

## Sustainability for a Healthy Lake

For many years Loch Lomond has had insufficient aquatic plant coverage. The aquatic plants serve many purposes: soaking up the excessive nutrients which our lake has an overabundance of; increasing the dissolved oxygen levels in the lake which promote native plant growth and fish health; and reducing algae blooms.

Loch Lomond's aquatic plant coverage has increased over the last few years as shown in the heat mapping done by Lake County Ecological Services. These maps are available on the Loch Lomond website <https://lochlomondlake.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Aquatic-Plant-Islands.pdf>. We are on the right path but we need to ensure we continue to expand the aquatic plant coverage and develop a more diverse range of aquatic plants.

### Chemical Spraying vs Weed Harvesting

**Chemical spraying** is not a sustainable solution. Years of chemical spraying has resulted in a build-up of chemicals in our lake (in the water and in the silt). Chemical spraying kills entire plants. Therefore, the aquatic plants that have soaked up excess nutrients die off and create more silt and return those nutrients right back into the lake. This is not a desirable outcome. The recommendation from Lake County Ecological Services is to spray for invasive aquatic plants only early in the spring.

**Weed harvesting** cuts off the top portion of the plant and removes it from the lake. The remaining plant continues to grow and absorb excess nutrients. We understand that increased aquatic plant coverage can result in navigational difficulties for boating and paddling in some areas. A recommended solution is creating boating lanes around the entire perimeter of the lake. This would help balance the lake recreation needs with the need for healthy aquatic plant coverage.

Many nearby lakes have moved from chemical spraying to weed harvesting. These lakes are seeing positive results towards healthier lakes.