

WINTER HAVEN

The Chain of Lakes City

Media Release

City of Winter Haven
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Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV), Illinois Pondweed, in Lake Howard

Every spring, Illinois Pondweed (specifically on the south side of Lake Howard) blooms and sends its flowers to the surface. The flowers present a temporary nuisance to boaters. Leaves remain near the surface when the flowers are gone to make the areas more navigable.

Residents with aquatic plant control permits can apply to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), Division of Habitat and Species Conservation, Invasive Plant Management Section, (863) 534-7074, for a permit modification to control pondweed in access corridors. An aquatic plant biologist from FWC will review the modification request, visit the site and issue modified permits, as needed.

Lake Howard has water quality issues stemming from high nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous) that allow algae and aquatic plants to grow in abundance. It is fortunate that Lake Howard has the pondweed and other Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV) to help with water clarity and nutrient uptake. Pondweed also helps somewhat with hydrilla control. Without the SAV there would likely be more free-floating algae and very green, cloudy water in Lake Howard. SAV creates a substrate to which algae attaches, and usually, there is not as much free-floating algae. Less algae results in clearer water and lower nutrients. Another benefit of rooted SAV is that it helps prevent solids from stirring up from the bottom of the lake and suspending in the water.

The University of Florida, IFAS, Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants website contains useful information that may be of interest <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/>. Specifically, more detailed information and a short video on Illinois Pondweed (which is native to Florida) may be viewed at <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/node/341>.

This message is brought to you by the City of Winter Haven's Natural Resources Division and the FWC Invasive Plant Management Section. Please call (863) 291-5881 to report illegal dumping in our lakes, on our shorelines and into our storm drains.