Municipalité de

Lac-Tremblant-Nord

Communiqué

UPDATE – WATER QUALITY OF LAKE TREMBLANT AND LAKE BIBITE

Dear citizens,

You've probably seen the messages from the municipality in recent weeks concerning the water quality of lakes Tremblant and Bibite.

To summarize the current situation:

- A first sighting of cyanobacteria/blue-green algae at the PLTN marina on June 16th, 2024;
- The torrential downpour on June 23rd- 24th led to a very high water level on the lake and many episodes of wind and hot days occurred over the past couple of weeks;
- A new sighting of cyanobacteria/blue-green algae on lake Bibite on June 30th- July 1st with much of the lake affected;
- Isolated sightings of cyanobacteria/blue-green algae on lake Tremblant starting July 2nd.

I am sure this is leaving many of you wondering what kind of summer to expect and what impact this might have on the quality of your enjoyment of the lakes in the coming weeks and months.

I want to start by saying that many lakes in the Laurentians, like us, seem to have had occurrences of cyanobacteria in the fall of 2023 and spring of 2024, but these occurrences do not seem indicative of the health of our lakes.

I learned from the literature that cyanobacteria occur naturally in all lakes and that they are the oldest organisms on our planet (2 to 3 billion years old), inhabiting even healthy lakes.

Studies done over the past 10 years on lakes Tremblant and Bibite confirm that both lakes are healthy: water testing is done every year, evaluation of aquatic plants, shorelines and septic tanks have been done regularly and don't indicate any worsening of health for the moment.

In moments of high heat and/or high wind, the cyanobacteria particles can come to the top of the water column and become visible. At various points, it can also become toxic depending on the strain of cyanobacteria. It is unpredictable and can last 24-48 hours or longer, depending on multiple factors.

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Laboratory analysis for cyanobacteria

- Since 2014, the Ministry of the Environment no longer considers it necessary to test for cyanobacteria in order to protect recreational uses;
- To have an official test in a laboratory can take up to 6 weeks. We did this in the fall and the cyanobacteria was confirmed on lake Bibite;
- Tests must be carried out to confirm the existence and type of toxin. This result, which also takes a long time to obtain, only confirms whether or not toxins were present on the day the test was carried out in a specific area, and this situation can change depending on the evolution of cyanobacteria and weather conditions. The tests carried out last fall did not reveal the presence of toxins on the day they were performed on lake Bibite.

With all of these factors, the municipality (and therefore its citizens) are faced with a lot of uncertainty.

What we know:

- Our **visual analysis** of this spring's observations confirms the presence of cyanobacteria in both lakes. Laboratory analyses will be carried out to confirm the presence of cyanobacteria;
- Cyanobacteria in lake Tremblant are characterized by a low density of particles sparsely distributed in the water column. Scum has also been observed in some bays due to the higher density of particles, which may have been blown by the wind and then piled up near the shore;
- The same phenomenon can be observed at lake Bibite, with a low particle density in the water column that seems to cover the entire lake, and a more pronounced presence of foam in the marina bay;
- Blooms can change appearance rapidly or even disappear temporarily.

As a municipality:

- We must inform and solicit the vigilance of our citizens in the presence of cyanobacteria. We encourage you to follow the government's recommendations, i.e. not to drink water (or boil it) in affected areas, and to avoid swimming in these areas (including dogs);
- We can never confirm the potability of water, as lakes and rivers are subject to a multitude of bacteria that can have an impact on lake health, whether or not cyanobacteria are present;
- We are in regular contact with several specialists, including **CRE Laurentides**, **OBV RPNS** and a biologist working on our territory;
- A report has been made to the Ministry, in accordance with the procedure in force.

Going forward, the municipality will continue to follow the situation closely and report when occurrences are visible. However, citizens must make their own observations on their shorelines and must use their own judgment when using the water from the lakes, depending on their observations and the recommendations we have sent out:

- **Taking precautions in the presence of a water bloom (gouv.qc.ca)**
- **Preventing the health effects of blue-green algae blooms | Gouvernement du Québec**
- **Blue-green algae = cyanobacteria! | Gouvernement du Québec**

As these situations are developing more often of late in all of the Laurentians, it is very important that the episodes get **signalled to the ministry of the environment**. This can only help in future decision making and approaches that are taken in these times by government officials.

As a municipality, we wish we could provide clearer answers of when it will disappear, whether it will come back or whether, in the presence of cyanobacteria, there are toxins or not, but we cannot.

We will continue to communicate all the up-to-date information we have. Please do not hesitate to contact the municipality (**urbanisme@lac-tremblant-nord.qc.ca**) if you have questions or if you notice anything suspicious in the lakes.

Thank you for your collaboration!

Kim Meyer and your Council