

# Information on Georges Pond

*A DEP Fact Sheet—July 2015  
(Revised)*

*The Maine Department of Environmental Protection has created this informational fact sheet to provide residents on Georges Pond as well as day users with information pertaining to the recent algal bloom.*

## Algal Bloom on Georges Pond

Recent reports have confirmed that Georges Pond in Franklin is experiencing an algal bloom this summer. Georges Pond had an algal bloom for the first time on record in 2012. DEP monitored the Pond frequently in 2013, but it did not reach bloom conditions. On August 26, 2014, DEP collected a water sample to test for an algal toxin called microcystin. The test results indicated that the toxin was present in amounts less than health-based guidelines in effect at that time. Because microcystin is generally produced by algae late in a bloom, DEP staff will collect another lake water sample in August.

## How do I recognize a severe algal bloom?

Signs of a severe algal bloom include water with color ranging from olive green to bright green and having the consistency of pea soup. The bloom may also appear as floating mats or scum layers, and could have a musty odor.

## What should I do to avoid problems?

If you believe the lake is experiencing a severe algal bloom, follow these steps in the affected area:

1. Do not drink lake water during a bloom. Domestic water treatment systems are not guaranteed to remove algal toxins.
2. Do not swim, water ski, or boat in that area;
3. Do not let pets or livestock drink or swim in the water; and
4. If you or your pet should 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.

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.

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

## What may be causing the algal bloom and what are the next steps?

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 a 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. Department staff will collect water samples in August and will continue to analyze what is likely causing the recent algal blooms. In general, it takes a long time for a lake to reach the point of producing severe 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. The Department will maintain communications with the Town of Franklin and the lake association as more information becomes available.

## Herbicide Application

In response to concerns of land-based herbicide applications, the Board of Pesticides Control (BPC) reports 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.

