

## **WHITE POND RECREATIONAL WATER USE ADVISORY ISSUED 10/21/16**

In the past several days, the Concord Health and Natural Resources Divisions have received reports from residents about an algae bloom at White Pond. Water samples submitted by residents to the US EPA Cyanobacteria Monitoring Collaborative have shown the presence of the blue-green alga *Anabaena*. The EPA program did not perform cell counts for algal density or test for the presence of algal toxins. However, a distinct blue-green algal scum/bloom is present in some areas of the pond (see pictures below).

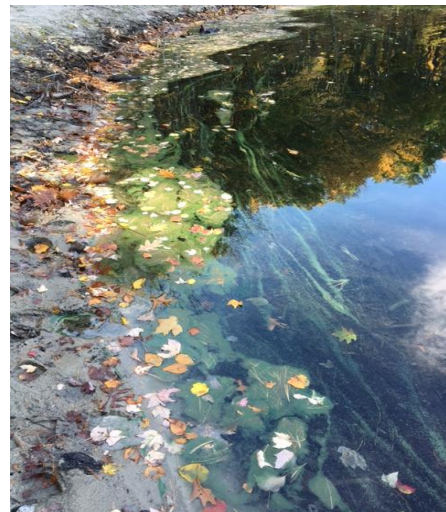
Out of an abundance of caution, a public health advisory is being issued.

The Concord Board of Health strongly advises:

- Avoid contact with areas of algae concentration- even on shore.
- Do not swim
- Do not allow your pet to swim in or drink the water.
- Rinse pets and children off immediately if they come into contact with an algae bloom.
- Do not swallow water and be sure to rinse off after contact.

### **When will this advisory be lifted?**

Algae blooms may last for weeks in the summer, or may disappear quite quickly. Autumn's cooling water temperatures and shorter day length should cause the bloom to subside fairly soon. Town staff will regularly observe White Pond for the presence of a visible algae bloom over the coming weeks and will lift the water use advisory when the bloom is no longer visible.



## **Background information**

Blue-green algae blooms can produce toxins that can make pets and people sick. Toxins may be present within the algae cells or in the water.

- For humans, the primary concern is ingestion of water containing blue-green algae while swimming. Of secondary concern is direct skin contact with the blue-green algae and inhalation of water droplets containing blue-green algae or toxins.
- For pets, the primary concern is the ingestion of water containing blue-green algae or scum that has washed ashore or gotten onto their skin or fur.

Contact can cause skin and eye irritation, and inhalation can cause respiratory irritation and exacerbate pre-existing respiratory conditions. Toxins are not absorbed through the skin. Ingestion of blue-green algae can cause acute gastrointestinal symptoms, such as vomiting and diarrhea. If the blue-green algae are producing toxin(s), the health effects can be more serious, especially for small pets due to their smaller body weights. Ingestion of the toxins can cause acute gastrointestinal distress and, depending on the specific toxin, can affect the functioning of the liver, kidneys, and/or neurological systems and in severe cases can result in death.

**PETS**--Call your vet immediately if your pet has been around an algae bloom and shows symptoms such as vomiting, staggering, drooling, or convulsions. These symptoms present themselves fairly quickly after exposure. Animals of most concern are dogs. They have been known to eat the scum that washes ashore and/or lick scum out of their fur. In Massachusetts and in many other states, canine fatalities have been observed due to the ingestion of harmful algae.

## **For more information, call the Concord Board of Health at 978 318 3275**

MA Department of Public Health, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention(CDC) and US EPA websites provide further information on blue-green algae blooms:

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/environmental-health/exposure-topics/beaches-algae/algae-information.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/hab/>

<http://www2.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/cyanohabs>