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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 7, 2013

LAKE PROTECTION GROUP SEEKS PERMIT FOR ALGAECIDE

Auburn, Maine-

The Lake Auburn Watershed Protection Commission today announced its intent to file to the Department of Environmental Protection for permission to apply algaecide to Lake Auburn this summer. In preparation for the permit application the watershed group has scheduled a public information session for March 27 from 6pm-8pm at Auburn City Hall to explain the need for algaecide, the process for application, expected long-and short term benefits to water quality, and to answer questions.

A diagnostic study completed this month by consulting firm CDM Smith indicates that last fall's fish kill was a result of oxygen depletion probably caused by the decay of large amounts of algae. The algae growth was fueled by increases in nutrients (phosphorus) in the lake, brought in from the watershed by large storm events and cycled from bottom sediments. Once algae populations flourish in a lake they can take hold and return year after year in increasing numbers.

"It's possible that last year's events were mostly weather-related and won't be repeated this year," explains Mary Jane Dillingham, Lewiston and Auburn's Water Quality Manager. "But we are closely monitoring the lake to be ready for action at the first sign of another algae bloom. Properly timed treatment can interrupt the growth of targeted nuisance algae and prevent bloom-related problems like low oxygen, taste and odor issues, clogged filters, and fish stress- without harming the quality of drinking water."

State permits are required for treatment to control algae. Plans include using approved an algaecide applied by licensed applicators, with strict management plans in place for all contingencies. John Storer, Auburn Water District's Superintendent explains, "It's a well-regulated process, as it should be. The goal is to halt any short-term decline of the lake and at the same time develop strategies to assure high quality drinking water for the long-term. We want to hear from our customers and from watershed residents if they have any questions or concerns."

The permit application is expected to be completed and filed with the State by the end of March.

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If you would like more information about this topic, please contact Lynne Richard at 207-712-5340 or email at lrichard@awsd.org.