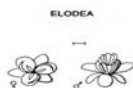


Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)

As one of Maryland's largest freshwater ecosystems, Deep Creek Lake possesses a valuable and extensive aquatic environment. Since its construction in 1924, the growth and natural development of the underwater environment has brought about many changes in both the flora (plant) and fauna (animal) species found here.



When lakes are new, the subsurface environment is very sterile and, unless stocked naturally or by man, few plants or animals are present. Nutrients slowly flow into the lake with water from the surface and the lake's tributaries and the environment slowly changes into a dynamic system. As the lake ages, different plants and animals become established. In a state of constant change and balancing, this plant and animal life below the lake's surface is always adapting to seasonal changes in temperature, oxygen, rainfall, runoff, and inflows of nutrients and natural and manmade changes.

In recent years there has been an increase in visible presence of submerged aquatic plant species, especially in the more shallow areas of the lake. This has been partially the result of higher than normal summer air and water temperatures. Also, as the lake level drops in the late summer, the plants (which grow upwards from the lake bottom) start to manifest themselves on the lake surface.

Some people also believe that improvements in septic and sewer systems have resulted in increased water clarity, thus allowing sunlight to penetrate the surface and help the plants grow. In late summer months, these aquatic plants can be seen in such areas as Green Glade, Pergin Farms, Meadow Mountain Run, Beckman's Cove, and Pawn Run.



While this vegetation is quite natural, always present and growing, and a sign of a healthy ecosystem, it is also often a cause of concern for boaters and lake property owners. Many of these people see it as a nuisance or interference with their boating use of the lake. This perception places the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in the position of trying to address these concerns while preserving the quality and health of the lake ecosystem.

Fast Facts and Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Submerged Aquatic Vegetation

- Sampling by DNR biologists indicates that the dominant species of aquatic plants are Wild Celery (*Vallisneria*) and *Elodea sp.* Deep Creek Lake has several exotic plant species residents, including *Eurasian watermilfoil*.
- The Department of Natural Resource encourages the growth and reintroduction of submerged aquatic species elsewhere in the State of Maryland, especially the

- Chesapeake Bay. These plants are environmentally beneficial, enhance water quality, and provide food and cover for fish and wildlife.
- Submerged vegetation enhances water quality by absorbing and filtering out nutrients, and they also help to oxygenate water. They are a valuable part of the lake's ecosystem.
- They are indicators of good water quality. The absence of submerged vegetation is more cause for concern.
- Navigation in SAV areas is still possible. Boaters can adapt by slowing their boats, raising their motors slightly, and proceeding slowly through the grass beds. Propellers are usually easily cleared by reversing them after leaving the beds and entering deeper waters.

What Does the Future Hold for Submerged Vegetation on Deep Creek Lake?

DNR Resource Specialists predict that the lake may continue to experience a gradual expansion in SAV's in localized areas, with occasional natural diebacks as seasonal weather changes. The growth and presence of submerged vegetation is a dynamic that changes relative to the seasons and climate change.

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<p><small>Accommodations for individuals with disabilities will be provided upon request. Seven days advance notice is requested.</small></p>		