

The District office has been receiving calls expressing concern regarding the lake water appearance and water quality.

The Water Security Agency has been consulted regarding these concerns and they indicate that the conditions we are seeing are not isolated to our lakes but are prevalent throughout the province this season.

Quite often it is human nature to equate water colour and appearance with the overall quality of a body of water. When we use these water bodies for recreation such as swimming and boating, we like to see them clear and free of sediments, plants and algae throughout the open water season.

This is not always the situation found in shallow prairie lakes such as those within the District of Lakeland. The clearness or clarity of our lakes drops over the summer season as weed and algae growth increases from the accumulation of nutrients from natural and introduced sources. Our lakes are naturally rich in nutrients and productive which is a good thing as they support a healthy ecosystem, plants and fish.

Natural Nutrient Sources:

- Decomposition of plant and animal material in the lake.
- Natural occurring eroding and break down of soil and rocks in the lakes and on shorelines.
- Warm weather heating the waters allowing organisms to move more easily and algae to float to the surface.
- High water levels washing organic debris from riparian vegetation into the lakes.

Introduced Nutrient Sources:

- Shoreline sediments from wind action, boating activities in shallow waters, construction and runoff from storms.
- Faulty or overflowing septic systems and grey water discharge (these activities are not legal and should be reported).
- Lawn fertilizers, and new sand on beaches.

Lakes are classified by what is called their trophic state which is a way of categorizing a lake's nutrient and clarity levels. The lakes within the District are classified as Eutrophic and such water bodies which tend to be shallow have large areas of aquatic vegetation and surrounding wetlands.

The water quality tests conducted to date this year indicate that Emma, Christopher, Anglin and McPhee Lakes comply with Saskatchewan Surface Water Quality Objectives for Recreation and Aesthetics and for the protection of Aquatic Life.

Concerns about algae and human health should be directed to the Prince Albert Parkland Regional Health Authority, Peter Ross 1-306-765-6610.