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At times pond owners may notice an increased turbidity or ‘muddiness’ of their favorite fishing holes. If this increase is clay turbidity, they may also see shading out of the helpful algal blooms, risking low oxygen events, and reducing the overall productivity of the pond. Additionally, the resulting color of clay turbidity is often undesirable.

To address clay turbidity in a pond, an owner has several options. However, the first step is always to identify the source of the problem. Livestock, for example, will erode pond edges when they enter and exit a pond. The quick fix for this source of turbidity is to restrict access to only a small portion of the pond with fencing.

A second likely cause of increased turbidity following a heavy rain is a lack of vegetation on the pond sides. The vegetation is an important erosion control device, and will serve to enhance both the aesthetic quality and water quality of the pond. New ponds typically demonstrate this type of clay turbidity. Planting grass around ponds will help reduce this type of clay input. In the meantime, while waiting on the grass to grow, using hay or other erosion controls to slow runoff water into the pond will help reduce turbidity.

If a turbidity source cannot be identified, or an older pond develops a problem with clay turbidity, further options are available to a pond manager. In these cases, the owner or

manager should contact their local Extension office for recommendations and suggestions.

For additional questions or information, contact P.J. Waters, Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center, 438-5690.