



Wisconsin DNR Weekly News Article

Treatment of East Alaska Lake set for Oct. 18-19 to improve water quality

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TOWN OF PIERCE, Wis. - The Tri-Lakes Association moves one step closer toward clearer water in one of Kewaunee County's few lakes when a barge-like boat treats East Alaska Lake with alum later this month to improve water quality.

The alum treatment is one of the tools that can be used to help tackle excess phosphorus in a lake after work has been done to cut the flow of new phosphorus entering the water.

"It's wonderful to see this next step toward restoration happen after working toward this for so many years," says Bill Iwen, president of the Tri-Lakes Association, which works to improve East Alaska, West Alaska and Krohns lakes.

The boat will release 89,000 gallons of alum, a nontoxic material, on the water's surface. Alum, similar to the main ingredient in antacids, will bind the phosphorus that now feeds algae blooms into a nonsoluble compound. The treatment, funded largely by a grant from the Department of Natural Resources, will prevent phosphorus in lake sediments from being released back into the water. Water clarity will improve with less algae blooms.

"Treating a lake with alum is a tool we can use when sources of phosphorus to that water are reasonably under control," says Carroll Schaal, DNR lakes team leader. "The alum addresses phosphorus that is already in the lake, in sediments on the bottom.

"After it's applied, the alum strips phosphorus from the water as it sinks to the bottom, and then seals up the phosphorus in the sediments so it doesn't fuel algae blooms," Schaal says. "Alum helps reset the clock."

This summer, Half Moon Lake in Eau Claire was treated with alum, and in past years, Delavan Lake in Walworth County, Silver Lake in Manitowoc County, Bass Lake in Marinette County and Wind Lake in Racine County have all received alum treatments after longterm efforts to reduce the amount of new phosphorus entering those lakes.

The Tri-Lakes Association has worked tirelessly for more than a decade to improve water quality of East Alaska Lake in Kewaunee County, says Mary Gansberg, the DNR water resources management specialist who has worked with the members.

She also commended the efforts of the Tri-Lakes Association, Town of Pierce, Kewaunee

County, and many local residents and concerned citizens that have donated time and money to this restoration project.

“The East Alaska Lake restoration project is an excellent example of the good work that can be done when many people and agencies work together,” says Gansberg. In addition to providing a number of grants for lake planning and restoration work on East Alaska Lake, DNR has provided technical help.

About 20 tanker truck loads of alum will be loaded onto a spray boat that is 24 feet long and 8.5 feet wide. Its booms allow alum to be evenly spread over a 60-foot path. Onterra, the DePere-based consulting firm hired to design the alum treatment, will also oversee the application of the alum treatment. The alum will be applied by Sweetwater Technologies of Aitkin, Minn.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: on the East Alaska Lake alum treatment contact Mary Gansberg, DNR water resources management specialist at (920) 662-5489; on the East Alaska Project ccontact: Mary Gansberg (920) 662-5489; on alum treatments contact: Carroll Schaal (608) 261-6423
