
Northern Rhode Island Conservation District, Providence Water, and Local Landowners Work Together to Target Aquatic Weeds in Local Pond

North Scituate, RI-Northern Rhode Island Conservation District (NRICD), Providence Water, and local landowners have secured funding from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) to begin treating an infestation of the invasive weed Yellow Floating Heart (*Nymphaoides peltata*) in the popular North Scituate fishing pond Dexter Pond. Dexter Pond, which is privately owned but open to the public for a popular opening day trout tournament every year, is facing increased challenges from this yellow-flowering water lily, which covers the majority of the pond's surface during the summer and fall of each year.

Yellow Floating Heart is native to Europe, but was brought to the United States for use in ornamental water gardens before its tendency to become **invasive**, or take over native waterbodies, was discovered. Lakes and ponds colonized by the plant can show a decline in water quality and are less able to support wildlife or



Dexter Pond in April, 2015, before the Yellow Floating Heart reached the surface for the year



Dexter Pond post-Yellow Floating Heart emergence (photo credit RIDEM)

human recreation. Dexter Pond is approximately one mile upstream from the Scituate Reservoir, Rhode Island's largest public water supply, so containing the spread of the plant from Dexter Pond is essential to protecting both Dexter Pond's position as a popular Scituate recreation site and the Reservoir's ability to provide drinking water to over 60% of Rhode Island citizens. Aquatic invasive species specialists from SOLitude Lake Management's Massachusetts office have designed a course of aquatic herbicide treatments for

Dexter Pond that is safe for a waterbody in close proximity to a public water supply, and have also ensured that no private or public wells will be impacted by the treatment. Any temporary limitations on recreation, including fishing, will be posted by SOLitude representatives at the time of treatment. RIDEM has reviewed and issued a permit for the treatment plan

"This is another good example of partners working together and taking proactive steps to protect the long-term ecological health of the water supply," said Providence Water Forest Supervisor Christopher Riely. "The infestation of this exotic invasive aquatic plant could easily lead to a much bigger problem if it were to spread downstream into the Scituate Reservoir and its tributary reservoirs. We're being careful to ensure that the treatment will follow EPA-approved best practices."

Treatment is expected to begin on August 4, 2016, and to continue twice yearly for three years. The aquatic herbicide applicators will post signs listing the treatment date and water use restrictions at the pond on the date of each treatment.