

Issued: 8/3/2023

DRINKING WATER ADVISORY

PRIVATE WELL TESTING STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

Recent private potable well sampling at homes around Cozy Lake indicates that some wells in your area are at risk for drinking water contamination, especially if your well has not been properly installed or maintained. Some wells around Cozy Lake are under the direct influence of surface water. This means that some wells are pulling water from the lake, which can present health risks if your well or household water treatment is not functioning properly.

JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP AND THE NJDEP STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT YOU HAVE YOUR WELL SAMPLED AND INSPECTED BY A NJ LICENSED WELL DRILLER.

Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) at Cozy Lake

As you are aware, Cozy Lake in Jefferson Township is currently experiencing a HAB that was confirmed on July 7, 2023. Subsequently, in accordance with the Cyanobacterial Harmful Algal Bloom Freshwater Recreational Response Strategy, a recreational Warning Alert was issued. The Jefferson Township and Morris County Health Departments were contacted on July 7, 2023, and Warning signs were posted along the lake and the beach closed. In response to the warning signs, on July 19, 2023, the Cozy Lake President contacted the NJ Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), Division of Water Monitoring, Standards and Pesticide Control, with the concern that some of the properties around the lake have shallow wells that may be connected to the lake. Subsequently, out of an abundance of caution, the NJDEP in coordination with the Jefferson Township Department of Health, issued a Drinking Water Advisory on July 22, 2023, warning residents not to drink the water if they had a shallow, point, or hand dug well.

Cozy Lake Residential Well Sampling

The NJDEP and the Jefferson Township Health Department have been working together to more accurately identify the risk that may be associated with the private wells along Cozy Lake.

Sampling was performed between July 24 and July 28, 2023, at a representative subset of homes within a 200-foot radius from the shoreline as well as samples directly from the lake. Analysis was performed to determine if cyanotoxins from the lake were contaminating residential wells. If you had your well sampled, you will be receiving your results directly.

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Findings Based on Sampling:

- **The data collected from this sampling event indicates that some of the wells in your area are under the direct influence of lake water (i.e., the wells are pulling water from the lake) and are at risk.** Although samples were only collected for cyanotoxin analysis, if your well is pulling lake water, it is also susceptible to other contaminants in the lake that were not specifically investigated during this sampling event. Septic fields or cesspools on your property may also pose a risk of contamination to private wells. Microorganisms (e.g., bacteria and viruses) may exist naturally or be introduced to the lake by stormwater runoff or failing septic and/or cesspool systems. These sources of contamination can also contribute to the growth of cyanobacteria and algae in the lake.

Recommendations Based on Findings:

- Have your well checked by a licensed well driller. A list of licensed well drillers and drilling companies is available at: https://www.state.nj.us/dep/watersupply/pw_permit.html
- Sample your well regularly. Even if you have a properly constructed well, it is still recommended that you sample your well regularly. The NJDEP recommends you have your well water tested annually for at a minimum for coliform bacteria, nitrates, and pH. Monitoring for additional contaminants and recommended frequency for your area can be found at https://www.nj.gov/health/ceohs/documents/pw_faq.pdf
- Properly maintain your waste system.
- Maintain your in-home treatment, if applicable.