

***Town of Weymouth
Massachusetts***

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Press Release

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Hydro-raking begins at Whitman's Pond

The work will remove nuisance vegetation that is negatively impacting the pond's landscape and environmental functions.

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Weymouth, MA – Mayor Robert Hedlund announced today that Whitman's Pond in East Weymouth will be treated with a mechanical hydro-rake to remove nuisance vegetation and their underlying root systems. The raking will impact approximately eight acres of the pond located off Middle Street and will greatly enhance the quality of the fresh water environment and the pond's visual landscape.

"I am excited to see this work happen. Whitman's Pond is a highly valuable environmental and recreational resource. It sustains a great diversity of fish and wildlife, and is a principal place of natural beauty in Weymouth. Keeping the pond clean and healthy is an important goal for our town," **said Mayor Robert Hedlund.**

Whitman's Pond is a major waterbody in Weymouth. It provides a vast habitat for local fish and wildlife and is an important environmental resources for flood retention and bio-filtration. Unfortunately, anyone who's visited the pond in recent months knows that significant areas have become infested with tangled and encroaching water lilies. This unsightly growth is overcrowding the pond's botanic diversity and negatively impacting its capacity to fulfill essential functions.

To help address these issues, the Town has contracted with SOLitude Lake Management of Shrewsbury, Massachusetts. The waterbody management company will use a floating backhoe known as a hydro-rake to scrape the bottom of the pond and remove as much nuisance vegetation and their attached roots systems as possible. The machine uses a 12-foot hydraulic arm with a York rake attachment to complete the work, and an aquatic weed harvester will

collect the uprooted vegetation for transport to an onshore bobcat. The bobcat will then load the materials onto containers which will be carried to an offsite compost location for final disposal.

"The hydro-raking will help control and manage the water lily population, but it's not intended to eliminate the population entirely," **explained Weymouth's Conservation Administrator Mary Ellen Schloss.** "The lilies are a native species that have grown to a nuisance level. Our goal is to keep them from affecting the pond's fish, wildlife, and boaters."

The hydro-raking will focus on the shoreline adjacent to the retaining wall at Whitman's Pond Park (a popular fishing site). It will also impact areas where the lilies are currently encroaching into open water. The shallow depth of the pond will control how close to the shoreline and retaining wall the rake will reach.

Hydro-raking is one element of the Town's overall vegetation management plan for Whitman's Pond. Other elements include an aquatic weed harvester that was purchased in 2016. This machine helps manage the pond's invasive *non-native* plant species, fanwort and milfoil, which clog the pond's waters and crowd out healthy vegetation. The Town is also pursuing a lake-level drawdown that can help control the fanwort and milfoil populations further. This technique involves draining the pond's depth and allowing the seasonal cold to kill weeds along the shoreline.

The hydro-raking of Whitman's Pond is funded by a legislative earmark in the state's 2016 fiscal year budget and administrated by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). Representatives James Murphy and Ron Mariono sponsored the earmark with then-Senator Robert Hedlund. The 2016 earmark is just one of many such earmarks that Weymouth's state delegation have secured in recent years for the care and maintenance of Whitman's Pond.

"Whitman's Pond is one of the important centerpieces of our community," **said Representative James Murphy.** "Each year we have advocated for this important state funding which will go a long way to preserving and protecting this beautiful natural resource for many years to come."

"Whitman's pond is a fantastic regional asset for this community," **said Representative Ron Mariano.** "The hydro-raking now taking place is a crucial and necessary measure that will help to preserve the pond's environmental health and protect the ecosystem from encroaching nuisance plant species. I have every confidence that this process will be performed efficiently and safely, keeping in mind especially those who have invested in and purchased property around the pond."

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