



February 10, 2023

Dear Members of the I F & W Committee,

**I would like to encourage you to support LD 92 An Act to Minimize the Propagation of Invasive Aquatic Plants.**

I am the president of the East Pond Association, the first lake in the Belgrade chain of 7 lakes. In 2021, a resident noticed an unusual plant that she had never seen in our waters. The plant fragment was examined by 7 Lakes Alliance and Maine Department of Environmental Protection representatives who agreed that it was **Curly-leaf Pondweed (CLP), a highly aggressive, aquatic, noxious, perennial weed and a major threat to East Pond, North Pond and all of the Belgrade lakes.**

**Curly-leaf Pondweed has turions (seeds) which look like tiny pinecones which drop into the sediment and can grow all winter under the ice or lay dormant for up to 5 years. Each plant can have as many as 100 turions.** As the plants die back later in the summer, it can result in masses of dead vegetation, and increased phosphorus levels causing algae blooms. **Potentially an infestation will decrease lake property values.** In Maine, Curly Leaf Pondweed has been found in: Legion Pond, Kittery; West Pond, Parsonsfield; the Kennebec River and recently the East Pond Serpentine and Old Mill Stream which connects to North Pond. **This CLP invasion is a very serious problem. Eradication will be costly and will require years of vigilance,** removal and individual cooperation. Public Education and community coordination are essential for success.

After careful inspection, it was determined that the infestation was confined to a half mile or so section of The Serpentine on East Pond and a small section of Old Mill Stream. It is likely that plant fragments were carried on duck decoys or fishing lines via a private boat launch site. A professional Dive Team hired by the DEP removed 160 gallons of plants during the summer of 2021 with more being pulled by 7 Lake Alliance throughout September. In 2022, 7 Lakes divers spent almost every day each week from May until September removing CLP plants. We do not know what 2023 will hold, but there will be more plants to pull.

**Any program that requires careful, diligent inspection of a watercraft as it leaves a water body will help reduce the spread of invasive plants.** The East Pond Association pays thousands of dollars each year to keep Courtesy Boat Inspectors at the IF&W Public Boat Launch for as many hours as possible and we cover additional hours with volunteers. We published 1,000 CLP informational brochures which we distributed in public places and by our CBIs at the boat launch. We spoke with boaters asking them to avoid the infested area of the Serpentine and an IF&W floating buoy recommended that boaters turn around before entering the plant growth area. Constant public education was required to reduce boat traffic in the area where divers were working. Some boaters did not heed our warnings, but most were respectful and avoided the defined area.

### **Remediation is way more costly than prevention.**

Please support LD 92 to help reduce the spread of invasive species in all Maine lakes. Our numerous lakes are a precious recreational resource which affords tremendous economic impact on our Maine communities.

Edith Cornwall  
East Pond Association President  
289 Brickett Point Ests.  
Oakland, ME 04963

Edith Cornwall  
East Pond Association  
LD 92