



## MEMORANDUM

Comfort Lake-Forest Lake Watershed District

**Date:** May 19, 2026  
**To:** CLFLWD Board of Managers  
**From:** Mike Kinney, District Administrator  
**Subject:** Starry Stonewort Rapid Response



**District Wide**

### Background/Discussion

The purpose of this memo is to provide additional information regarding funding and policy questions from the April 28th CLFLWD Board Meeting related to [Starry Stonewort](#) early detection and rapid response.

Starry Stonewort is an aquatic invasive species (AIS) that is not present in any lake within the District. However, there are several infested lakes within short travel times making it one of the top AIS threats to the CLFLWD. In 2025, a total of 94 watercrafts entering District Lakes were documented by watercraft inspectors as last being in a starry stonewort infested lake. Of this total, 10 boats were last in Medicine lake which is only 40–50 minutes away from the District and poses the greatest risk due to its proximity.

Starry Stonewort is a green macro-algae that can harm lakes by forming dense mats at the water's surface restricting recreation and reducing diversity of native plants and animals. Starry Stonewort can require multiple treatments throughout the months of July through September to effectively manage heavy growth.

**Early Detection:** Early detection is the effort to identify AIS populations when the population is new and small, which allows for the most effective treatment. Statistically Starry Stonewort is most likely to be introduced at a public access. To bolster early detection efforts, District staff will work with seasonal Watercraft Inspectors and provide additional training in aquatic plant identification and guidance on how to perform early detection rake throws when the public launches are not busy. Additionally, either Blue Water Science (BWS) or District staff could perform concentrated meander surveys at the boat access using a minimum of 50 points. The cost of this survey if performed by BWS would be approximately \$1,000.

**Rapid Response:** If early detection efforts detect the presence of a new AIS species, the District would implement its rapid response plan. First, the general area is surveyed in detail to determine the extent of the initial infestation. Then, a whole lake meander survey would be conducted to ensure a larger population does not exist. The initial infestation should be treated as soon as possible after the initial survey; the most successful treatments have been using copper products. In some cases, scuba diving and hand pulling have augmented copper treatments. The delineated infestation area should be treated and then resurveyed in 2 to 3



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weeks. Several surveys and treatments are typically conducted over the growing season. The survey and treatment frequency is higher than CLP or EWM management surveys and treatments.

- Mechanical and algaecide treatments greatly reduced starry stonewort biomass, but that their star-shaped bulbils, which can regenerate into new plants, remained viable after treatment. This reinforces the importance of a multi-pronged approach to starry stonewort control
- After analyzing 11 years of starry stonewort treatment data across three states, MAISRC researchers have found that current methods (generally copper-based algaecide treatments) are not slowing starry stonewort's expansion within infested lakes. However, treatments can be effective at reducing abundance, e.g., biomass, of starry stonewort in localized areas, providing nuisance relief. Researchers also found that if infestations are found early enough—when they are still small—sustained hand removal efforts can be highly effective for reducing and containing infestations. These findings emphasize the need for early detection/containment efforts and identify a pressing need for continued research into effective control options for established infestations.

If a Starry Stonewort population is detected and not eradicated via rapid response, a whole lake meander should be conducted at least once per year. Cost is dependent on the lake size and runs \$2,000-\$3,000. Estimate costs for the management of Starry Stonewort varies depending on depth with ranges from \$289-\$651 per acre for a Copper Sulfate/Hydrothol 191 treatment and \$1,053-2430 per acre for a Komeen Decend treatment.

### **Attached**

Starry Stonewort (SSW) Management Cost Estimates



## Starry Stonewort (SSW) Management Cost Estimates

Rapid Response (RR) Management Activities	Costs*
Early Detection Survey (individual lake)	\$1,000
WCI Early Detection Survey	\$0**
RR Copper Sulfate/Hydrothol (1 acre @2.5ft depth)	\$181
RR Komeen Decend (1 acre @2.5 ft depth)	\$648
RR Diver Assisted Hand Removal (1 acre)	\$TBD
RR Additional Contractor/Public Notice Costs	\$TBD
Total Rapid Response Cost - survey & treatment	\$1,181 - \$1,648

Annual SSW Management Activities	Costs*
Annual SSW Meander Survey (individual lake)	\$2,000 - \$3,000
Copper Sulfate/Hydrothol 191 (10 acres) \$289 - 4ft avg depth \$651 - 9ft avg depth	\$2,890 - \$6,510
Komeen Decend (10 acres) \$1,053 - 4ft avg depth \$2,430 - 9ft avg depth	\$10,530 - \$24,300
Diver Assisted Hand Removal	\$TBD
Total Annual SSW Management Costs	\$4,890 - \$27,300

\*Estimate costs received from Blue Water Science & PLM Lake & Management reflect 2026 pricing. Pricing for SSW treatments varies depending on depth.

Bone Lake ~4ft average treatment depth

Comfort Lake ~4ft average treatment depth

Forest Lake ~9ft average treatment depth

\*\*CLFLWD Watercraft Inspectors will be provided with additional training and equipment (throw rakes) for conducting early detection surveys at public launches during normal working hours.