

Wading through the weeds



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A public meeting was held last week to discuss ongoing problems with weeds in Lake Banook and Lake Micmac. Darrell Oake

Rapidly-growing weeds in Lake Banook and Lake MicMac has become a big problem this summer for recreational boaters, swimmers, rowers and paddlers.

John Ross, who has lived near Lake Banook for years was one of about 100 people who turned out for a meeting held at the MicMac AAC last week to talk about a solution to a problem that some have described as a health hazard and scary.

"I have noticed in the past four or five years the weeds have really increased," he said. "It is at a point now it comes right up to the surface in places."

Boaters and paddlers also complained about the weeds getting caught in rudders and propellers.

The meeting was called by councillors Gloria McCluskey and Darren Fisher. Also in attendance to answer questions from the public were Richard MacLellan, Manager HRM's Sustainable Environment Office and Cameron Deacoff, an environmental performance officer.

Deacoff said he has been working with the experts from Dalhousie University, the Department of the Environment and Fisheries and Oceans to look at the cause and some solutions.

"I am not a botanist, but the weeds are not causing an ecological problem to the lakes," he said. "But we want to find out why they are growing and the causes. The weeds are all native to the area."

Deacoff and MacLellan passed out information at the meeting about weed cutters, but after hearing about the wide scope of the problem said maybe some of the options weren't enough to handle the weeds.

Allan Billard said lowering the lake's level two years ago started the natural course of events and caused the weeds to grow.

"Whether we rent a harvester or buy it, we have to do it by the fall or in early spring," said Billard. " We can put one and one together pretty easily and see what has to be done."

Mike Schmid, another long time resident of Dartmouth said he is worried that his children's children won't be able to use the lakes .

"I am worried," he said. "We can cut grass all we want. But we have to manage the cause, not the problem."

MLA Marilyn More stood up at the end of the meeting and said she remains committed to this problem but admitted it is tough to get everyone on the same page.

She suggested a committee be formed from each of the government departments and interested residents to find a solution.

Allan Billard, Terry Clattenburg, John Ross, Allan Billard, Karen Swan, Mike Schmid, John Pike and Roy Cluett all agreed to be a part of the committee and meet with staff over the next few weeks. Another public meeting will be held after they meet.