

PRESS RELEASE: 2024 Lyngbya Control Treatments at Lake Gaston

The Lake Gaston Weed Control Council's (LGWCC) lyngbya management program is initiating its first treatments of the season the week of April 15th. This year's program will increase the overall acreage for lyngbya specific treatment applications from 375 acres targeted in 2023 and 2024 to 500 acres in 2024. An interactive map of all treatment locations can be found on the LGWCC website (<http://www.lgwcc.org>). April's treatment will be the first of six consecutive treatments which are expected to occur the weeks of April 15th, May 13th, June 10th, July 15th, August 12th, and either September 9th or 16th.

During the mid-part of each month from April to September, residents in treatment areas should expect to see airboats utilized by the application company, Aqua Services, slowly moving along the shoreline applying lyngbya directed algaecides in established treatment sites. The chemical protocol that will be used at Lake Gaston includes chelated copper-based algaecides that are EPA-approved for aquatic use. These algaecides have a bright blue hue and will be observed in the water directly following applications but have no use restrictions in terms of irrigation, fishing, or swimming.

The timeline for achieving lyngbya control is difficult to estimate. Due to the physical nature of lyngbya, healthy, viable mats look very similar visually to those that are less viable at the alga's cellular level and therefore it is difficult to determine the immediate impact of treatments by visual observation alone. Within a treatment season, it is expected that lyngbya mat material may persist along the bottom of the lake, however, homeowners are likely to observe a decrease in overall biomass between treatment seasons. Additionally, homeowners may notice an immediate response to treatments with the absence of surface mat formations.

Lyngbya (*Microseria wollei*, formally *Lyngbya wollei*) is a genera of filamentous cyanobacteria that includes both freshwater and marine species. Lyngbya found in Lake Gaston can be identified by dense, dark-colored mat formations, wool-like texture, and musty odor. Unlike other algae lyngbya persists year-round along the lake bottom, but as water temperatures rise it begins to proliferate upwards through the water column forming floating mats at the water's surface. Lyngbya has become increasingly problematic in reservoirs throughout the southeastern US and is associated with a host of negative ecological and human-use impacts.

Any questions regarding aquatic vegetation in Lake Gaston should be directed to either aquaticplants@ncsu.edu or the Lake Gaston Weed Control website (<http://www.lgwcc.org>).

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