

HOW TO HELP

- Use less detergent. The amount of detergent you need to use depends on the hardness of the water in your area and how dirty your laundry is. Even if you do use detergents with phosphate in them, you can still help the environment by using the minimum amount recommended on the pack – and of course still get good results.
- Choose environmentally friendly brands with no phosphate at all. They're out there on the shelves if you look for them.

Watch out for the word PHOSPHATE on the side of each packet. Aim for less than 5% if you can. Phosphate is sometimes called sodium tripolyphosphate (STPP).

- Try to buy liquids or powders instead of tablets. Laundry liquids tend to contain less phosphate, laundry tablets tend to contain the most phosphate.
- Wait until you have a full load before using a washing machine.
- Ensure that your private sewage treatment plant is well maintained and working effectively.

For further information on reducing phosphate please contact:
Broads Authority tel 01603 610734
www.broads-authority.gov.uk

PHOSPHATE

how to avoid it and help improve water quality in The Broads

If you use a septic tank, small sewage plant or boat please read on...



The Broads is a wonderful place for wildlife and people, and much of this value depends on the water being of good quality. One of the problems facing The Broads is that there are too many nutrients in the water.

Effect of phosphate in The Broads

Excess nutrients, particularly phosphate, leads to algae growth and poor water quality. Algae prevent light reaching through the water and use up oxygen, causing a decline in the health of the water environment.

Sources of phosphate

The phosphate entering rivers and broads comes from many sources, but mainly from sewage treatment plant effluents and agriculture.

Agriculture

Phosphate can come from animal manures or fertilisers washing off fields into rivers. Several initiatives are underway which encourage farmers to reduce these problems.

Detergents in sewage

Phosphate is added to laundry detergents to soften the water and to hold dirt in the wash water. The usual alternative to phosphate is a naturally occurring material called zeolite, which is environmentally friendly and does not contribute to nutrient pollution.

Over the last few years Anglian Water has installed phosphate removal facilities at its larger sewage treatment plants. This has decreased phosphate entering The Broads. However, small private sewage treatment plants, while still treating sewage adequately, allow phosphate to pass into ditches and rivers. It may be a small contribution compared to other sources, but reducing this source will help restore The Broads.

- **Overall, detergents account for almost 20% of the phosphate entering the water environment (Defra 2008).**

Boats

Washing water from boats goes straight into the rivers and broads. So the cleaning products we use will have a direct impact on the water environment.

