



Uroglena Americana Algae

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## York tackles problem of algae in town's drinking water

*No health threat to residents or Chases Pond, officials say*

YORK, Maine — Algae in the town's drinking water presents no health hazard, but York Water District officials are proposing two methods to remove the nuisance from the Chases Pond reservoir.

In the short term, the district wants to use algaecide on a limited, as-needed basis, according to Superintendent Don Neumann.

"Hopefully it's never needed," he said last week.

The long-term solution is the installation of a water circulation system in 14 acres of the pond near the dam off of Chases Pond Road. If the necessary state Department of Environmental Protection permits are approved, the system is expected to be designed and installed within two years, according to Neumann.

The algae was first noticed under the ice in February 2010, according to Neumann. This algae grows with sunlight and doesn't mind the cold, he said. That February, cold temperatures, little snow and sunshine cause a growth of algal numbers to the point that it was called a "bloom."

The green or gold color could be seen under the ice and some residents complained of a metallic taste to the water, he said.

The algae came back, but not in the same numbers, from August to September 2011, in late 2013, and again this year, Neumann said.

There have been no complaints of a bad odor or taste, he said.

Water Treatment Plant Manager Ryan Lynch said, "The algae we have is unusual. This algae likes the cold; it has no predators."

It also feeds on the nutrient-rich, clean Chases Pond water, Lynch said. He believes the presence of algae may also be tied to global warming, despite the cold temperatures this winter. A January thaw may have allowed organic compounds to filter into the water, feeding the algae, he said.

The circulation system would reduce the amount of nutrients by increasing oxygen in the water, Lynch said.

The noise of a compressor or blower would be contained within an insulated shell, Neumann said. The system would not be on all year, he said.

The algaecide would be used, if needed, prior to the new system being installed. The algaecide would be applied to the pond, adding copper to the water in low amounts, according to Lynch.

The Environmental Protection Agency allows up to 1.3 milligrams of copper per liter, according to Lynch. The water district would add, at its highest dose, 0.1 milligram per liter, Lynch said. This is less than what the average person gets from drinking water through copper pipes, he said.

The district's filtration system removes metals from the water, but not copper, he said.

The permit would allow only two algaecide applications in a five-year period, Neumann said.

A public hearing on both plans will be held at 6 p.m. Monday, March 17, in the York Public Library.

The engineered water circulation technology system requires a Maine DEP permit and local shoreland permit, according to information released by the district. A Maine DEP permit is also being sought for the secondary option of the use of an algaecide. This option has been used in Chases Pond previously, but algaecide use now requires a Maine DEP permit, according to Neumann.



York Water District Plant Manager Ryan Lynch  
Talks About Uroglena Americana Algae  
And Plans To Control It.

The water district is expected to file the application with DEP sometime this June. People wishing to receive copies of the draft permit and supporting documents, when available, may request them from DEP or review a copy which will be filed at York Town Hall, according to Neumann.

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