

First Meeting to Discuss a Phosphorus Restriction in Fertilizers
for Greater Sudbury
Wednesday, October 27, 2010
7-9pm at reThink Green's Resource Centre

Next meeting: Wednesday, November 24, 7pm location TBA



One pound of phosphorus can grow 700 pounds of blue green algae.

(Beeton, A.M. 1971. Eutrophication of the St. Lawrence Great Lakes. In: Man's Impact on Environment, T.R. Detwyler (ed.), McGraw-Hill Book Co., New York, pp. 233-245.)

In Attendance: Perry Sarvas, Jessica Tann, David Furino (Simon Lake)
Stephen Butcher (Long Lake)
Jillian Smith (St. Charles Lake)
Ersin Abdullah Planet Earth Organic Landscaping,
Steve May, Lilly Noble, Mark Browning, Audrey Wagemann (Ramsey Lake)
Dave Young, Lin Gibson (McFarlane Lake)
Charles Ramcharan (Laurentian University, Freshwater Co-op)
Sherry Cooper (Black Lake)

Regrets: Linda Heron, Leslie Flowers (Simon Lake) Richard Paquette (Whitewater Lake-Azilda CAN), and Margaret Harkins (Fairbank Lake)

The Phosphorus Reduction Group met to discuss what steps should be taken before approaching council early next year with a request to implement a bylaw restricting the use of phosphorus in fertilizers across Greater Sudbury. Similar bylaws are in place in Manitoba (pop. 1.1M), Maine (pop. 1.3M), Minnesota (pop. 5.3M), New Jersey, New York, Florida etc. If phosphorus is needed a soil test must be presented or can be obtained when laying new sod.

Background-Mark Browning and Lilly Noble met with Evelyn Dutrisac and Catherine Matheson, General Manager of Community Development to explain the relationship between phosphorus from fertilizers, which is often unnecessary applied to established lawns, and the growth of blue green algae in our lakes. They suggested we make a presentation at the Priorities Committee meeting early next

year. It has been suggested, however, that we instead ask a councillor to put us on a council meeting agenda.

Charles Ramcharan spoke to us about the phosphorus testing his graduate student has been doing in Ramsey Lake. During the recent blue green algae bloom in August/September, a measurement of approximately 17.5 micrograms per L phosphorus was detected at Station 2 (somewhere between the shoreline and the drinking water intake). This was surprising. The average spring runoff measurement over the last few years has been 11 micrograms per L. Stormwater that enters Ramsey Lake from the streets around Ramsey Lake was found to contain over 100 micrograms per L phosphorus. Research has shown in urban settings that 50% of the phosphorus in stormwater outflows comes from fertilizer applications to lawns. In February, phosphorus levels from other samples will be received from the Ministry of the Environment to confirm initial results received from another lab, Testmark. Funding for these studies is limited.

We discussed the new law mandating septic system inspection every 5 years in some areas of Ontario. This is something that should be pursued by a new committee as faulty septic systems also add phosphorus to the lakes. Claude Berthiaume has expressed interest in bringing inspections to Greater Sudbury. We should follow up with him and indicate our support. As it stands, the septic systems (42) that are close to the municipal wells in the Valley are going to be inspected.

Another way phosphorus reaches our lakes is through sewage bypasses. This occurs when there is significant rain event and the city cannot handle all the extra rainwater mixed with sewage. They then bypass the sewage treatment plant, add chlorine and dump the excess directly into the lake it is located on. Sewage treatment plants cannot remove phosphorus when they have bypasses. Some people have downspouts that are directly connected to the sewage system instead of the stormwater system. The city is trying to correct this and other ways that rainwater is getting into the sewage pipes.

Creating a natural shoreline buffer also helps use up excess phosphorus and helps to prevent it from reaching our lakes. All residents who live on a shoreline should leave a natural buffer. Ersin has offered to transform a shoreline on Ramsey Lake with native plants. It should be a great tool to educate residents. The Ramsey Lake Stewardship Committee is working on getting funds for the plant material.

It was decided that an education package should be created to contain the most relevant and concise information about phosphates for the general public, lawn care professionals and councillors. These are the three groups we will need to convince of the importance and relative ease of switching to a phosphate-free fertilizer.

- Educating the public will be through newspaper articles (coincide with the grand opening of the Living with Lakes building in March?), through a Water

Forum poster (Dec. 6) and any other lake stewardship newsletters or gatherings.

- A separate group will need to be established to meet with lawn care professionals. We will meet when an education package is ready. Lawn care professionals will be the group most likely to oppose a bylaw but we need to convince them that their businesses will not be negatively impacted and it may even increase their business. The lake stewardship committees can endorse those companies that make the effort to switch before the bylaw.
- We have tried to assign a lead person or people for each ward (see your name below in green) who will make it their priority to educate a councillor about the importance of this bylaw. Once we have an educational package prepared, we can start meeting with councillors. Lilly, Mark and anyone else can work on these and then send them out to the committee for editing.

Wards, Lakes, Councillor, Educator:

Mayor- Marianne MATICHUK- Stephen Butcher, Lin Gibson, Lilly Noble

Ward 1-St. Charles Lake, Kelly Lake, Robinson Lake Joe CIMINO- Steve May

Ward 2-Long Lake, Black Lake, Clearwater, Simon Lake, Mud, McCharles, Vermillion River, Grassy Lake, Kusk, Ella, Agnew, Panache Lake, Little Panache Lake, Fairbank Jacques BARBEAU-Perry Sarvas, Jessica Tann, David Furino

Ward 3-Windy Lake, Vermillion Lake, Gordon Lake Claude BERTHIAUME-Stephen Butcher

Ward 4-Whitewater Evelyn DUTRISAC-Mark Browning

Ward 5-McCrea, Whitson Lake Ron DUPUIS-Lin Gibson

Ward 6-Joe Lake, Greens Lake, Hanmer Lake, Fisherman Lake, Tank Lake, Nelson Lake André RIVEST-Valley East CAN has been contacted.

Ward 7-Lake Wahnipitae, Garson Lake, Lac St Jean, Blue Lake Dave KILGOUR-Stephen Butcher

Ward 8-No lakes. Some wetlands. Fabio BELLI-Audrey Wagemann

Ward 9-Long Lake, McFarlane Lake, Richard Lake, Laurentian Lake, Raft, Little Raft, Clearwater, Middle, Hannah, St. Charles, Lohi, Tilton, Crooked, Silver, Brodil, Crowley, Forest Lake and many others Doug CRAIG-Perry Sarvas

Ward 10-Ramsey Lake, Nephawin, Bennet, Bethel, Laurentian Lake Frances CALDARELLI-Lilly Noble

Ward 11-Ramsey Lake, Minnow Lake, Perch Lake Terry KETT-John Lindsay-waiting for reply

Ward 12-Minnow Lake Joscelyne LANDRY-ALTMANN-Audrey Wagemann

Sign at Bell Park 2010 for three weeks



Fertilizer with no phosphorus is available in Sudbury stores

Action: grams of phosphorus sent to lake	Effect: weeds in the water
Lawn fertilizer 1 x per year 30 sq.m. lawn (10-10-10) (1,980 g)	almost a tonne
Dishwasher 1 x daily (650 g)	1/3 tonne
Human waste (535 g)	1/4 tonne
Household products (180 g)	1/10 tonne