

# TOWN OF SAINT GERMAIN

P. O. Box 7  
SAINT GERMAIN, WI 54558

«Name»

«Address\_Line\_1»

«Address\_Line\_2»

«Address\_Line\_3»

October 22, 2003

Dear «Addressee»:

Your help is needed in what is becoming a serious threat to the economic stability of the town of Saint Germain. Our town has long been a tourism destination because of its abundance of natural lakes and the recreational appeal they offer. Also, steady growth of the town's population and property valuation are directly attributable to the desire to own lakefront property. The lakes are Saint Germain's most important natural resource. They are now being attacked by unwelcome aggressive invaders that are placing a heavy financial burden on local property owners who wish to protect their property values and their tourism related businesses. The time has come for the State of Wisconsin to assist in the battle against invasive exotic aquatic species.

Property owners around Little Saint Germain Lake learned in 2002 that a previously unknown lake weed that had been steadily increasing in growth in recent years was none other than Curly-leaf Pondweed. This exotic plant species had formed approximately 50 acres of high density surface mats with an additional 50 acres or more of surrounding infestation that had not yet reached the surface of the water. Little Saint Germain Lake has been identified in recent years by the WDNR as one of the most heavily fished lakes per acre of surface in the entire state. There are approximately 15 resorts on the lake that depend on the lake's appeal for fishing and family recreation for their survival. The invasion and rapid spread of Curly-leaf Pondweed had already begun to turn people away from the lake by the time the invader was properly identified. This can be verified by the local Chamber of Commerce who fielded numerous complaints about Little Saint Germain Lake's rapid deterioration due to explosive weed growth and excessive algae blooms brought on by the annual die back of the plant mass and its release of unnatural amounts of nutrients into the water.

The Little Saint Germain Lake District responded quickly with a WDNR approved management plan which was put into action in the spring of 2003. That response placed a \$32,000 burden on local property owners throughout the town. In the meantime, another invader, Eurasian Water Milfoil, had found its way into the same lake. Early detection in 2003 and a swift response to gain control of the

invader before it, too, spread throughout the lake cost those same property owners an additional \$8,000. The cost of managing these extremely aggressive plants in this one lake alone is expected to approach \$50,000 in 2004.

In recognition of the need to begin monitoring for and controlling exotic species in town lakes, the Saint Germain town board recently created a Town Lakes Committee which consists of representatives from all the major lakes in the community – those lakes with public boat landings and high volumes of transient boat activity. The formation of this group of volunteers reflects the commitment of the community to preserve its lakes. However, volunteerism of human resources alone won't get the job done. Money is needed and the full financial burden is more than local residents should be expected to shoulder.

Enclosed is a copy of a resolution recently adopted by the Town of Saint Germain. This action follows adoption of the same resolution by the Vilas County Lakes Association. It calls upon the State of Wisconsin to fulfill its obligation to protect and preserve Wisconsin's water resources as mandated by the State Constitution and Public Trust Doctrine. Your assistance in developing adequate funding sources for education, preventive programs and management of exotic species invasions is critical. This call to action represents the expectation of not just a few property owners around a single lake, but of all Saint Germain property owners as well as those of every community and lake organization in the state needing assistance in the battle against invasive aquatic exotic species.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

Ted Ritter, Supervisor, Town of Saint Germain  
Chairperson, Town of Saint Germain Lakes Committee