

## Water Quality Update:

The Sherbrooke Lake Stewardship Committee did not undertake sampling in 2020 due to Covid 19. Accordingly, there is no 2020 Water Quality report to provide. The Committee is hoping that the lake sampling effort will restart in 2021 and is working to expand the scope of its sampling effort. Some of you may be aware that the Nova Scotia Department of Environment issued a water quality advisory in late July of 2020 due to the appearance of an algae bloom. The advisory which stated *“Blue-green algae can be dangerous to you and your pets, as it can produce toxins that can make you sick. You shouldn’t use untreated water from lakes or rivers for drinking water. It could be contaminated with toxins from blue-green algae.”* It also provided a link to the following web site which cautions against swimming: <https://novascotia.ca/nse/environmental-health/blue-green-algae.asp>. The advisory remained in place for the balance of the cottage season. No lab testing of the algae or lake water was conducted to determine whether toxins were actually present or present in a concentration that could be harmful.

The Committee is working to conduct the 2021 sampling program in a manner to better predict the onset of blue-green algae and should a bloom occur, test for toxicity. Further, it is hoped that the sampling results can be used in coordination with the NS Dept of Env as they determine whether any advisories should be issued and subsequently lifted. To provide an idea of the level of risk associated with an algae bloom:

- Not all blooms are of the blue-green type. If a bloom is not comprised of blue-green algae, it will not be toxic.
- Not all blue-green algae blooms are toxic
- Even if a blue-green algae bloom is toxic, the toxin may not be present in a high enough concentration to cause issues for people or pets (Sherbrooke Lake is large)
- Even if a bloom is toxic, the toxic bacteria in time, “die” and sink harmlessly to the bottom of the lake.

As an owner of lakefront property, the most important thing you can do to reduce the chances of algae blooms is to avoid using fertilizer if you have a lawn as the nutrients (phosphorous and nitrogen) can potentially wash into the lake. These nutrients are the principal food source for algae..

Please watch for further updates on the Lake. If you see an algae bloom, contact the NS Environment and Climate Change regional office at 902 543 4685

Kind Regards

Sherbrooke Lake Stewardship Committee