative impacts on the lake similar to variable milfoil. Both invasives are difficult to eradicate once established. For more information please visit:

RI DEM <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/water/quality/surfwaq/aisplant.htm>.

Additional resources are available at UMaine Cooperative extension: Variable Leaf Milfoil <http://www.extension.umaine.edu/onlinepubs/PDFpubs/2530.pdf> and

Fanwort <http://www.umext.maine.edu/onlinepubs/htmlpubs/2522.htm>.

Lake Management plans provide lake associations with the tools needed to control the spread of exotic plants, encourage native growth, improve water quality and habitat for native biota. In addition, lake associations that have a comprehensive, long-term management plan are more likely to obtain funding to improve the condition of their lake. Both the Bowdish and Smith & Sayles Lake Management plans provide the methodology and strategies that should be used to create similar plans throughout the state. To view these plans please visit www.NRICD.org.



Fanwort, *Cabomba caroliniana*
Picture: Kerry Dressler, 1996

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