

Community deals with foul smell; n Pointe-a-Bouleau seeks to remedy pungent smell that is the result of rotting algae

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POINTE-A-BOULEAU - When the wind blows it smells like rotten eggs for miles in this northern New Brunswick community.

"It's very, very foul," said Weldon McLaughlin, chairman of the local service district committee of Pointe-a-Bouleau, just east of Tracadie-Sheila.

"People who live near the area can't keep their windows open, they can't go outside, it has an effect on our quality of living and an effect on the value of the properties.

"It's not just the residents of Pointe-a-Bouleau that smell this, some residents of Tracadie-Sheila smell it, hundreds of us do, and when the wind blows it can be smelled all the way to the town hall."

Tracadie-Sheila has set aside \$20,000 in hopes to remove the pungent smell of rotting algae in the area.

The provincial government has delivered another \$48,000 itself from the roughly \$500,000 it set aside specifically for the region.

A line item in a press release from the province says the money will "assist in the costs of reducing odour problems in Pointe-a-Bouleau."

It's a problem that has plagued several regions of the province.

Funding from the province's Environmental Trust Fund, which typically funds local environmental projects, was given to Lameque in the amount of \$15,000 in 2008 to go towards collecting and composting algae from along the shoreline, reducing odour in the area.

A less heady smelling alga is being watched in the Irishtown Nature Park north of Moncton this summer.

The city announced yesterday that it was again partnering with Universite de Moncton officials to carry out water sampling of the green slime that has recurred there several times.

Algae blooms have also caused problems in the past for Lake Utopia near St. George.

"Here, it smells awful in the summer," McLaughlin said.

"It's warm weather plus poorly treated waste water that is doing it.

"In the long term it is going to be a very costly thing for the town, they're going to have to improve their waste water treatment system, but in the short term all they can do is widen the channel to make the water flow freer and hopefully that will help."

Narrow contributories that run inland from the Gulf of St. Lawrence have created a smelly lagoon near McLaughlin Brook. Both the Department of Environment and Public Health will be involved in the project.

Floating gardens are also a possibility in attempts to expunge the excess phosphates and nutrients from the water.

The technicolour growths of algae are caused by contaminants leaching into lakes in the form of fertilizers from urban lawns and farm fields, faulty septic systems and soil erosion or in some cases raw sewage.

A hot and hazy summer mixed with the odd day of intense rain now has waterways turning slime green.

"The odour, you can feel it growing when it's a dry summer," said Tracadie-Sheila mayor Aldeoda Losier.

"It happened in Lameque a few years ago and we have to deal with it now.

"This is something we had to make sure was in our budget and it will only get worse if we do nothing."

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