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CURLYLEAF PONDWEED MANAGEMENT TIPS

Curlyleaf pondweed (CLP), a member of the Pondweed family, is an aquatic perennial with roots made up of creeping rhizomes. Flowers are cream to brown, inconspicuous, and bloom on short emergent spikes. The leaves look like lasagna noodles and have tiny serrations on the edges. CLP can have negative impacts on native aquatic vegetation, waterfowl, some mammals, fish and water quality. Dense mats of CLP can reduce dissolved oxygen levels, impede water flow, and inhibit boating, swimming and the growth of native vegetation.



Management strategies for CLP include:

1. **Mechanical treatment (hand-pulling):** Hand-pulling and diver operated suction dredges are options for small infestations, but will have to be repeated as the plants grow back. Bottom barriers have also been used around docks and boat ramps to kill or reduce CLP. As sediment accumulates to about 1.5 inches on the barriers, they will have to be cleaned to prevent fragments from taking root. Water drawdown followed by freezing temperatures and desiccation can prevent growth. Habitat manipulation is another method for the management of CLP.
2. **Herbicide treatment:** Be sure to always follow directions on the label. **The label is the law! In Montana, a 308 permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality is required to intentionally apply aquatic herbicides to water.** Herbicides can be used in some circumstances to control CLP, but applying herbicides to surface water safely and effectively requires specialized knowledge and training. Aquatic herbicides usually require 2 or more hours of contact time with the plant and therefore are ineffective in flowing water.

Prevention is the most important goal in any IWM strategy, especially in Montana where invasion of CLP is relatively recent. Recreationists, fishermen and boaters should clean their boats, trailers, watercraft and other equipment and inspect all equipment for plant fragments before entering another body of water.