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Plunkett Lake -- Public Health Advisory

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

The Board of Health will continue to monitor the bacteria levels and consult with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Updates on this matter will be posted on the Town's web site and posted in the Town Hall.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.



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