

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Local-State Collaboration Results in Starry Stonewort Success

Grand Lake, Stearns County, MN, May 5, 2019: A collaborative partnership between the Grand Lake Improvement District (GLID), the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Minnesota Aquatic Invasive Species Research Center (MAISRC) has resulted in the successful containment of a Starry Stonewort infestation for the past two years at Grand Lake, Stearns County, MN.

Starry Stonewort was discovered in Grand Lake on August 4, 2017 during the annual Starry Trek program organized by MAISRC and University of Minnesota Extension and coordinated locally by the Stearns County Coalition of Lake Associations. Volunteers performing public water access sampling discovered the infestation at the Grand Lake public water access. The infestation was out from the boat ramp in an 8'X 8' area.



Figure 1: MNDNR staff hand-remove Starry Stonewort from Grand Lake

Starry Stonewort is a large, submerged plant-like alga that can form dense mats in water bodies. These mats can interfere with boating, fishing, swimming, waterfowl hunting and other recreational activities. In addition, Starry Stonewort may choke out native plant communities, causing ecological harm. The species can spread by clinging to watercraft, trailers, and equipment.

The partnership implemented a coordinated plan to respond to the infestation. An initial full-lake survey was performed to determine the extent of the infestation. Determining the infestation was localized to the access area, DNR performed a hand removal of Starry Stonewort three times in 2017, with each successive removal resulting in less Starry Stonewort in the infested area. Additional full-lake surveys continued to be performed to assess removal success and determine if the infestation was being contained. In addition, public water access inspection hours were increased to minimize re-infestation or spreading Starry Stonewort to other water bodies. These efforts were duplicated in 2018.

This collaboration has demonstrated aggressive hand removal along with frequent surveying can result in successfully containing and reducing the severity of a Starry

Stonewort infestation. In addition, the early discovery of the infestation thanks to the Starry Trek initiative shows how crucial early detection is in containing an infestation.

The DNR and GLID will implement this strategy again in 2019 to further evaluate whether it continues to deliver the success achieved so far. To date, complete eradication of Starry Stonewort from an infested water has not proven to be successful anywhere in the United States.

For more information, please visit <https://co.stearns.mn.us/Environment/WaterResources/AquaticInvasiveSpecies>.