



Title: Pine Lake news getting worse

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Guest Column

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Steve Throssel is interested in the history of Hardin County and lives in Eldora.

Well, the bad news is worse. Now The Iowa Environmental Council's water quality testing for the week of 7/21 shows, not only E-Coli present in Lower Pine Lake, but also Cyanobacteria. This is an alarm bell warning. Unlike E-Coli, Cyanobacteria is a Neuromuscular disruptor, meaning it can trigger degenerative brain disorders that can affect muscular development, not unlike ALS.

This particular virus is also bacterial in its development and usually follows a blue green

algae bloom. I'm sure that's the case this time. This particular bacteria is more easily spotted using a lower powered micro biological microscope. It can be a little confusing to view but I looked at it under a microscope.

The sample (looks tapeworm-like in appearance) came from Pine Creek on my property before it entered Pine Lake, however, my

understanding is that it has been showing up in Lower Pine Lake sporadically for the last four years.

This little devil can cause trouble by entering your ear canal and is not merely gastrointestinal. So big trouble for anyone that doesn't wear ear plugs when kayaking or canoeing on the lake. This is a big problem in Lake

Erie and in many inland lakes and waterways that double as sewers for effluents. It tends to come and go, but the tell-tale physical indicators are a blue-green scum and a foul rotting smell. This occurs when the algae, actually a valuable nitrogen fixer, deteriorates, oxidizes and transforms to a usable nutrient. That in-between time, the transition, can be toxic to humans and pets.

Please do not go into the water and wear ear plugs if you have them

when recreating in boats on the water. Shower immediately afterwards and watch for the warnings posted on the beach and online through the **IEC** beach warning website. This one is a hardball player.

We are all at risk, but you can mitigate it by simple common sense.

It's a terrible thing to do to a recreational lake and one of Iowa's great state treasures.

It's very frustrating because manure isn't needed elsewhere in the state. The hilltops in a farm field will almost always show a need for nutrients and the

valleys will likely show a surplus. Fixing it on brown hilltop soil has not been effective in the Pine Creek Watershed. So, into the lake it goes. I'm experimenting with a variety of potential off-sets, the latest idea being enzymes. The first pass cost of treating Upper and Lower Pine Lake looks like about a minimum of \$100,000/year to do any good and likely double that amount.

We need to do edge of field and buffer strip filtering and cleaning. We also need to reset our standards and not shoot for the lowest acceptable EPA numbers. ■