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An Update: Plunkett Reservoir Public Health Advisory

June 26, 2020

Greetings:

Due to reports and my examination of a blue-green algae/scum in Plunkett Reservoir during the week of June 15th, 2020, a **Health Advisory** was issued regarding all water activity.

Water samples were taken on Monday, June 22, and sent to a lab for testing. Late this afternoon we learned via telephone call the levels of the blue-green algae were below the State of Massachusetts Regulatory Limits. The actual lab report itself has yet to be delivered to the Hinsdale Board of Health. We should have it Monday or Tuesday.

A second sample and testing is required one week after the first, and that second sample must also indicate that the blue-green algae in Plunkett Reservoir is below the State of Massachusetts Regulatory Limits before water activity may resume and the Advisory can be lifted. The second sampling has been ordered for Monday, June 29, 2020.

Again, Massachusetts guidelines require two samplings and tests, at least seven days apart from each other, indicating the algae level remains below regulatory limit before we can lift the current Advisory.

Below is the original Public Health Advisory and links to further information regarding cyanobacteria.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Fred J. Sears
Hinsdale Health Agent

June 18, 2020

Cyanobacteria/blue-green algae level in Plunkett Lake

Responding to a concern raised by a resident/abutter of Plunkett Lake, Hinsdale's Board of Health Agent Fred Sears had water samples taken and tested for cyanobacteria. The test result revealed that a particular sample was slightly over the standard health-based threshold of 70,000 cells per millimeter, which determines a public health risk.

Cyanobacteria can present itself as "blue-green algae" and is found on many lakes. The presence of the bacteria itself is not alarming. However, if the concentration exceeds a level on a cyanobacteria scale that is over 70,000 cells per milliliter, public health may be at risk, triggering a Public Health Advisory. A Public Health Advisory is a precautionary measure ensuring public safety.

The Board of Health Recommends:

- Individuals should not swim, paddle, boat, or fish in any section of the waterbody where the water is discolored or where foam or mats of algae are visible on the water's surface.
- People should rinse off with fresh water immediately if they or their pet comes into contact with the water. If they believe they or their pet are experiencing any adverse health effects, they should contact their doctor or veterinarian immediately.

For additional information, the public is encouraged to visit the following websites:

- Massachusetts Department of Public Health: www.mass.gov/dph/algae
- Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/cyanobacterial-harmful-algal-blooms-cyanohabs-water>
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/habs/index.html>
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: www.epa.gov/cyanohabs

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



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