



**Far Hills Association, Inc., 13 Blueberry Road, Ashburnham, MA 01430-1049**

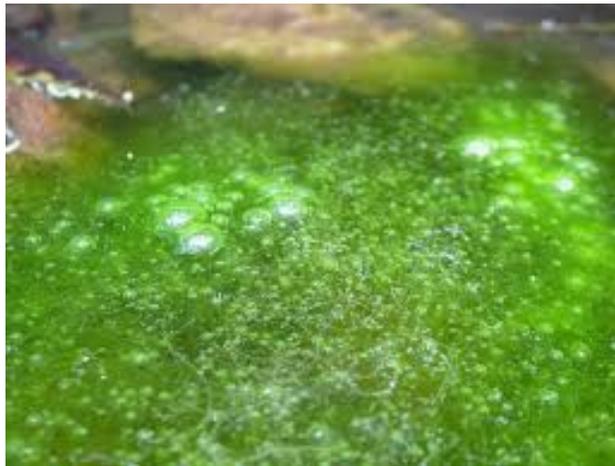
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### **Algal Blooms in Sunset Lake**

Like many of the shallower lakes in our region, Sunset Lake routinely has nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) levels high enough to support blooms of filamentous (green) algae. This, combined with July's record high average temperature, has resulted in localized algal blooms in some of the lake's coves.

#### **What are filamentous algae?**

Filamentous algae are single algae cells that form long visible chains, threads, or filaments. When attached to something, such as the lake bottom, they are referred to as "benthic filamentous algae." Benthic filamentous algae provide benefits to the lake ecosystem, including providing valuable fish habitat. However, under certain conditions, benthic filamentous algae can create a dense carpet on the bottom of the lake. As pieces of benthic filamentous algae break apart, they can form dense mats that float on the surface, called "floating filamentous algae."



**Floating Filamentous Algae**

Unlike cyanobacteria (commonly called "blue-green algae"), filamentous algae are not toxic; nevertheless, floating blooms can obviously become a nuisance in shallow areas such as beaches.

#### **What can we do if we have algae along our shoreline?**

We have received some inquiries regarding what, if anything, we can do to address blooms of algae. We do treat the lake annually with an algaecide. Longer-term solutions, of course, involve steps to reduce nitrogen and phosphorus runoff into the lake. You can help by:

- limiting your use of cleaners and fertilizers;
- careful and limited watering of your lawn and garden; and
- establishing a natural vegetative buffer along most of your shoreline, which will absorb nutrient runoff before it reaches the lake.

Short-term, the best way to address a bloom along your shoreline is to physically remove it. An effective tool for removing floating algae is a deep pool net, available online or at a store that carries pool supplies

(an inexpensive one is available at Ocean State Job Lot). We recommend one that is about 18 inches or so across. Slowly and gently sweep the net across the bloom capturing it inside the net, as shown below. For larger blooms, you may have to repeat this step several times. Sweeping too quickly will break up the mat, making it harder to capture, so a little patience goes a long way.



**Floating Algae Removal**

For deeper water, most pool nets can be attached to a handle to make it easier to reach the bloom from shallower water or a boat.

Once captured, the nutrient-rich algae can be added to your compost pile (well away from the water, please).



**Captured Algae**

As always, please do not hesitate to contact the Far Hills Association Environmental Director ([environmental@farhillsassociation.com](mailto:environmental@farhillsassociation.com)) with any questions or concerns.