



Department of Natural Resources Fact Sheet



2012-2013 BIENNIAL BUDGET FACT SHEET **Full Cost Recovery for Aquatic Plant Permit Issuance** **Revenues: \$700,000 FY 2012 / \$700,000 FY 2013** **(Natural Resources Fund – Water Recreation Account)**

It is needed because

The 2008 Legislature directed the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to recover the full costs of aquatic plant management permitting. Aquatic plant management permit fees, which are deposited in the water recreation account (WRA) in the natural resources fund, currently generate approximately \$300,000 in revenue, covering only 30 percent of the approximately \$1 million in program costs incurred by DNR. The existing permit fee structure requires that other funds, such as the general fund, game and fish fund, as well as other revenue to the WRA, subsidize this work.

This initiative enables DNR to recover the full cost of aquatic plant management permitting as required by M.S. 103G.615, subd. 2, which states that: “[permit] fees shall be based on the cost of receiving, processing, analyzing, and issuing the permit, and additional costs incurred after the application to inspect and monitor the activities authorized by the permit, and enforce aquatic plant management rules and permit requirements.”

This initiative proposes to increase permit fees for lakeshore property owners controlling aquatic plants in public waters from \$35 to \$90 per property and eliminate the \$750 fee cap for group permits; increase permit fees for lakeshore property owners controlling swimmer’s itch or algae from \$4 per hundred feet of shore to \$40 per property and eliminate the \$200 fee cap for group permits; establish a \$100 annual permit fee for commercial mechanical control or commercial harvest of aquatic plants; and establish a \$300 inspection fee for the inspection of water bodies proposed for the commercial harvest of aquatic plants. No permit fees would be required for the large-scale control of invasive aquatic plants to restore the ecological health of lakes.

Major program elements

DNR regulates the harvest, transplanting, and destruction of aquatic plants in public waters through a permit program. The purpose of the Aquatic Plant

Management (APM) permit program is to protect the beneficial functions of aquatic vegetation while allowing riparian property owners to obtain reasonable access to public waters. The use of pesticides in lakes to control submerged vegetation or aquatic nuisances, the use of automated plant control devices, or the destruction of emergent vegetation by any means, require DNR permits. DNR processes and issues permits, provides educational and informational materials for permit applicants, coordinates with the Department of Agriculture on herbicide regulations, inspects and monitors permit activities, works with commercial aquatic plant harvesters, and enforces rules and permit requirements.

Priority-setting

M.S. 103G.615 limits aquatic plant management permits to activities in public waters. All chemical control, control using automated plant control devices, control of emergent plants, and large-scale control of floating and submerged vegetation require permits. Small scale removal of aquatic plants using mechanical methods requires no permit.

Project locations

Project locations are statewide.

Key measures and outcomes

- Receive and review aquatic plant management permit applications from 10,800 lake shore property owners;
- Monitor aquatic plant management activities on approximately 900 lakes;
- Conduct 1,114 aquatic plant management site inspections; and
- Enforce APM regulations.

Financial Implications (if appropriate)

DNR spent on average \$1.063 million annually from FY 2006 – FY 2008 in issuing and enforcing aquatic plant management permits. Permit fees covered approximately

one-third of these costs. This proposal is expected to raise approximately \$700,000 per year in additional revenue to the WRA. No increase in expenditures is proposed.

For further information contact:

Steve Hirsch, Director
Division of Ecological and Water Resources
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
500 Lafayette Rd, St. Paul, MN 55155
651-259-5106
steve.hirsch@state.mn.us