

Algae bloom on Chases Pond has passed

Water District resumes normal operation



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YORK — The algae bloom on Chases Pond has passed, according to a released statement from the York Water District.

As of March 8, the district closed the emergency interconnection for water with the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Wells Water District, according to a statement released Wednesday, March 24.

The interconnection had been in effect since Feb. 4, when the York Water District experienced a rare and unusual, cold water algae bloom under ice on Chases Pond. Chases Pond supplies much of the town's water.

An algae bloom is not an uncommon condition in July, but a rarity for the middle of the winter, according to Water District Superintendent Don Neumann Jr.

The culprit was believed to be a lack of snow, which allowed the ice over Chases Pond to act as a magnifying glass, helping the algae to grow.

On Feb. 3, the Water District began getting calls from residents about a strange taste to the water, Neumann said at the time. The algae posed no health threat, he said.

The York Water District has flushed water mains and increased distribution system water quality samples, according to the statement.

Neumann and his staff worked with the department's own engineers and the Maine Drinking Water Program to implement several new treatment techniques that removed the water's taste and odor, said the released statement.

The interconnection with the KK&W system posed no water quality issues, the release stated. However, one difference was the addition of fluoride by the KK&W system. York water is not fluoridated.

Fluoridated water is used to help prevent tooth decay. For parents who have been providing prescription fluoride tablets to their children, the few weeks using fluoridated water posed no health risk, said the statement. If parents have a concern, they should contact their health provider.

An algae bloom is a rapid increase or accumulation in the population of algae in an aquatic system, according to Neumann. A dense spread of algae results from changes in the chemistry and/or temperature of lake water. Algae blooms may occur in freshwater as well as marine environments, he said. Typically, only one or a small number of phytoplankton species are involved, and some blooms may be recognized by discoloration of the water resulting from the high density of pigmented cells.

The York Water District is working to finalize an Algae Management Plan in the event this reoccurs, said the statement.

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