

Upper Fire Lake
Water Quality Problem
Fact Sheet

September 8, 1994

I. Is the water taken from Upper Fire Lake safe to drink?

Based on the test data that the Anchorage District office staff have been able to gather from several sources, if the water is filtered and disinfected it is safe to drink. The reasoning is that none of the parameters that any agency has monitored has been found to be above the State Drinking Water Regulations maximum concentration levels. Next, all surface water must be filtered and disinfected to ensure that the water is safe to drink.

II. The material floating on the surface looks like wastewater and wastewater has several other parameters, such as bacteria and virus, that could be harmful.

By proper filtration and disinfection, all bacteria and virus can be treated so that the water is safe to drink.

III. What is the Department of Environmental Conservation, Anchorage District Office (ADO) doing to determine the source of the discoloration/algae bloom in Upper Fire Lake?

On August 16, 1994, ADO staff collected samples from three different locations on the lake. We have had them analyzed by a local testing lab and one lab in Canada to determine the levels of three nitrogen components, fecal coliform, turbidity, total phosphorous, and classification of the algae. We have also reviewed the Department of Fish and Game records on Upper fire Lake and photocopied all necessary information from their files.

This afternoon, staff from Watershed Development, Water Quality, and On-Site programs of Municipality of Anchorage, along with Anchorage District Staff of the Department of Environmental Conservation and Senator Rick Halford's Chief of Staff meet to discuss the information that ADO has been able to put together over the last three weeks.

The results of this meeting was that the Municipality of Anchorage and the Department of Environmental Conservation with as many as possible residents impacted by the change in the water quality of Upper Fire Lake

will get together to form a working group to tackle the existing water quality problem. The first step in this process will be to gather all information on Upper Fire Lake and to determine what data is missing, what hard testing data is necessary, to obtain permission to enter all privately owned land, conduct interviews with residents living around the lake to gather historical data, and what field inspections are necessary. Once all this information is put in a useful format, the working group will determine the total cost of the next data collection/ investigation..

The working group will then present this information to the residents of the lake for their comments on the cost and direction the investigation is going and how the residents can assist. At this step, the working group may have narrowed the scope of the investigation down to a point that only a very limited number of items will be looked at.

Once the data is collected and again placed in a useable format the working group will be coming back to the residents and asking their assistance in analyzing the data. If the process was correctly setup, the source of the problem will be determined and several solutions could be given to the residents of the effected area to be discussed and determine which solution is the one they would like to support. We must stress that this must be a working partnership between the Municipality of Anchorage, Department of Environmental Conservation, and the residents of the Upper Fire Lake area in order for an acceptable solution to be reached.

IV. How long will this all take?

Representatives of the Municipality of Anchorage and the Department of Environmental Conservation are hopeful that by mid October to Early November the working group will have collected and formatted the all known information related to Upper Fire Lake and be able to meet with the residents to discuss the scope of the investigation.

V. How can residents get on the working group?

Tonight. If you are interesting and willing to assist, (this may require that you come into Anchorage during the day to assist in data collection and possibly receive training in such areas as data collection, report writing, file searches, and public outreach), please provide me with your name, address and telephone number.

VI. Will the Municipality of Anchorage and the Department of Environmental Conservation make the final call on what will be done at each step of the process?

No. This must be a group effort and that means the residents of the area must be involved in the complete process which will include determining the final solution.

VII. Will we be able to bring the lake back to it's previous condition?

At this time, it is too early to call. However, most of us at the meeting this afternoon feel nothing is impossible as long as everyone keeps an open mind and a willing attitude towards the problem.