

Vermilion River Stewardship



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Dr. Arlene King
Chief Medical Officer of Health
Hepburn Block
11th Floor, 80 Grosvenor St
Toronto ON M7A1R3
Email: Arlene.King@ontario.ca

Dear Dr. King:

Re: Signage – Warning of Toxic Blue-green Algae

In early February of this year the Ministry of Environment (MOE) was called to report a Blue-green Algae outbreak on Ella Lake, which is part of the Vermilion River system, within the City of Greater Sudbury. On 5 March 2013, MOE confirmed the report, and even though the microcystin level was only .05 ug/L at the time of sampling, we were advised that this water should not be used for drinking, bathing or sauna.

Vermilion River Stewardship (VRS) informed the local residents of the outbreak and cautions by email and by telephone; however, Ella Lake, and Wabagishik Lake which is immediately downstream on the Vermilion River System, are used by many people not on our contact list. This is a Finnish community and there have been reports of people brushing the algae aside to take water for their sauna, and others use this water for all their household needs, so there is a great concern that some people could be at risk. VRS was also contacted by the Beaver Lake Sports and Cultural Club informing of their concern for local fishermen, cottagers and homeowners, and to request that warning signs be posted.

Consequently, VRS contacted Al McDougall of the Sudbury & District Health Unit to request that warning signs be posted at the Ella Lake and Wabagishik Lake boat launches. Mr. McDougall informed that the only warning signs available were to caution against swimming.

VRS is requesting highly visible signs to be posted at Ella Lake and Wabagishik Lake boat launches to warn about the toxic Blue-green Algae, and to inform that it should not be used to drink, swim or sauna. Also, it would be prudent for the signs to caution against allowing pets to enter or drink the water.

VRS looks forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Linda Heron
Chair, Vermilion River Stewardship

Cc: Allan McDougall, Sudbury & District Health Unit, Allan.Mcdougall@ontario.ca
Drew Brennan, Senior Environmental Officer, MOE – Drew.Brennan@ontario.ca
France Gelinias, NDP MPP – FGelinias-co@ndp.on.ca
Jacques Barbeau, City of Sudbury Councillor – Jacques.Barbeau@greatersudbury.ca
Eija Hietaharju, Pres., Beaver Lake Sports & Cultural Club – Seawright@sympatico.ca