

On October 7, members of the SLA and the Town of Chesterfield met with Amanda McQuaid, PhD with the NH DES harmful Algal and Cyanobacteria Bloom Program, to inspect for a second time areas around the lake where cyanobacteria have come ashore.

According to McQuaid, the sites have improved as the mats have begun to disperse, the overall volume has lessened, and the odor is less obvious. She viewed these as all positive signs. Based on these observations, NH DES will downgrade the situation at Spofford Lake from an “Advisory” to an “Alert.”



Current recommendations are:

- Handle any debris on beaches with care, burying it away from the water where it will naturally degrade,
- Clean watercraft in the same manner as suggested for invasive species, like milfoil, which is to thoroughly wash the boat away from the lake,
- No human or animal consumption of lake water,

- Do not use lake water to shower,
- Keep pets away from the shoreline as they are often drawn to the odor emitted from the mats and may roll in them, and
- Eating the occasional fish from the lake (no heads or organs) is ok

McQuaid is reasonably sure that the cyanobacteria mats have been present in Spofford Lake undetected for years. She suspects, but cannot confirm, that due to a combination of factors, e.g., warm and lower water, lake agitation, nutrient rich sediment, and ample sunlight, mats dislodged and came ashore.



Cyanobacteria floating in the water does not pose a major danger as the concentration of the bacteria is low. Rather it is the high density of the bacteria in the mats that is potentially problematic.

In late September, the SLA contracted with Green Water Labs in Florida to analyze the bacteria. Results have confirmed the presence of *Scytonema*, *Tolypothrix*, and *Stigonema*, the latter of which has also been found in Lake Winnepesaukee. Previously, the species was thought to be the more dangerous, *Lyngba wollei*. In the meantime, DES will run additional tests and is collaborating with Keene State College which will perform DNA tests.

When questioned about the likely situation in the Spring, McQuaid believes that wind, rain, and ice will cause the current mats to degrade and disappear, but that she could not rule out that another bloom or

more mats would not appear in 2021. Downstream areas, e.g., Partridge Brook, are likely to follow the same pattern of activity as Spofford Lake.

For more information, visit spoffordlakeassociation.org. Or contact Dr. McQuaid at 603-848-8094.