

- Access lanes to open water should be clustered around shared lot boundaries. This practice maintains large contiguous tracts of emergent aquatic vegetation.
- Open water access lanes centred on individual cottage lots is discouraged as this results in the fragmentation of aquatic habitats into small non-contiguous patches.

Swimming Areas

- Removal of aquatic plants for the creation of private swimming areas in front of cottages is strongly discouraged if a public beach/swimming area exists in the immediate area of the cottage subdivision. Incremental removal results in a significant cumulative loss of aquatic habitat to the lake ecosystem.



General Requirements

- Aquatic plants are to be removed by manual or mechanical means only.
- Aquatic plant removal may be performed once between July 1 and September 30.

- In areas with high bird/waterfowl nesting values, aquatic plant removal may be performed only once between August 1 and September 30.
- Stands of aquatic vegetation that cover less than 75 per cent of the width of a lot front must remain intact, and access is gained around these stands.
- Vegetation cannot be cut shorter than one metre in height.
- The lakebed cannot be disturbed.
- To avoid the spread of plant fragments, all cut vegetation must be removed from the lake and disposed of where it cannot re-enter the water.

Disclaimer: This pamphlet is provided as general information only. Contact Alberta Sustainable Resource Development or Alberta Environment for legislative, regulatory or policy details.

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Aquatic Vegetation Removal From Alberta Lakes

*Shared
Resource*

*Shared
Responsibility*

**Government
of Alberta** ■

Aquatic Plants and Lake Ecosystems

Aquatic plants are an important part of a natural aquatic ecosystem, especially for the ecology of shoreline areas. They provide habitat for fish to spawn, feed and hide from predators. Aquatic plants help maintain water quality by stabilizing sediments.



Too many aquatic plants, however, can interfere with boating, swimming and other recreational water activities. At times, some control through aquatic vegetation removal may be necessary and allowed under special circumstances.



Removal of aquatic vegetation may be approved for individual use, public use or commercial purposes. Public use or commercial purposes are normally limited to areas that benefit multiple users or are required for the successful operation of commercial facilities (e.g., provincial parks, beaches, marinas, resorts, boat ramp/launch areas).

Provincial and Federal Laws

Under the *Water Act*, an approval is required for all aquatic vegetation removal. Under the *Public Lands Act*, it is prohibited to disturb the bed and shore of a water body without prior authorization. Approval is also required under this Act where the proposed removal site is located in or adjacent to a Restricted Development Area (RDA) on a lake, or if the method of removal will alter or modify the lakebed or shoreline. An approval under the *Fisheries Act* may be required where the proposed project does not follow the general guidelines outlined below.

Restricted Development or Activity (RDA) Areas

Aquatic plant removal will not be permitted where critical fish habitat or nesting areas of migratory birds of special concern or species at risk have been identified. Removal of aquatic vegetation in or adjacent to these areas requires project reviews and prior approval. Some of these areas have been mapped and are available at www.srd.alberta.ca.



Review and Approval Process

The review and approval of applications for aquatic vegetation removal is coordinated between Alberta Environment (ENV), Alberta Sustainable Resource Development (SRD) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (Canada). Applications for approvals can be made at any Lands (SRD) or Water Management (ENV) office across the province. Application forms can be found at www.srd.alberta.ca.



Removal for Individual Use

In addition to obtaining an approval, the following guidelines will apply for areas that have not been identified as critical fish habitat or nesting areas for migratory birds of special concern or species at risk:



Piers and Boat Lanes

- Removal of aquatic plants adjacent to a pier or boat lift is restricted to an area not more than four metres in width.
- A single lane is to provide access to the main water body. The lane cannot exceed more than four metres in width extending from the pier outward and must be perpendicular to the shore.
- The lane must remain in the same location from year to year.