

[Date]

[Address]

RE: Results of True Blue™ treatment to control algae growth

Dear Resident,

Last year, Strathcona County applied a vegetable-based dye to two stormwater ponds in Sherwood Park throughout the summer. The dye, called True Blue™, was applied to Village on the Lake and Clover Bar Ranch stormwater management facilities (SWMF). The application was part of an experiment to study the effectiveness of the product to help inform whether treatment with True Blue™ should continue in the future.

Algae requires sunlight to grow. There are aquatic colorant products available in the United States (e.g., Aquashade™) that claim to reduce subsurface algae and weed growth by filtering out specific wavelengths of sunlight that are necessary for photosynthesis. These types of products are registered with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and are not available in Canada. Utilities has used similar colorants such as True Blue™ with the belief that they can reduce the amount of light penetrating the water and thus slow the growth of algae in the SWMF. However, there is little documented evidence regarding the effectiveness of these products.

The results from the 2023 aquatic colorant program do not support the claim that colorant products available in Canada reduce algae growth. The level of chlorophyll-a in the water (a reliable indicator of algae growth) was not measurably affected by the application of the colorant.

The program report recommends that the County discontinue aquatic colorants within the stormwater management network. As such, the County will not be adding True Blue™ or similar products to the SWMFs moving forward. If you are interested in reading the full report it can be found on our website at strathcona.ca/StormwaterQuality.

While small amounts of algae can be beneficial, you can help maintain the health of your local stormwater management facility and prevent excess algae growth by limiting fertilizer use on your property and picking up animal waste. These materials act as nutrients for algae and promote growth.

It is also important to not cut down plant material or mow within the naturalized areas surrounding the facility as these plants help filter pollutants and reduce nutrients from run-off in the surrounding neighbourhood.

Want to learn more?

Strathcona County and a number of its partners will be holding a Community Pond Party on Tuesday, June 18 at Clover Bar Ranch stormwater management facility from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Pond parties are a fun way for residents to learn about Strathcona County's stormwater facilities and their ecological benefits. Join us to celebrate the role our stormwater facilities play in our water system, learn ways to positively impact its health and take part in fun activities.

We hope to see you there!

Regards,

[Contact person]