

# Blue-green Algae Blooms

Last week, John Alms from Alberta Lake Management Society came to Kindler Elementary School to give the entire school a presentation about blue-green algae blooms and how people can help prevent blue-green algae blooms.

Blue-green algae blooms also called Cyanobacteria blooms are made of bacteria that produce energy through photosynthesis. It forms a scum on the lake that looks like the color of pea soup. There were two local lakes in 2019 that had blooms, Moose lake in July and Cold Lake in August. Blue-green algae can be caused by extra nutrients entering into the lakes that come from fertilizer, manure, dog poop or pesticides washing into the lakes. They add high levels of phosphorous and nitrogens to the water which spurts the growth of blue-green algae, especially in hot, dry weather.

There are a couple different ways to help prevent blue-green algae blooms. One is to stop the extra nutrients from washing into the lakes by picking up dog poop and using less fertilizer and pesticides. The other way is to keep a natural shoreline with many different native plants. Some native plants that could help with Moose lake and Cold Lake are: Swamp Milkweed, Bergamot, Big Bluestem and Snowberry.

Blue-green algae is harmful in many ways. It decreases the oxygen in the lake, which is not very safe for the fish. It produces harmful toxins to animals and people and it can make them sick if they touch or drink the water. A student asked, "What happens if you touch or drink water with blue-green algae?" John Alms said, "If you go swimming in water with blue-green algae you can

get a skin rash and irritation, a sore throat, sore red eyes, and your lips can swell. If you happen to drink some water with blue-green algae you can get a headache, diarrhea, weakness, liver damage, a fever (temperature of 38.5 °C or 101.3 °F), nausea and vomiting, muscle and joint pain, and cramps in the stomach."

I recommend anyone that doesn't know any or very little information about blue-green algae blooms to get a presentation done by John Alms from Alberta Lake Management Society. The more people that know about blue-green algae blooms, the more help there is to minimize the blue-green algae forming in the lakes.

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