



## ENJOYING THE LAKE THIS SUMMER

Owning property on Sherbrooke Lake can be tranquil, relaxing, idyllic – until an algal bloom shows up. Then, the water may not be safe for you and your pets.

Testing water quality for the last three years, the Sherbrooke Lake Stewardship Committee has noticed an increase in the presence of algae. Under the right conditions, this algae can “bloom”, potentially causing toxic conditions for humans and pets who come into contact with it.

### *What is an algal bloom?*

An algal bloom is a rapid increase in the population of algae in a body of water. Algal blooms can be toxic or non-toxic, so it's best to treat them with caution. Like in many other lakes, bacteria (Anabaena bacteria) has been found in Sherbrooke Lake, which means that algal blooms that occur have the potential to be toxic (a sure sign is evidence of fish kills). Algal blooms float and can be moved from area to area by the wind, so all parts of the Lake may be affected. They can also move up and down in the water column.

### *Why is there uncertainty about the safety of the water when a bloom appears?*

Not all algal blooms are toxic, and even if there are toxins present, they may be too diluted to be harmful. The only way to determine the presence of toxins and their strength is to take a sample and send it to a laboratory.

The Sherbrooke Lake Stewardship Committee is a group of volunteers, residents, municipal staff, and field experts dedicated to the well-being of Sherbrooke Lake.

For information about the Committee, or the work they are doing, please contact:

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To learn more about the health of Sherbrooke Lake, including initiatives, updates and testing, please ask Garth or Robin to include your name on a mail list, exclusively for Sherbrooke Lake residents and land owners.

To learn more about general best practices concerning lakes in Nova Scotia visit  
[www.voicesandchoices.ca](http://www.voicesandchoices.ca)



Sherbrooke Lake,  
credit: Garth Bangay, 07-13-2019

## Get updates in your inbox

1. about Sherbrooke Lake - email [gebangay@yahoo.ca](mailto:gebangay@yahoo.ca) or [rbmccadam1@gmail.com](mailto:rbmccadam1@gmail.com) with the words 'SIGN ME UP' and your road name in the subject line.
2. about recreational water quality - sign up at [www.voicesandchoices.ca/recreationalwater](http://www.voicesandchoices.ca/recreationalwater) to ask questions, make comments, and learn about healthy lakes.

## ***What causes algal blooms?***

A combination of variables, such as available nutrients (like phosphorous and nitrogen), sunlight, water flow, and temperature can trigger an algal bloom. Many lakes have these conditions present, but we can control excessive nutrient supply by restricting our fertilizer use, preventing septic waste from leaching into the lake, and cleaning up animal waste.

## ***Can algal blooms be prevented?***

Yes.

## ***How?***

To ensure our lake remains clean and safe now and into the future, it needs to be protected and managed responsibly by all of us.

### *What we are doing to protect our lake:*

- Increased water testing
- Sharing resources on causes and effects of algae blooms, how to prevent them from occurring, and steps to protect our lake water.
- Council for the Municipality of Chester is considering implementing a “Lake-front Zone” on its side of the Lake designed to protect it from harmful runoff. Measures would include maintaining natural vegetation as a buffer zone at the shoreline.

### *What you can do to protect our lake:*

- Stop using lawn fertilizer.
- Ensure your septic system is functioning properly by maintaining it and pumping it out regularly
- Ensure that gray water is not escaping into the environment. Gray water is waste water from baths, sinks, washing machines, and some kitchen appliances.
- Clean up animal waste on your property, especially near shore.
- Support zoning strategies that better protect the Lake.
- Stay informed. Sign up for our electronic updates at [www.voicesandchoices.ca/recreationalwater](http://www.voicesandchoices.ca/recreationalwater)
- **TAKE PHOTOS OF AND REPORT ALGAL BLOOMS TO NOVA SCOTIA ENVIRONMENT AT 902-543-4685.**

**One kg of phosphorus fertilizer can produce 500 kg of algae. (Limnology, Lake and River Ecosystems by Robert G. Wentzel, 2001). Fertilizer should not be applied within 200 feet of the shoreline**