

POND PROJECT UPDATE
COMMENTS FROM DR. MARK CLARK
8.24.09

“The algae and SAV in the ponds is not the problem, it is a symptom of the problem. The problem is elevated nutrient levels that are coming from nutrients in runoff from the watershed (lawn fertilizer, reclaimed water, additives to irrigation water, leaching of fill soil, etc) or flux from underlying soil geology that was exposed when ponds were excavated. Killing the algae and SAV using herbicides temporarily gets rid of the symptom, but does not fix the problem and instead likely sends the problem further downstream where the symptom (algal bloom) will now express itself in the natural environment.

The alternative treatments being proposed seek to allow the symptom of the problem to be part of the solution to prevent excess nutrients from moving further downstream, but the degree to which their effectiveness can be balanced with acceptable conditions within the ponds will be influenced by the degree to which the sources of nutrients can be reduced.

Even though I realize that phosphorus leaching from fill soils and/or the pond bottom may be significant, nutrient loads are additive and reducing inputs associated with reclaimed water and fertilizer practices within the community can only help to reduce the amount of nutrients available to fuel algae growth either in ponds or downstream in the environment.

I should have water sample data from last sampling back from the lab in about a week and I have requested that Jim send survey forms and memory stick with photos so that I can have a student start processing.”