

FRIENDS OF NORTHERN LAKE CHAMPLAIN

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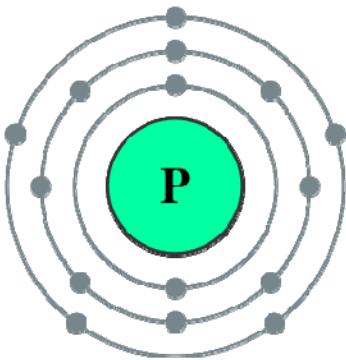


PHOSPHORUS: SO, WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

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Phosphorus is a chemical element. It is a component of DNA, and is an essential element for all living cells and all known forms of life.

But Too much phosphorus causes algal blooms and eutrophication. Eutrophication is defined as a process where water is enriched in excess nutrients that stimulate the growth of aquatic plant life, usually resulting in depletion of dissolved oxygen. Bad for fish, bad for most animals, bad for most plants. Too much phosphorus causes poor water quality. Water pollution.

Where does it come from? Phosphorus is found dissolved in water, but it also readily attaches to soil particles. Thus, erosion is one of the prime causes of phosphorus and sediment loading in our watershed. Other sources are excess or mis-applied manure; nutrient-rich water from around barnyards; municipal sewage plants; malfunctioning residential septic systems; town roads, city streets and parking lots; dishwasher soap; lawn fertilizer; and so on.