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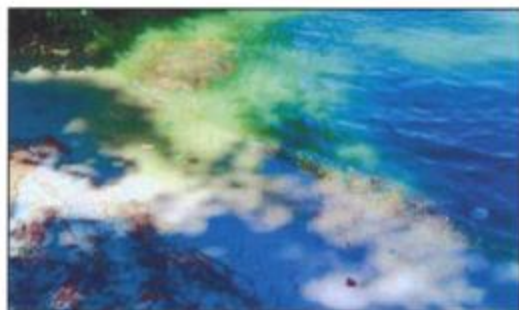
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YELLOW-GREEN KOOL-AID IN THE LAKE?

by **Andrea LaMoreaux**
NH Lakes Association

Here's the bad news— on June 28 a cyanobacteria warning was issued for the west shore of Bear Island of Lake Winnepesaukee. People living along and visiting this area of the lake reported a scum which resembled the color of yellow-green Kool-Aid along the shoreline and extending out into the open water. The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (DES) advised that lake users avoid contact with the water.

Here's the good news— on July 1, the cyanobacteria warning was removed. The DES re-tested the area and found that the concentration of cyanobacteria in the water was below the level of concern. Despite this good news, this



A cyanobacteria bloom may look like someone dumped blue-green paint or yellow-green Kool-Aid into the lake.

is most likely not the last lake cyanobacteria warning you will hear about on the radio or read about in the newspaper this summer.

Here are some important things that you should know to ensure you have a safe time enjoying New Hampshire's approximately 1,000 lakes and ponds this summer...

What are cyanobacteria?

Cyanobacteria are single-celled bacteria that produce their own food utilizing sunlight. They

are some of the earliest inhabitants of our waters and they naturally occur in all of our lakes, usually in relatively small amounts. However, scientists have found that the amount of cyanobacteria in a waterbody often increases when the amount of nutrients, particularly phosphorus, increases (phosphorus typically comes from eroding soils, fertilizers, yard wastes, septic system effluent, and waterfowl droppings that wash into the water). Scientists have also discovered that some cyanobacteria produce

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ENJOY THE WATER

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Be sure to "look before you leap" so that you don't accidentally leap into a cyanobacteria bloom!

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toxins that adversely affect livestock, domestic animals, and humans.

What does a bloom look like?

When present in low numbers, cyanobacteria can not be seen with the naked eye and they typically do not cause recreational or aesthetic problems. Unfortunately, when the perfect "bad conditions" come together, such as when a day or two of heavy rain is followed by a few days of sunny, warm weather, a cyanobacteria bloom may occur in a lake. Typically, blooms are found in cove areas or along the windward shoreline of a waterbody. The surface of the water may look like pea soup or antifreeze, yellow-green or blue-green Kool-Aid, or like someone dumped greenish-blue paint into the water. It could also smell like grass.

What you should do if you discover a suspicious looking bloom in your lake:

There are simple precautions that you can take to protect you and your family and pets if you suspect that a cyanobacteria bloom is occurring in your area of the lake.

Keep pets out of the water. And, report the bloom to DES at (603) 419-9229.

What does it mean if a cyanobacteria advisory

is issued?

When a cyanobacteria advisory is issued, it is usually for an area of a lake, not for the entire lake. It is very unusual

for an entire lake or pond to be affected by a bloom at the same time. The general rule is that if you don't see what looks like

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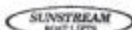
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a cyanobacteria bloom where you intend to swim, then you should be safe. DES recommends that you "look before you leap" into the water—if you see what might be a bloom, you shouldn't swim in that area and you should report it. If an area is posted for a cyanobacteria bloom, DES will continue to retest the water in the area and will remove the advisory when the bloom no longer is present. This may take a day or two, or a week or two. Every bloom is different—we just have to let nature take care of it.

You can help prevent a bloom in your lake!

To reduce the chances of a cyanobacteria bloom occurring in your lake, you can help reduce the amount of nutrients that enter the water. There are many simple things you can do to reduce your individual contribution to phosphorus pollution:

vegetate shorelines with native plants; use phosphorus-free fertilizer, or better yet, no fertilizer at all; dispose of yard waste away from waterbodies; use phosphate-free soaps; stabilize areas on your property where soil is washed away during rainstorms; keep the shoreline clean by not feeding waterfowl; and, upgrade out-dated or undersized septic systems.

Don't be afraid to swim in New Hampshire's lakes!

Overall, New Hampshire's waterbodies are among the cleanest in the nation! Instead, be relieved that in New Hampshire we wade and swim in one of the *few* states where lakes are monitored for this potentially toxic bacteria.

For more information:

For the most up-to-date cyanobacteria advisories issued for New Hampshire's lakes, visit [www2.](http://www2.des.state.nh.us/Advisories/Beaches/)

des.state.nh.us/Advisories/Beaches/.

The New Hampshire Lakes Association (NH LAKES) is a member-supported, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting New Hampshire's lakes and their watersheds. Find NH LAKES on Facebook by searching for "NH LAKES (NH Lakes Association)" at www.facebook.com and become a fan of their page. To receive NH LAKES' free monthly e-news blast, Shorelines, full of interested

lake-related information, sign up at www.nhakes.org.

Join NH LAKES for their fourth annual LakeFest fundraiser on July 29th, 5-8pm, at the Inn at Church Landing in Meredith. There will be two live comedy performances, gourmet food and wine, and a silent auction. Tickets can be purchased at www.nhakes.org/LakeFest2011.htm or by calling (603) 226-0299. Tickets are \$50 for one, \$75 for two.

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