

Study pinpoints nutrient behind fresh water algae blooms

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University of Alberta ecologist David Schindler has reviewed data from studies of controlling human-caused algae blooms in lakes and says controlling the input of the nutrient phosphorus is the key to fighting the problem.

Recent short-term algae studies claim that controlling the human input of both nitrogen and phosphorus into lakes must be reduced to control summer [algae blooms](#).

In contrast, Schindler concluded that only phosphorus control is necessary after reviewing long-term lake experiments and case histories of lakes where nutrients have been controlled.

Schindler estimates that the cost of controlling just the phosphorus input alone would be as much as 90-per-cent less than trying to control both phosphorus and nitrogen.

Possible sources of phosphorus to lakes are from [sewage](#), agriculture, runoff from lawns, gardens and septic tanks.

Much of Schindler's critical evidence comes from long-term experiments, some lasting 40 years, in the Experimental Lakes Area in northwestern Ontario. The Federal government recently announced that it would shut the ELA down in March of 2013.

More information: Schindler's review of cultural eutrophication was

published today by the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London Series B*.

Provided by University of Alberta

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