



PLM Mechanical Harvesting Fact Sheet

Best Management Practices (BMPs) & Invasive Species Prevention Protocols

Overview of Mechanical Harvesting

Mechanical harvesting is a highly effective, environmentally responsible method for managing nuisance aquatic vegetation. The process involves cutting, collecting, and removing plant biomass from a waterbody, providing immediate results while also removing nutrients from the system.

PLM operates state-of-the-art harvesting equipment capable of cutting vegetation up to 4–6 feet below the surface and removing material efficiently for off-site disposal.

PLM Commitment to Environmental Stewardship

PLM Lake & Land Management Corp. is committed to protecting water resources through science-based management and strict operational protocols. Our harvesting programs are designed to:

- Improve navigation and recreational access
 - Enhance fish habitat and water quality
 - Reduce nutrient loading through biomass removal
 - Prevent the spread of invasive aquatic species
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Best Management Practices (BMPs)

1. Pre-Harvest Planning & Evaluation

Prior to any harvesting operation, a site-specific evaluation is performed, to ensure appropriate use and minimize ecological impact:

- Identification of target species and sensitive areas
 - Evaluation of water depth (minimum operational depth ~18–24 inches depending on equipment)
 - Assessment of access points and offloading locations
 - Coordination with client-designated disposal sites (within ~10-mile radius when feasible)
 - Avoidance of areas where harvesting may increase spread of invasive species (e.g., Eurasian watermilfoil fragmentation risk).
 - PLM does not cut in areas infested with nonnative, invasive species as part of our common practices.
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2. Selective & Controlled Harvesting

PLM utilizes precision harvesting techniques to balance vegetation management with ecological integrity:

- Targeted cutting to reduce nuisance density while preserving beneficial native vegetation
 - Maintenance of habitat structure for fisheries and aquatic life
 - Avoidance of over-harvesting or sediment disturbance (as we do not dredge and ONLY cut)
 - Adherence to recommended harvest timing based on plant growth cycles
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3. Operational Protocols During Harvesting

To ensure safe, efficient, and environmentally sound operations:

- Harvesters operate at controlled speeds to minimize turbidity
- Cutting depths are carefully managed (typically up to 5 feet depending on site conditions)
- Continuous collection of cut vegetation to limit free-floating fragments
- Real-time monitoring of harvesting progress and effectiveness
- GPS Tracking of equipment
- Coordination with client representatives for quality verification

Invasive Species Prevention Protocols

Preventing the spread of invasive species is a critical component of all PLM harvesting operations.

1. Equipment Inspection & Cleaning

Before and after each project:

- All harvesting equipment is visually inspected for plant fragments, mud, and debris
- Equipment is thoroughly cleaned prior to transport between waterbodies
- Residual vegetation is removed from conveyors, cutters, and pontoons

2. Decontamination Procedures

Before and after each project:

- High-pressure washing of equipment between sites
- Treatment with Virkon Aquatic (broad spectrum disinfectant)
- Drying periods implemented when feasible before redeployment
- Additional decontamination measures as required by site conditions or client specifications

3. Fragment Containment

Although invasive species are not a target species and areas are pre-surveyed to be “cleared” prior to initiating, our practice is:

- Immediate collection of cut material during harvesting
- Minimization of drift through controlled cutting patterns
- Avoidance of harvesting in areas where fragmentation may exacerbate spread (e.g., certain invasive species)

4. Transport & Disposal Controls

Strict controls are implemented during transport and disposal:

- Vegetation transported only to pre-approved disposal sites
- Loads managed to prevent spillage during transit
- Trailers have side rails and covers to keep materials contained
- Disposal in designated upland locations (e.g., farm fields, landfill sites)
- No return of plant material to waterbodies

5. Staff Training & Accountability

PLM field staff are trained in:

- Invasive species identification and risk awareness
 - Equipment cleaning and decontamination protocols
 - BMP compliance and documentation
 - Environmental stewardship and regulatory expectations
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