

Didymo is Bad.

A young girl is walking through the woods. She looks into the stream. She sees something gooey and slimy, and then yells, "... ahhhhhhh!" What she is screaming about is a thing called 'rock snot' or 'didymo'. It is an alga found in lakes, rivers or streams all over the world. I'm wondering how water speed affects didymo.

Didymo is a type of algae that is spreading all over the earth. Didymo feels like wet cotton. It looks like a white rat tail or toilet paper as it trails in the water current but it is a single celled algae. It is invisible to the naked eye because it is a single celled algae but when it gets bigger you can see it. Didymo makes these massive stalks and large mats are woven out of the stalks. Its color is yellow and brown and needs fresh water. It started spreading widely and wildly the 1980's. Didymo has been native to Canada, Norway, Europe, and the west coast of the United States.

How does water speed affect Didymo? Didymo needs a low and calm flow. When there is a dam, a small bit of water goes over the dam, just enough for didymo to grow below. When there is a rain storm at the dam, they let more water go and the didymo will flow away with the water. It will eventually grow back when the low water is back. The dams are made so people can get electricity or irrigate crops. The dams slow the water down so the didymo will grow in and out of the dam.

Water level depth affects didymo. The water needs to be around 3 to 6 feet for the didymo to grow. A healthy stream or river has caddis flies, stone flies, and may flies. An unhealthy stream has midge, larva, and worms. Didymo makes an unhealthy stream and so there are less fish and plants. It impacts plants because it takes their oxygen and impacts fish by having less food. To keep didymo away, we need the streams to flow and the rocks to scour the didymo away.

When people go fishing, they spread didymo on their gear and boots. So if you see didymo when you are fishing or other stuff you do in the water, clear, clean and dry what you have that might have didymo on it. This will prevent spreading it. If that girl that I spoke about above was a fisherwoman and she knew about didymo, she would wash off the didymo on her boat, boots, coat, pants, and hook.

Bibliography

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