MLPOA
Monomonac Lake Property Owners Association

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Our Mission: To preserve and protect the natural beauty, water quality, and recreational value of Lake Monomonac and its surrounding watershed, promote responsible enjoyment of the lake, support public safety and law enforcement, educate the community about lake stewardship, and manage resources in service of these goals for the benefit of current and future generations.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT CYANOBACTERIA

WHAT ARE CYANOBACTERIA?

Cyanobacteria—commonly called blue-green algae—are ancient, photosynthetic bacteria that naturally inhabit freshwater lakes, ponds and rivers. Under normal conditions, they exist in low concentrations and pose little risk. However, when water temperatures rise, nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus accumulate (often from lawn fertilizers, septic systems or stormwater runoff) and then water stagnates, cyanobacteria can multiply explosively to form dense harmful algal blooms. Some species produce cyanotoxins that can cause liver damage, neurological symptoms and skin irritation in humans, pets and wildlife.

HOW DO I IDENTIFY A CYANOBACTERIA BLOOM?

Early detection is critical to avoiding exposure. NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) provides photos and criteria to help residents identify blooms:
https://www.des.nh.gov/water/healthy-swimming/harmful-algal-blooms

Look for these visual and sensory clues:

- **Discolored water:** Bright green, blue-green, brown or reddish hues.
- **Surface scum or mats:** Thick, paint-like patches, foam or streaks that concentrate along shorelines or in coves.
- **Opaque or cloudy appearance:** Water may resemble pea soup, antifreeze or spilled paint.
- **Unpleasant odor:** Musty, earthy or "rotten" smells often accompany heavy blooms des.nh.gov.

NH LAKES PHOTOS

WHERE TO FIND CURRENT CYANOBACTERIA WATCHES AND WARNINGS

- A cyanobacteria **watch** refers to a state of heightened awareness and monitoring for potential harmful blooms. During a watch, increased vigilance is encouraged. A cyanobacteria **warning** is issued when cyanobacteria reach a density or toxin level that poses a potential health risk to humans and animals. During a warning, contact with the water in the affected area should be avoided. An NHDES watch or warning is issued based on information collected at a single point in time. They are intended to help individuals make an informed decision about recreating at a waterbody. Due to the nature of cyanobacteria, it can be difficult to track a bloom. Cyanobacteria blooms are dynamic events, so visually evaluating your risk is important anywhere in the waterbody.
- **Visit** the Healthy Swimming Mapper at https://www.des.nh.gov/water/healthy-swimming/healthy-swimming-mapper to see all cyanobacteria updates.
- **Sign up** for statewide weekly updates at https://visitor.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001dZZfSJUF90B7pVuGHqxRT9m3JtvAlITr and selecting the "Healthy Swimming Updates" list to get at summary cyanobacteria during the swimming season.
- If you are interested in signing up for updates on a single waterbody, **sign up** for the waterbody-specific email list at https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/su/pHPCXq8/healthyswimming.

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I SPOT A BLOOM?

- **Protect children and pets** by keeping them away from the water's edge as cyanotoxins can be ingested or absorbed through the skin.
- **Avoid contact with scum.** Even dried algae can harbor toxins—don't touch or collect it.
- If you, your pet, or your gear contacts bloom-affected water, **rinse thoroughly** with clean, fresh water as soon as possible. **Seek medical assistance if you see any unusual symptoms.**
- **Report it.** (See next section)

HOW DO I REPORT SUSPECTED BLOOMS?

- **Act fast.** Don't hesitate if you see suspicious looking water.
- **Take photos** of the suspicious bloom.
- **Use this link or QR code (on page 3) to report the bloom**. Remember to include photos, lake name and location on the lake. https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/151c9fc3c8214c2e93325f77e0f1d578

WHAT SHOULD I DO DURING AN OUTBREAK?

When NHDES issues a warning for cyanobacteria, follow these guidelines in the area of the bloom until clear-water conditions return:

- **Stay out of the water** in the vicinity of a cyanobacteria bloom.
- **Limit water sports.** Activities that spray or churn water (e.g., jet-skiing, water-skiing) can aerosolize toxins.
- **Avoid fishing in bloom zones.** Cyanotoxins accumulate in fish tissue; don't eat fish caught where blooms are present unless NHDES testing confirms safety.
- **Wear protective gear if necessary.** For essential shoreline work (e.g., dock maintenance), wear waterproof gloves and clothing, then launder immediately.

HOW DO I HELP PREVENT FUTURE BLOOMS?

Community and individual actions can help reduce nutrient inputs and discourage cyanobacteria bloom formation:

- **Minimize fertilizer use:** Choose phosphorus-free products and apply sparingly.
- **Manage stormwater:** Install rain gardens, vegetated swales or buffer strips along shorelines to filter runoff.
- **Maintain septic systems:** Pump regularly and repair leaks to prevent nutrient leaching.
- **Promote water circulation:** Consider installing aeration devices in coves or stagnant areas.
- **Participate in LakeSmart:** This voluntary NH LAKES program provides free guidance for homeowners on lake-friendly landscaping and erosion control. https://nhlakes.org/lakesmart/
- **DES Cyanobacteria Prevention and Remediation web page:** https://www.des.nh.gov/water/healthy-swimming/harmful-algal-blooms/cyanobacteria-prevention-and-remediation?utm_source=chatgpt.com

By learning to recognize cyanobacteria blooms, responding appropriately when they occur and supporting community prevention efforts, Lake Monomonac residents can protect their health, safeguard wildlife and enjoy the lake responsibly all season long.

BE INFORMED!

Bloom Report Form

Healthy Swimmer Mapper

Statewide Weekly Updates

Waterbody-Specific Emails