

Will Lake George Change from Oligotrophic to Eutrophic Under Our Watch?

Algae Blooms require prompt action

Travels underwater during the past six weeks have confirmed algae blooms throughout Lake George. Lake George is a 10,000 year old lake, but it has only been in the recent past that we are witnessing the lake 'ageing' at an accelerated rate. As a result of the recent press release concerning algae blooms in Lake George, lakeshore owners have contacted the Lake George Waterkeeper regarding suspected excess algae growth. Photographs and samples have been taken and identified. All of the algae to date has been identified as non-toxic, grows in response to nutrient inputs and can be found in enriched waters. Widespread documentation of algae blooms in Lake George has not previously been made.



Algae on native aquatic plants in Lake George at 8 ft depths

Although Lake George is not considered a nutrient rich lake, it appears that the algae seen today is capable of surviving, which is likely a result of the progression known as eutrophication. **Eutrophication** is defined as the deterioration of the esthetic and life-supporting qualities of lakes and streams caused by a gradual increase in the concentration of phosphorus, nitrogen and organic growth substances that can be found in an ageing aquatic ecosystem, such as a lake. In eutrophic conditions, algae and aquatic plants grow in excessive abundance and eventually die and decompose. The decomposition of large amounts of algae and aquatic plants deplete oxygen levels and can be fatal to aquatic organisms.

A change in the quality of Lake George's water will touch all of us, affecting property values, recreation, tourist incomes and our enjoyment of fishing, swimming and drinking clean water. The "Queen of American Lakes" will become just another body of water that has been altered, compromised, piped, dumped into and used to collect our wastes. Lake George is being treated as if it were an infinite natural resource. Our elimination of fertilizer use, improved sewage treatment and stormwater runoff controls can alleviate the factors that lead to eutrophication.

Prompt action is essential.

What can you and your neighbors do to reduce the amount of nutrients entering the lake and lessen our individual cumulative impacts?

- Reduce the footprint of disturbance and preserve our natural environment.
- Maintain your septic system. Inspect and pump it out regularly and know the condition of your leach field. If the system is old and suspected that it is not working optimally, it needs to be replaced.
- Plant a buffer to infiltrate and treat stormwater runoff before it leaves your property.
- Plant a shoreline buffer to deter waterfowl from feeding and grazing on your lawn.
- Use bioretention cells or rain gardens as a means to infiltrate and treat stormwater before it leaves your property.
- Plant native species that do not require the use of fertilizers and pesticides. Avoid all chemical use on the shoreline and near streams.
- Compost plant and grass clippings away from the lake.



These Lake George beaches could be your shoreline too

To report excess algae and request identification, contact the **Lake George Waterkeeper** at info@lakegeorgewaterkeeper.org or call 518-668-5913. Visit the Lake George Waterkeeper's website on-line to view photos of algae taken this summer (www.lakegeorgewaterkeeper.org).

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