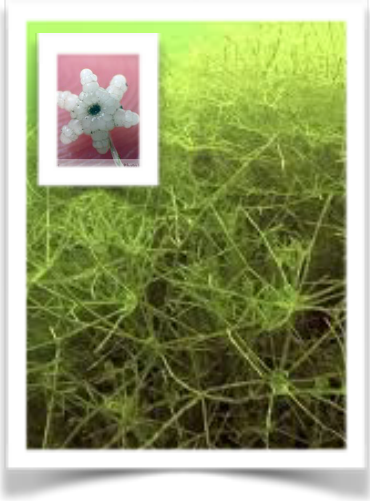
Environment Council
for Clear, Ston(e)y and White Lakes

Starry Stonewort Best Management Practices

A common sense approach for cottagers and businesses to help prevent the spread of Starry stonewort (SSW) and other Aquatic Invasive Species on Clear, Ston(e)y and White Lakes

Being informed and taking a common sense approach can help to prevent the spread of Starry stonewort as well as prevent other new species invading Ston(e)y, Clear and White Lakes. Protecting and sustaining a healthy functioning aquatic ecosystem is better for aquatic life and our health and wellbeing.

BE INFORMED: Your actions could increase the spread of Starry stonewort



- Starry stonewort reproduces by fragmentation, so any small pieces that break and are carried to a new location can spread it. Commercial weed harvesters or boats travelling through infested areas create a high risk of spreading it.
- It also reproduces by tiny 'bulbils' – white star-shaped 'tubers' that form on the plant's root-like structures in late summer and fall.

BE INFORMED: Timing is important

- Restrict weed harvesting activities and travel in and out of infested areas during peak biomass in August and September when there is a greater risk of spread.

USE CAUTION when travelling by boat in infested areas

- Avoid or reduce boat travel during peak biomass and reproductive periods (especially in August and September) from infested areas (Gilchrist Bay, Duck Pond, Mackenzie Bay, Lost Channel) into non-infested areas.
- If you absolutely need to travel in or through an infested area, stop and lift your boat motor and remove all vegetation when leaving an infested area. The plants that you remove should be placed in a bucket and taken to dry land away from any water for disposal.
- CLEAN, DRAIN AND DRY (https://canadainvasives.ca/programs/clean-drain-dry/) your boat whenever launching or trailering a boat to another lake. This will prevent the spread of SSW out of infested lakes as well as prevent other new invasive species from being spread into Ston(e)y, Clear and White Lakes.

BE INFORMED when considering aquatic vegetation removal options

- Commercial "weed" harvesting will not eradicate Starry stonewort and in fact actually increases the risk of spread of Starry stonewort fragments.
- Removal of native plants, like pond lily, is more likely to create more open areas. This gives Starry stonewort or other invasive species more room to grow with less competition.
- Control options are still limited for this invasive alga, but hand removal has shown some success.
- If aquatic vegetation removal is done, it's important to remove all material from the lake and ensure that you are removing all above and below ground biomass (i.e. shoots and bulbils).

A permit is required when working in water or to remove aquatic vegetation

- Plant removal is regulated by the Trent-Severn Waterway (Parks Canada) in the Kawarthas. A TSW permit is required to do any in-water work, apply herbicides or remove aquatic vegetation. The policy permits removal up to 50% of shoreline to a maximum 10 m wide and 30 m into the water body. Larger areas or channels (e.g., Gilchrist Bay) require a separate TSW permit application and may require review by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forests (OMNRF) or Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) depending on the size of the project.
- Ensure that any commercial weed harvester that you hire to remove (mechanically or by hand) any aquatic vegetation on your waterfront:
  - has a permit from Trent-Severn Waterway to remove aquatic vegetation specifically for your waterfront and applies their advice and best management practices;
  - is not moving in and out of Starry stonewort infested areas;
  - follows a CLEAN, DRAIN AND DRY protocol for the entire weed harvester whenever launching it in these lakes or trailering a boat to another lake or moving in and out of infested areas;
  - removes all aquatic plants and Starry stonewort at least 30 meters away from the lakes and in a dry area that does not flood or flow into a lake or stream.

Do Not Use Chemicals

- There are no effective herbicides or other chemicals approved for use on Starry Stonewort in Canada.
- Use of chemicals in lakes can cause serious impacts to drinking water quality including increased risks of cancer for the many cottagers that filter water from the lake for drinking. They also impact the aquatic ecosystem food chain and overall aquatic ecosystem health.

- Use of aquatic herbicides is regulated by the Ontario Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) and the Trent-Severn Waterway in the Kawarthas. No applications can occur without a permit.

Report Illegal Use of Chemicals in Lakes or Weed Harvesting without a Permit

1. Trent-Severn Waterway (Parks Canada) – contact for concerns related to in-water work, aquatic vegetation removal, permit inquiries, environmental concerns or to report new locations of Starry stonewort.
    1. Telephone: 705-750-4900
    2. Toll-free in North America only: 1-888-773-8888
    3. Email: Ont.Trentsevern@pc.gc.ca
    4. Website: https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/on/trentsevern/info/contact
    5. If you've seen Starry stonewort, or other invasive species in the wild, please also contact the toll-free Invading Species Hotline at 1-800-563-7711, or visit www.inaturalist.org/projects/invasive-species-in-ontario to report a sighting.

2. Department of Fisheries and Oceans – a Fisheries Act violation is when someone engages in: polluting, poaching, damage to fish habitat, illegal fishing. Report a fisheries violation using the following 24 hours/day toll-free numbers. Where there's both a national and provincial/territorial number available, please report to both contacts:

    Canada-wide Crime Stoppers: 1-800-222-8477
    Ontario Toll-free: 1-877-847-7667 (provincial number)

3. Ontario Public pollution reporting hotline (Available 24/7)

    Toll-free: 1-866-MOETIPS (6638477)

    Call Ontario's Spills Action Centre if you witness: pollution spilled on land, in the water or in the air; industrial or commercial noise pollution; waste being dumped into the natural environment or improper disposal of commercial waste.