

ON AQUATIC WEEDS (by Rick Smith, Lake Poinsett Watershed Coordinator)

With nutrients in water you get either algae or weeds. High concentrations of Phosphorous promote algae which can choke the sunlight from penetrating far into water. Over abundance of algae will starve oxygen from the water column by preventing aquatic plants from functioning. Algae does not promote fish growth, is capable of producing its own nitrogen and is the green soup you see floating in the water. Weeds or aquatic plants on the other hand function in a lower Phosphorous concentration, create great fisheries and clear water, contribute oxygen to the system and can be a BIG PAIN to negotiate through. This is just a short explanation of the interactions of water, nutrients and plant or algae growth. For a lake the weeds indicate better health than algae. For some surface recreational activities the algae may be more to your liking. For immersion sports neither is desirable. Last year an attempt was made to organize a chemically kill of weeds. The effort was never carried out. While the chemical treatment is allowed by Game Fish and Parks, it in no way removes the underlying problem of years of accumulation of Phosphorous in the lake. Chemically killed summer weeds will quickly decompose and release Phosphorous to the system. The expectation is that algae would benefit from this release and expand exponentially.

If the various lake associations are serious about dealing with the problems associated with Phosphorous (too many weeds or algae), then deal with the Phosphorous. Recently I received information from Aquarius Systems, A Division of D&D Products Inc. from North Prairie, Wisconsin. You can all look it up on internet and find their aquatic harvester systems. Harvesting the weeds and the rough fish and removing them from the lake system is a long term solution to removing Phosphorous. We have the fish removal program, we need some entrepreneur that would like to start up a weed harvesting enterprise.