

## EMERGENT VEGETATION AT BUCKEYE LAKE – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Below are responses from ODNR to some of the frequently asked questions concerning treatment of emergent aquatic vegetation at Buckeye Lake.

### ***Does ODNR realize that Buckeye Lake has been virtually overtaken this year by weeds and tree saplings as a result 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 be doing 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 two meters during the growing season and die back each fall with the arrival of seasonal frost. While 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.

### ***Why doesn't ODNR mechanically remove excessive aquatic vegetation through use of a weed harvester or other mechanical means?***

Mechanical removal of aquatic vegetation likely will result in attracting more geese to Buckeye Lake. Decomposing vegetation also may negatively impact water quality. The arrival of fall and winter weather will kill most aquatic vegetation; rising lake levels next year likely will limit the emergence of new aquatic vegetation. ODNR staff observed the emergence of silver maple seedlings in some areas this summer. Fluctuations in lake levels also have displaced many of these emergent tree seedlings during summer. The current silver maples are water-stressed seedlings less than one foot tall and many of them will not survive the winter.

### ***Can't lake residents just 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 seasons. 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 now is preserved at the bottom of the lake, in some cases for thousands of years, would begin to decompose.

### ***Should lake residents do anything about this 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 nonnative, nuisance 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 emergence of invasive plant species.

**What does ODNR advise with regard to the spraying of herbicides to kill this 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 (Ph: 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>