

# Statement of Department Efforts

## Starry Stonewort Management

The Department has continued to intensify its efforts on understanding the distribution, ecology and management of starry stonewort (*Nitellopsis obtusa*, SSW) since this ch. NR 40 prohibited macroalgae species was first verified in Wisconsin in 2014. Part of this effort includes continuing annual lakewide point-intercept aquatic plant surveys on waterbodies with verified SSW populations, early detection monitoring on proximal waterbodies without SSW present, as well as quantitative pre- and post-treatment monitoring following a variety of management activities which have been implemented to control SSW (i.e., chemical herbicides, hand-removal, diver assisted suction harvesting (DASH), water level drawdown, etc.).



Preliminary data from annual lakewide surveys indicate that SSW frequency can vary across lakes, with some waterbodies exhibiting a relatively rapid increase in SSW frequency since discovery, while other lakes have seen a much slower expansion of SSW, or even a reduction over time. Evaluation of pre- and post-treatment data compiled across several lakes which have utilized chemical control methods (primarily copper-based herbicides) have not resulted in control nor eradication of SSW in the scenarios where this management technique has been attempted. Data on other control methods is currently being compiled in order to better understand their efficacy and selectivity. While this documented lack of control efficacy might be discouraging, the department is committed to continue to work with impacted lakes to develop and test new SSW management strategies as they become available.

In addition, the department has also embarked upon several collaborative research efforts with other regional and national partners (i.e., US Army Corps of Engineers Engineer Research and Development Center, University of Minnesota, Indiana University, New York Botanical Garden, Midwest Aquatic Plant Management Society, etc.) in order to work collectively to understand how the potential impacts of this new invasive species can best be prevented and managed in the Midwest. The department is an active participant in the EPA-grant funded SSW Collaborative, which is intended to increase the capacity of experts, resource managers, and citizen scientists to monitor and control SSW across the Great Lakes basin.