

Algae bloom blamed for bad taste in York water

By **Susan Morse**

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YORK—The York Water District has been dealing with an algae bloom in the town's drinking water, a condition not uncommon in July, but a rarity for the middle of the winter, according to Superintendent Don Neumann, Jr.

The culprit is believed to be a lack of snow.

On Wednesday, Feb. 3, Neumann's office began getting calls from residents about a strange taste to the water, he said. Neumann did not describe the taste.

"We're experiencing an algae bloom. It's not common for this time of year," said Neumann by telephone on Thursday.

"As a result, some of our customers are experiencing taste and odor problems when using the water," Neumann said in a statement released the same day.

Neumann, along with engineers working on the problem, believe that due to the lack of snow cover, the ice over Chases Pond is acting as a magnifying glass and the sun is heating up the water.

The water is safe to drink, he said, but until the problem is solved, the district has temporarily stopped using Chases Pond as the town water supply source and has initiated the emergency interconnection to the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District (KK&W).

"The district is working closely with the Maine Drinking Water program and its engineers on this issue and wishes to reassure our customers that the water is safe to consume and there is no health concerns associated with this problem. It is simply an unpleasant aesthetic problem with the water," said Neumann in the statement. "We do not anticipate this problem to last more than a few days."

The district is flushing water mains to replace the water from Chases Pond with water from KK&W. Also, Neumann said staff and engineers are working to identify the type of algae which is causing the problem and are implementing additional pre-treatment to the water.

The district is also increasing routine distribution system samples to reassure customers that the water is safe to consume.

Anyone with questions or concerns is asked to call the York Water District office at (207) 363-2265 or the Maine Drinking Water Program at (207) 287-2070. Updates will be posted on the Web site, www.yorkwaterdistrict.org.

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