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## Meeting tackles lake weeds

By DAVENE JEFFREY Staff Reporter  
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There's a "scary" problem growing in two Dartmouth lakes, a life form that can threaten both swimmers and boats.

More than 70 people turned out Thursday evening to discuss the weeds in Lake Micmac and Lake Banook. A small committee of residents and government officials was formed at the public meeting to find a solution.

"It really has increased exponentially," John Ross, of Lakeview Point Road on Lake Banook, said of the weed problem.

He said he and his wife swim in the lake daily and run into big patches of the aquatic plants.

"It literally tangles around your legs. It's scary."

Boat rudders also get caught in the weeds.

City staff offered information on a number of small-scale weed cutters, the most expensive of which costs just over \$3,000. But after hearing from residents about the scale of the plant growth in the lake, Richard MacLellan, head of Halifax Regional Municipality's sustainable environment management office, quickly admitted that the options he was considering likely weren't up to the problem.

Cameron Deacoff, an environmental performance officer with the city, explained that the

weeds — clasping leaf pondweed, leafy pondweed and Canadian waterweed — are all native to the area.

Deacoff doesn't know why the "nuisance species" have multiplied this year. But he's been consulting Dalhousie University, the provincial Environment Department and Fisheries and Oceans Canada to find out why.

Coun. Gloria McCluskey (Dartmouth Centre) told the group that it's difficult to get one level of government to take responsibility for fixing the problem. The province owns the lake, while the municipality is accountable for the surrounding land and the land underneath the lake. As well, Fisheries and Oceans has an interest in the marine life.

"We need to do something to fix it now," and to find out why it's happening, said commodore Anne Ring of the Banook Canoe Club.

Allan Billard believes lowering the lake's water level two years ago to carry out sewer work caused the plant growth.

"The weeds are only growing in the shallow area," he said.

But many folks disagreed, saying the plants are sprouting up all over the lake.

Susan Pring, who lives on Little Albro Lake, came to warn people that the species that are choking her lake could easily spread to Banook and Micmac.

"If you think you've got a big problem with what you've got, you've got a bigger problem coming," she said.

Little Albro Lake has been choked with yellow floating heart and now millweed has also taken over, Pring said.

McCluskey said she'd like to see some sort of weed mowing begin this fall or by spring.

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