

Weed Harvesting Guidelines

Tri-Lakes begins harvesting in late May and will continue through the end of September. Areas of the lake that can be harvested as well as harvesting depths are established by the DNR. For areas of the lake deeper than six feet, the harvest depth will be five feet. Along the shoreline where depths are less than six feet, a 60-foot wide path can be harvested as needed along the ends of docks. There will be no mechanical harvesting in areas between the shoreline and the end of docks. Property owners can hand harvest a 30-foot wide path in this area. Weeds can be left on piers or along the shoreline for pick-up by the harvester operators. Please be sure to put them in a spot that is accessible. Weeds only will be picked up – do not include heavy amounts of sand in the piles.

One of the advantages of harvesting weeds (as compared to chemical treatment) is that phosphorus that is present in the weeds is also removed from the lake along with the weeds. UW-SP measures the amount of phosphorus present in our weeds. Last year, over 2,463 pounds of phosphorus was removed from the three lakes.

The amount of weeds in the lake is a result of runoff of excess nutrients – especially phosphorus. **Tips to reduce phosphorus runoff:**

- Most lawns do not need fertilizer, especially if clippings are left on the lawn or you draw water from the lake for your sprinkler system. However, if you do use fertilizer, choose a brand **without phosphorus**
- Inspect and maintain your septic system regularly (at least once every 3 years)
- Properly dispose of household chemicals such as paint, car oil or pesticides
- Because lawn grass increases runoff, plant trees and shrubs and maintain wooded areas
- Direct spouts onto your lawn or landscaping, not onto hard surfaces
- Install a rain barrel to collect water for watering your lawn or garden
- Build a rain garden which will soak up water and is also visually aesthetic
- Establish, protect or restore a shoreline buffer (recommended to be at least 35 feet in depth). Do not mow in this area.