



Managing Excess Native Aquatic Vegetation

Native aquatic plants are a natural and beneficial component of a healthy lake ecosystem. Among other things, they provide oxygen to the lake, shelter for aquatic life and help with water quality. There are times, however, when native aquatic vegetation or aquatic invasive species becomes so prolific that it becomes a nuisance and interferes with swimming, boating and other lake activities. In such circumstances, PLC recognizes that limited removal or treatment of nuisance vegetation may be warranted if done in a responsible manner. The following summarizes PLC's guidance regarding removal of aquatic vegetation.

PLC supports limited mechanical removal when excess weeds interfere with lake activities such as swimming and access to boat houses, lifts and docks. The more aquatic vegetation you "clean out", however, the greater the opportunity for something worse to move in its place. Lakes are not intended to be swimming pools, but living ecosystems.

Any form of chemical or biological treatment must be approved by SD Game Fish and Parks. The application can be found [here](#). PLC currently supports chemical or biological treatment of native aquatic vegetation by licensed professional organizations who are skilled at handling treatments. It should only be considered when aggressive invasive species have been detected in the lake.

Recommendations for removal and disposal of nuisance vegetation are as follows

REMOVAL

- Vegetation should be removed carefully in a manner that minimizes chopping into fragments. Many aquatic plants propagate from fragments. Cutting or tearing plants into pieces could end up making the nuisance vegetation problem grow even worse.
- Aquatic plants should not be removed on a large scale. Removal should be limited to swimming areas around docks and lanes for boats to access lifts and boat houses
- Care should be taken not to disturb the lake bottom, which could release algae producing phosphorus into the water column.
- Once dislodged, aquatic plants should be removed from the lake and not allowed to float away.

DISPOSAL

- Aquatic plants removed from the lake should be disposed on land.
- Pickerel Lake currently does not have a designated land area to dump aquatic vegetation.
- Aquatic plants make good compost when layered with other composting materials.
- Try spreading out the vegetation on the ground and allow them to dry out for a day or so. Once dry, they mulch easily or can be burned using safe burning practices. They are also much lighter to carry when dry.
- Area landfills that accept yard waste will likely accept aquatic vegetation in reasonable quantities.
- Dumping piles of aquatic vegetation in ditches or onto public and private property is irresponsible and quite possibly illegal.
- Under no circumstances should aquatic plants be dumped back into the lake after they have been removed.