

# Information on George's Pond

*A DEP Fact Sheet—July, 2015*

## Herbicide Application

A call to the Board of Pesticides Control (BPC) reveals that tetrachlorodibenzodioxin (TCDD) has never been used as an herbicide. TCDD was a contaminant in some herbicides used prior to 1980, but would not have been in any of the products which may have been used recently.

Note that the Herbicide issue is not directly related to the algal bloom issue. DEP will defer to the Board of Pesticides Control about any herbicide questions.

## Algal Bloom and Cyanotoxins

George's Pond in Franklin bloomed for the first time on record in 2012. DEP monitored it frequently in 2013, but it did not reach bloom conditions. We visited it on 8/26/2014 and collected a sample for cyanotoxin analysis. The result for Microcystin was 0.42 ug/liter. We visited the pond again on July 8<sup>th</sup> and it was in full bloom. We will be visiting it again in early August and will collect another sample for cyanotoxin analysis at that time. Generally cyanotoxins are produced by the algae late in a bloom.

As of right now, Maine CDC has not issued formal advisory language but ~ 2010, approved DEP listing the following guidelines on the department's website:

## What should I do to avoid problems?

While most adults will avoid green discolored water, a hot day can lure children and pets into the water.

1. Do not swim, water ski, or boat in areas where algae are visible (e.g., pea soup, floating mats, scum layers, etc.), where water is discolored, or where musty odors are present.
2. Do not let pets or livestock swim or drink where the water is discolored or where you see foam, scum, or mats of algae on the water or where musty odors are present.

3. If you swim or wade in water that has dense algae present - rinse off with fresh water (and soap if available) as soon as practical. This is also an effective method of reducing skin exposure for your pets.
4. Do not drink lake water during a bloom. Well maintained domestic water treatment systems may make lake water safe to drink in many instances, but they are not guaranteed to remove algal toxins.

For more information, please visit DEP's website at: <http://www.maine.gov/dep/water/lakes/cyanobacteria.htm>

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Note that DEP does not recommend drinking any untreated lake water because of the risk from parasites such as *Giardia* which can cause an intestinal infection known as giardiasis.

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## What's Next

With DEP's assistance, in 2013 the lake association conducted a watershed survey and produced a report of the findings in February of 2014. Although a number of non-point source issues were identified, the issues were not of magnitude to account for the entire phosphorus load to the lake. It is likely that factors internal to the lake itself are causing phosphorus to be released from the sediments and fueling algal blooms. We have begun discussions with one member of the association about what it will take to quantify internal loading. We will likely collect some extra samples during our August visit which will begin to shed light on this aspect. In general, it takes lakes a long time to reach the point at which they produce regular algal blooms. Likewise, it takes time and financial resources to determine nutrient sources and loads. And more often than not, it takes a number of years and financial resources to restore a lake. A positive aspect is that there is a very interested group of individuals in the George's Pond Property Owners Association already working with DEP. Further federal grant money may be available to help with restorative projects.

