



## Aerial Treatments Approved by EGLE to Control Woody Vegetation in Wixom and Sanford Lakebeds

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) recently issued permits allowing aerial treatments to control woody growth - mainly Cottonwoods, Willows and Aspen - that sprouted and are growing vigorously in the dry lakebeds since the dam failures in 2020.

Treatments using low-altitude helicopter spray applications, which target woody plants, are scheduled for selected locations by **Edenville Township** (northern Sanford Lake) and the **Wixom Lake Improvement Board (WLIB)**, within Billings Township and Tobacco Township (east of M-30). These treatments will occur on a relatively small number of dry lakebed acres to evaluate the effectiveness on the trees and brush which now display differences in growth vigor (height) at different lakebed locations due to available moisture and fertility. These evaluations will allow better optimization of a more extensive treatment program to occur during early summer 2023.

WLIB will also conduct similar preliminary evaluations on two man-made canals to control rampant cattail growth. The canal treatments will NOT use helicopter application. Instead, ground crews will likely spray on foot.

Aerial and ground-based applications require favorable weather conditions and may be delayed or canceled on a daily basis by wind, rain or fog. Because of this, treatment dates cannot be precisely scheduled at this time. **However, the window for helicopter low-altitude treatments in the open lakebeds will likely begin the week of September 12, 2022.** It is estimated that aerial treatments can be completed on both Sanford and Wixom lakebeds in two to four "good weather days."

Scheduling of canal treatments by ground crews, NOT helicopter, is still being finalized and will also be weather dependent.

**Property owners in the vicinity of a WLIB treatment evaluation plot will receive written notification by U.S. mail** at the same address to which their property tax bills are sent. The WLIB mailing list was developed from the most recent version of FLTF's SAD list **but, in this case, does not include properties more than 500 feet distant from the edge of a treatment location.** Exception: For canals, all properties in Venice Subs (S of Red Oak) and Pleasure Island will receive mailed notice.

Edenville Township: All property owners in the most recent FLTF SAD database will receive a notice by U.S. mail.

Normal property "posting" signage, similar to that for aquatic weed treatments will be done by PLM staff on the day of treatment.

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### Questions and Answers

**Q: Where are the open lakebed evaluation plots located?**

**A:** Four lakebed evaluation plots have been identified by WLIB in Billings Twp and Tobacco Twp (east of M-30) for low-altitude helicopter application:

1. Muddy Bay to Musellman Island, 10 acres
2. Lakebed east of Venice Subdivisions, 20 acres
3. Lakebed east of Wixom Rd. Church Camps S to Pleasure Island, 10 acres
4. Southern portion of Heron Cove, 20 acres



Two areas will receive ground-based treatment:

1. Canal, Venice Sub, 5 acres along S. Pine (ground-based treatment)
2. Canal, Pleasure Island, 5 acres. (ground-based treatment)

Edenville Township is managing the terrestrial weed vegetation at the township level. Edenville Township is not part of a lake improvement board.

- Multiple lakebed locations will utilize low-altitude helicopter applications. No canals are planned for evaluation in Edenville Township
- Starting location for low-level helicopter application: Lakebed east of Verity Shores. The treatment area will proceed north at multiple locations toward Branscom Road, but not close to high banks or within 40 feet of the river
- Estimated treatment acreage for Edenville Township: 90-150 acres

**Q: What group is organizing these treatments?**

**A:** WLIB has taken recommendations from its consultant, Progressive AE, and contracted with Professional Lake Management, (PLM) to perform canal treatments. PLM is subcontracting the helicopter applicator and PLM will directly supervise that treatment component and ensure all federal and state regulations, safety, compliance and reporting are met for lakebed treatments.

**Q. What herbicide will be used, and will it affect any plants on my lakefront property?**

A. Vastlan had been approved by EGLE for control of woody growth in the lakebeds. It does not affect lawns, grasses or cattails. It does control certain broadleaf weeds that have also invaded the lakebeds, including the invasive species, Purple Loosestrife. The evaluation plots were intentionally located sufficiently offshore to eliminate possibility of spray drift on shoreline landscaping.

**Q. Will it affect trees on my property?**

A. No

**Q. What other safety considerations do property owners need to be aware of?**

A. Property owners must observe the safety precautions listed on the bright yellow placards posted on their property by PLM the day spraying will occur in their area. Namely, stay out of the lakebeds during and for 24 hours following aerial activity near their location. Do not allow any pets to enter lakebeds during this same timeframe. DO NOT approach helicopter launch or landing areas including flight paths to, and from, these areas.

**Q. What will the helicopter look like?**

A. Expect to see a small helicopter flying at very low altitude while spraying in the lakebeds. Most evaluation plots will require multiple spray passes with a no-spray, U-turn zone at each end. Stay away from helicopter activity zones. Do not enter the lakebeds for any reason while helicopter activity is occurring.