



Algal Blooms and Deadzones

Dead zones are areas of water bodies where aquatic life cannot survive because of low oxygen levels. Dead zones are generally caused by lots of nutrients washing into the water, and are primarily a problem for lakes and coastal waters since they receive excess nutrients from upstream sources, such as farms or factories.

Excess nutrients can cause an overgrowth of algae in a short period of time, also called algae blooms. The overgrowth of algae takes up a lot of oxygen and blocks sunlight from underwater plants. The lack of oxygen makes it impossible for aquatic life to survive. The largest dead zone in the United States is in the Gulf of Mexico and occurs every summer as a result of nutrient pollution from the Mississippi River.

The map below shows how water sources in Bloomington, like Blue Pond, meet up with other water sources, such as the Mississippi River, until the water eventually flows into the ocean at the Gulf of Mexico.

