

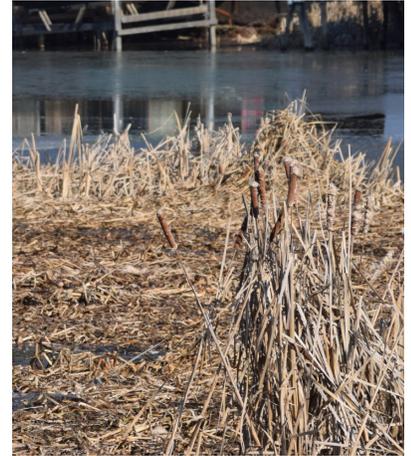
EMERGENT VEGETATION

March 2017

BUCKEYE LAKE STATE PARK

DOES ODNR REALIZE THAT BUCKEYE LAKE HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY OVERTAKEN THIS YEAR BY WEEDS AND TREE SAPLINGS BECAUSE OF THE LOWER LAKE LEVELS?

Emergent aquatic vegetation has been observed this year in greater abundance in and around Buckeye Lake. This vegetation is dominated by native plant species that are characteristic of high quality emergent marshes — a type of wetland with very little woody vegetation present. The reduced lake level at Buckeye Lake has resulted in the lake attempting to reclaim itself as the natural wetlands environment it once was nearly 200 years ago, prior to dam construction and reservoir impoundment.



WILL ODNR DO ANYTHING ABOUT THE EXCESSIVE WEED GROWTH AT BUCKEYE LAKE?

ODNR staff will continue to daily monitor the situation throughout the warm season. The wetland vegetation largely is comprised of lake sedges, bulrushes, spike rushes, cattail, tickseed-sunflower, rice cutgrass, water plantain and smartweed. These species reach heights of less than 2 meters during the growing season and die back each fall with the arrival of seasonal frost. Although seedlings of woody vegetation have been observed, their habitats still appear to be quite wet and will unlikely support extensive growth of woody species, except in the shallowest channels.

HOW IS ODNR ADDRESSING THE EXCESSIVE AQUATIC VEGETATION AT BUCKEYE LAKE?

The arrival of fall and winter weather will kill most aquatic vegetation, and rising lake levels are likely to limit the emergence of new aquatic vegetation. Last summer, ODNR staff observed the emergence of silver maple tree seedlings. Many of these silver maples are less than 1 ft. tall and water-stressed. It is anticipated that these trees will drown (i.e. silver maple and cottonwood) when the lake levels rise. Additionally, in February 2017, ODNR's Division of Wildlife conducted a pilot project using a Marsh Master to mechanically remove vegetation.

CAN LAKE RESIDENTS TREAT THIS VEGETATION WITH CHEMICAL SPRAYS OR CUT IT DOWN?

The current vegetation is dominated by herbaceous species whose above-soil parts will die back each fall and winter. The newly formed wetlands perform important ecological services, such as holding the exposed lake bottom of peat in place and preventing it from being exposed to harsh sunlight and heat. If the vegetation was completely killed using herbicides, this would likely raise the temperature of the peat and when combined with oxygen, the peat that is now preserved at the bottom of the lake, in some cases for thousands of years, would begin to decompose.

SHOULD RESIDENTS DO ANYTHING ABOUT EMERGENT VEGETATION, OR BE CONCERNED?

ODNR says "Let It Be," as wetland plants play a key role in the Buckeye Lake ecosystem, such as providing cover for valuable wildlife and fisheries. The emergent aquatic vegetation also absorbs phosphorous and other nutrients, (which enter the lake and negatively impact water quality during the warm season) potentially mitigating problematic harmful algal blooms. Exposed mudflats and other exposed lakebed areas can be ideal locations for invasive plant species. Lake residents should take notice of the emergence of any non-native, invasive plant species, such as purple loosestrife and phragmites, as well as submerged aquatic nuisance species like hydrilla. ODNR staff also continue to monitor the lake for the emergence of new invasive plant species.

WHAT DOES ODNR ADVISE REGARDING THE SPRAYING OF HERBICIDES TO

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KILL EMERGENT VEGETATION?

By law, people are not permitted to apply herbicides and other chemicals on property they do not legally own. At present, ODNR does not intend to treat state-owned property for native emergent, herbaceous vegetation at Buckeye Lake, but staff will continue to monitor the situation daily. Questions concerning the potential application of herbicides to treat emergent aquatic vegetation should be directed to the Buckeye Lake State Park office at 740-467-2690.

Additional resource information can be found online at:

OSU Extension <http://extension.osu.edu/>

Ohio EPA <http://www.epa.state.oh.us/districts.aspx#115772913-central>

Ohio Dept. of Agriculture <http://www.agri.ohio.gov/apps/odaprs/pestfert-PRS-index.aspx>