

An algal sample was collected from Conservancy Bay on April 25, 2019 by a local citizen. A representative picture of the algae in the water is shown in Photo 1. The sample was examined under a microscope at the Onterra office in Madison.

The alga is not a cyanobacteria (blue-green algae); instead, it is the single celled green alga *Chlamydomonas*. This alga possesses flagella which propel it through the water. A close examination of Phot 2 shows two of the flagella. The water sample appeared to only contain this alga. It is likely environmental conditions were just right for the alga to experience a massive growth. *Chlamydomonas* often grows under elevated nutrient levels. This alga is not known to be toxic to animals or humans.

Onterra staff consulted with Gina LaLiberte, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources algal expert, who indicated this has not often been documented in Wisconsin. She did receive an algal sample collected in mid-April 2019 from a storm sewer retention basin that contained a large amount of *Chlamydomonas*. While it is not clear why this alga bloomed in Conservancy Bay this spring it likely is a combination of higher nutrient levels and cool water. Algae generally grow better at warmer temperatures so the *Chlamydomonas* had reduced competition from other algae.

Biology often responds in unusual ways to human disturbances as this causes the ecological system to become out of balance. The algal bloom experienced this spring might not become a common occurrence but it could also reoccur. It should not be regarded as necessarily indicative of harmful water conditions but instead an indication of a disturbed ecological system



Photo 1 (left) Algal bloom in Conservancy Bay, Waterford Waterway, April 25, 2019.
Photo 2 (Right) Photomicrograph of *Chlamydomonas* found in Conservancy Bay (400X).