



THE LAKE AND THE LAKE OPERATIONS

We are currently seeing a break out of algae in several forms fairly early this year showing up in the east basin of the lake, mostly along the eastern and southern shore's where the recent storms pushed the surface waters. The surface algae pushed to the village of Pewaukee beach and water ski area and concentrated in small areas and started a "mono specific bloom of Microcystis" which produces a liver toxin which is what we watch for as it affects human health. This is the algae called "Blue-Green Algae". We quickly took water samples in the beach area and sent them to UW Wisconsin Milwaukee School of Public Health. Unfortunately the results showed it was over the EPA limit for the beach party and the beach was closed for safety precautions. (The threat is mostly for very small kids and pets). On Monday new samples were taken and they show that they are below EPA standards, so the beach was reopened. That's how quick things can change from bad to good. Fortunately we can see it slowly go from good to bad so we are always on the "watch" for that specific "bad algae".

The other algae showing up more and more is the filamentous algae which is what most of the lake has. This shows up as green clouds floating around beneath the surface, sheets clinging to plants and along the rocks on the bottom and can be a matt on the surface usually in calm areas or the shallow bays. This is a "good algae" per the wdnr although it can be a nuisance to swimmers, fisherman and all the other lake users. This type of algae can collect organisms and bacteria so it would be good to shower after swimming to avoid getting a rash or hives or even "swimmers itch" which I have seen on my kids. Baking soda and water helps to alleviate the itching and time takes care of the symptoms.

For more information on swimmers itch see this article for questions and answers:

<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p4/p42094.pdf>

To learn more about Blue-green algae go to the wdnr website at:

<http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/bluegreenalgae/Default.aspx?show=resources>

There is also a really good write up on algae blooms located in this location:

<https://www.wisconsinacademy.org/magazine/algal-blooms-wisconsin>

Please look these up and read about how you can handle the situation and what you can do to help. Too many people want to say I'm calling the District or the WDNR because they think we/they control the ecology of the lake. The reality is, it is all the people around the lake and in the watershed that influence the quality of the lake. The District does what it can to help what can be controlled such as cutting invasive aquatic plants and maintaining a sewer system to alleviate any sewage from getting into the lake. Eliminating the nutrients flowing into the lake is what we all need to help stop. Fertilizing your lawns is the biggest culprit, even if its phosphorus free, it contains nitrogen and other nutrients. Isn't it coincidental that we received a few heavy rainfalls which washed the lawns right into the lake as well as the sediment resuspension and erosion...and then we got the algae bloom? To stop the problem we have to go to the sources.

Although the District, the WDNR and other non-profits are doing what they can, we need everyone to take responsibility and do what is right for the lake and environment if we want a better ecosystem. Ironically it's usually the people that own the pristine lawns who are paying for fertilizing services, they are the first one's that call about the problem of the algae or aquatic plants in the lake and they do not want to hear about a native buffer. They are taking the problem from their lawn and feeding it to the lake. If you are interested in a native buffer to do your part we can discuss a "Healthy Lakes grant program" and possible participation for next year. For more information go to: <http://healthylakeswi.com/>

The lake crews are in full swing for the 2017 season and the aquatic plants appear to have had a slower start despite the theory that a cool spring and early ice out promotes milfoil growth. Please continue your support by participating in the pile pick up program on Mondays and Fridays. We can't emphasize enough how much more efficient we can remove the aquatic plants if the lake property owners participate by making piles on their shores in an accessible location for the big barges. The Lake Pewaukee Sanitary District started this process several years ago and to date, other Lake Districts have been following our lead. This process takes teamwork. You should know that this effort goes a lot farther than you may think. Aquatic plants you pile up help us remove even more Eurasian milfoil fragments from the lake and prohibit their re-establishment. If your plants are piled we can move around the lake quicker, pick up more plants faster and it allows us to clean more shoreline, which allows us to harvest more milfoil and other invasive species. Removing the dead floating aquatic plants helps remove nutrients from the lake as well, thus helping to minimize potential algae blooms.

Lake Equipment reminder –

The Harvesters (Aquatic Plant cutters) are Yellow. They are cutting on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Typically “as a rule of thumb” the harvesters do not cut on Friday. This is so we do not create any floaters for the weekend lake use. The Shore barges will typically follow a cutter the next day to collect any residual aquatic plants that are floating. This helps assure the lake is ready for the recreational users over the weekend whether you are sailing, fishing, skiing or just on a scenic cruise.

The Shore barges (Aquatic plant pick up – floaters and shorelines) are Orange. They are out everyday, picking up floating weeds and weeds along the shoreline. Typically there is one driver and 2 people pitch forking aquatic plants on to the conveyors. They are slow moving as they are paddle driven and they are difficult to maneuver. Going in and out of all the docks and boat lifts is very tedious and time consuming, but necessary to gather the floating aquatic plants.

The Transporters are Blue. They are out everyday and they are used for unloading Harvesters and Shore barges to transport the weeds across the lake. They hook up to the conveyor back at the Lake Building and load the aquatic plants into the big dump trucks.

All equipment and the lake staff are scheduled daily based on plant status and wind directions. The schedules are always subject to weather conditions. Old Mother Nature can shut us down at any time. While we will work in rain and fairly windy conditions, we pull the crews off the lake when the winds get too strong and/or lightning is observed in the area.

A common misconception - Although there can be some floaters from harvesting, they are very minimal and they are cleaned up the next day. Most of the floating aquatic plants are created from water-skiers, wake boarders, larger fishing and recreational boats that dig down deep and chop aquatic plants. After the July 4th Holiday we see a huge increase in floating plants that the crews will be working on, be patient it's a big lake, they will get around to clean the shorelines it just might take a week or two to get all the way around the lake. Please help participate by piling weeds in an accessible area so we can remove them from the lake ASAP.

If homeowners wish to cut aquatic plants between the piers there are hand held cutters and rakes available on Amazon, Shermans in Oconomowoc, Northern tool and Jenlis, some of these companies even have them in stock.

SANITARY SYSTEM

Don't flush it down the toilet unless it is toilet paper or something that you flushed through your own body! Flushing rags that may be labeled “flushable” have been causing problems with our pumps. Fortunately the new rules require manufacturers to pass 7 different tests that allow them to consider labeling something “flushable” but not everyone follows the rules. So consider the fact that if our pumps all clog up, the pipes fill, it has no other option then to come back up your toilet. Think about that concept before you flush any wipes (other than toilet paper) down the toilet. Remember too that when we are called in for emergencies, that cost the district unnecessary overtime dollars for staff to respond to emergencies, these fees relate to our budget, the budget sets the user's fee and is why the user fees can go up. Help us save you money on these potentially “avoidable” emergencies. Ultimately the District has an outstanding record of protecting you against those back-ups through our emergency procedures but we also are successful by educating our users and creating an awareness of all potential circumstances.

For more information go to: www.lakepewaukee.org or call the Lake Pewaukee Sanitary District at (262)691-4485