

Lake and River Resources: Aquatic Plant Management

Intense cultivation or land development near a lake can increase the amount of aquatic plants by increasing the amount of nutrients flowing from the watershed into the water. Nutrient-laden discharges from sewage treatment plants, livestock feedlots, and leaky septic systems promote heavy growth of aquatic plants. Development within a watershed also speeds up the aging process of a lake. The construction of roads and houses removes vegetation that would normally protect soils, leading to more soil erosion. Eroded soils can cover sand and gravel providing additional areas where plants might grow. The addition of houses, paved driveways, and other hard surfaces adds to the amount of nutrient-rich runoff that flows into lakes and streams. For all of these reasons, lakes and ponds that did not support a dense growth of aquatic plants in their natural state may show increased growth because of human activities.