



PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY UPDATE SEPTEMBER 10, 2020

The Facts

On September 8, 2020 the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) collected pond water samples at the following locations the Town Beach and Thurston's Cove. Samples were analyzed for cyanobacteria cell count. The Town Beach sample was 110,000 cells/ml and the Thurston's Cove sample was 83,000 cells/ml. Both samples are above the MDPH guideline level of 70,000 cells/ml. The microcystin toxin level was <1ppb for both samples.

Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) advisory concentrations for cyanobacteria toxins is complicated and can be found at (www.mass.gov/info-details/guidelines-for-cyanobacteria-in-freshwater-recreational-water-bodies#guidelines-for-cyanobacteria-cell-counts-).

The Recommendation

The Board of Health is not lifting or changing the current no contact advisory. The Board strongly recommends adhering to the DPH guidance of obtaining samples over 2 consecutive weeks documenting levels are below 70,000 cells/ml. MDPH is tentatively scheduling another round of sampling on Tuesday, September 15, 2020. We are continuing to monitor the situation and will let the community know if that sampling date is changed.

The BOH recognizes that the clarity of the water has improved. That is not justification for changing the current advisory.

Therefore, residents continue to be advised of the following no contact advisory which applies to Bare Hill Pond in its entirety:

- Warning: Avoid Harmful Blue-green Algae Blooms while fishing and during boating activities.

- Keep kids and pets away from areas with blooms (greenish discolored water) or scum.
- If contact occurs, rinse skin with clean water. If skin rash or illness occurs, contact a medical provider.
- If removing a boat from the water, wash the boat thoroughly with clean water before transport.

For more information, please see:

www.mass.gov/info-details/harmful-algae-blooms-in-freshwater-bodies

www.harvard.ma.us/board-health

Residents may also sign up for alerts from the Board of Health and the Town Administrator at: www.harvard.ma.us/subscribe