



ALGONQUIN ECO WATCH GROUP

BATHING IN THE LAKE – MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE



Washing in the lake introduces many undesirable chemicals into the aquatic environment.

The controversy rages on: is it acceptable to bathe and wash our hair in the lake? The inclusion in soaps and shampoos of chemical compounds such as phosphates, which fertilize and accelerate ageing of lakes, has largely been abandoned in recent years. To assume, however, that the addition of bath products no longer poses a threat to

Algonquin lakes is probably wishful thinking.

Pure water is comprised of molecules consisting of 2 hydrogen atoms bound to 1 atom of oxygen. Every time something is added to water, it loses some of its purity and instead becomes a dilute solution of those additives. Following is the chemical formula of a popular brand of shampoo: Water. Sodium laureth sulphate. Sodium lauryl sulphate.

Cocamidopropyl betaine. Aloe barbadensis extract. Chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis*) extract. Passionflower (*Passiflora incarnata*) extract. Cocamide MEA. Dihydroxypropyl PEG-5 linoleaminum chloride. Fragrance. Citric acid. Propylene glycol. Sodium chloride. DMDM hydantoin. Iodopropynyl butylcarbamate. FD&C Yellow No.5. D&C Orange No.4. Ext. D&C Violet No.2. Considering the large numbers of people annually utilizing Algonquin, is it desirable to introduce potentially large amounts of foreign substances into the waters of a natural environment ecosystem? The answer becomes a matter of conscience. It is well to remember that even those natural elements left behind from biodegradable products are additives which were not previously present in the water. The use of a bucket to wash ourselves away from the shore ensures that the majority of chemical compounds will be bound up in the soil and not reach the lake water.

Consider the lowly sponge! A natural "Loofah" sponge can be purchased in any drugstore for about the price of a cake of soap and can be re-used indefinitely. It is lighter than a cake of soap and can be squeezed into any corner of a packsack. Brisk rubbing with the sponge, followed by a dip in the lake, will remove dead skin, most of the "offensive" odour, and leave the body feeling tingly and clean – without adding manufactured chemical compounds to the lake.

The addition of scents to soaps and shampoos has implications other than just chemical degradation of pure water. It is generally accepted that perfumes attract insects such as mosquitoes and black flies. Many scents and perfumes contain chemical compounds known as pheromones, which act as sexual attractants. The release of these aromatic compounds

in a natural environment may affect the normal behaviour patterns of local wildlife in unpredictable ways. While not much is known about the introduction of such compounds to a wild landscape, why tamper with Nature?

Finally, we like to think that the water droplet depicted in the Algonquin Eco Watch logo is comprised ONLY of oxygen and hydrogen.

REMEMBER - THE CHOICE IS YOURS.