

State Issues Cyanobacteria Advisory for Halfmoon Lake in Alton and Barnstead, New Hampshire

Concord, NH- Aug 20. A cyanobacteria bloom has been observed along the shoreline of Halfmoon Lake, in the towns of Alton and Barnstead, NH. The bloom appeared as blue-green ribbons in the water, accumulating along the shoreline. Samples collected on 8/20 exceeded the State threshold of 70,000 cells/ml of cyanobacteria. Water samples contained 31,000 to 137,000 cells/ml of the cyanobacteria taxa, *Anabaena/Dolichospermum* and *Oscillatoria (Planktothrix isoethrix)*. Higher concentration occurred along the shoreline, but also observed in the deeper water. Surface blooms can rapidly change and accumulate in various locations around a waterbody. As a result, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) has issued a cyanobacteria advisory for those who use the waterbody for recreation. Please continue to monitor your individual shorelines for changing conditions and avoid contact.

NHDES monitors public beaches and public waters of the state for cyanobacteria. Once a cyanobacteria advisory has been issued, NHDES returns to affected waterbodies weekly until the cyanobacteria standards are again met. NHDES advises lake users to avoid contact with the water in areas experiencing elevated cyanobacteria cell conditions. NHDES also advises pet owners to keep their pets out of any waters that have a cyanobacteria bloom.

This advisory is not based on a toxin evaluation and is intended as a precautionary measure for short term exposure. Cyanobacteria are natural components of water bodies worldwide, though blooms and surface scums may form when excess nutrients are available to the water. Some cyanobacteria produce toxins that are stored within the cells and released upon cell death. Toxins can cause both acute and chronic health effects that range in severity. Acute health effects include irritation of skin and mucous membranes, tingling, numbness, nausea, vomiting, seizures and diarrhea. Chronic effects may include liver and central nervous system damage. Be cautious of lake water that has a surface scum, changes colors, or appears to have green streaks or blue-green flecks aggregating along the shore.

The cyanobacteria advisory went into effect on August 20, 2019 and will remain in effect until NHDES confirms that cell concentrations of the bloom have subsided.

Visit the NHDES Beach Program website for photos and more information about cyanobacteria at: <https://www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/beaches/index.htm>

Updates on cyanobacteria advisories may be obtained at:
http://www4.des.state.nh.us/WaterShed_BeachMaps/WaterShed_BeachMaps.aspx

Follow the Beaches twitter feed:

https://twitter.com/NHDES_Beaches

If you notice anything resembling cyanobacteria, please refrain from wading, swimming, or drinking the water. Keep all pets out of the water and contact NHDES immediately. Please call NHDES to report a cyanobacteria bloom at (603) 848-8094.