

MEDIA RELEASE

Original release dated 8 June 2017

UPDATED 15 June 2017

Algae, pollen, and large debris in Shuswap Lake

Reports of algae in the Canoe area of Shuswap Lake this morning are currently under investigation.

“The biologists are on the lake today collecting samples of a yet-to-be-identified algae that is present in low levels near Canoe,” said Erin Vieira, program manager for the Shuswap Watershed Council, a watershed-based partnership that enhances water quality and safe recreation in the Shuswap. “They have ruled out the possibility that it is *Ochromonas* algae, also known as Golden Brown algae, which is what bloomed in the lake in 2010,” Vieira said. The algae samples will be sent to a lab for identification.

The levels aren’t substantial enough to be deemed a ‘bloom’ at this point.

There are also large swaths of pine pollen in the water, both floating on the surface and submerged in the water column, which can bear a resemblance to algae.

“There is also plenty of large debris in the lake, ranging from logs, firewood and plywood due to high water levels catching debris off shorelines,” Vieira said. Anybody venturing onto the lake is urged to be very cautious, watch for debris, and not create wake near shorelines to avoid causing damage.

UPDATE as of 15 June 2017

The algae observed last week in Shuswap Lake near Canoe has been identified as being a species of *Anabaena*, also known as cyanobacteria or blue-green algae. Biologists have indicated that this type of algae commonly occurs in the Shuswap watershed, and usually at low levels such as what was observed last week.

The high water levels and influx of nutrients that comes with freshet are likely what caused the algae growth, which has since dissipated from Canoe and Sandy Point. “We may see additional isolated algal blooms on the lakes over the next few weeks,” added Vieira. Suspected algae sightings can be reported by phoning the RAPP (Report All Poachers and Polluters) hotline at 1-877-952-7277.

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