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## General Information – Leeches at Jensen Lakes

Leeches are very common in waters in Alberta and are anticipated to be present in Jensen Lakes. They are found in lakes and streams with good water quality and are not necessarily an indicator of pollution. They could have entered the water through the sand and materials brought in, watercraft, anglers, and birds may also disperse leeches. Stocked fish are generally quarantined but leeches can also be transported into waters by stocked fish (not the case here though). For some context, the first account of leeches in Summerside came within the first year to 2 years of construction of the lake and, while there were continued reports of encounters through the years, resident reports were generally rare.

1. Leeches are expected to be in the lake - this is not abnormal or an indication of pollution. The water quality in Jensen Lakes is continually monitored but that does not preclude that natural organisms are present in the lake.
2. Not all leeches are blood-sucking and not all attach. Leeches do not transmit diseases and allergic reaction is very rare. The following is some information on how to remove a leech:  
<https://www.healthline.com/health/how-to-remove-a-leech>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3p8mpUQEkg>
3. When fish are stocked, part of their diet is anticipated to include leeches so some food in the lake for them is a good thing.
4. Resident Fishing Rules – Fishing Rules are not yet finalized but will include steps to reduce the introduction of leeches into the lake.

If you find a leech, please bring it to the maintenance building so that staff can keep records of leeches found, and to determine the type of leeches present in the lake.

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Division of Core Management Group, Inc.

Office Address: 1250, 5555 Calgary Trail, Edmonton, AB T6H 5P9

Phone: 780.651.1577 [www.coremanagement.ca](http://www.coremanagement.ca)