



# HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

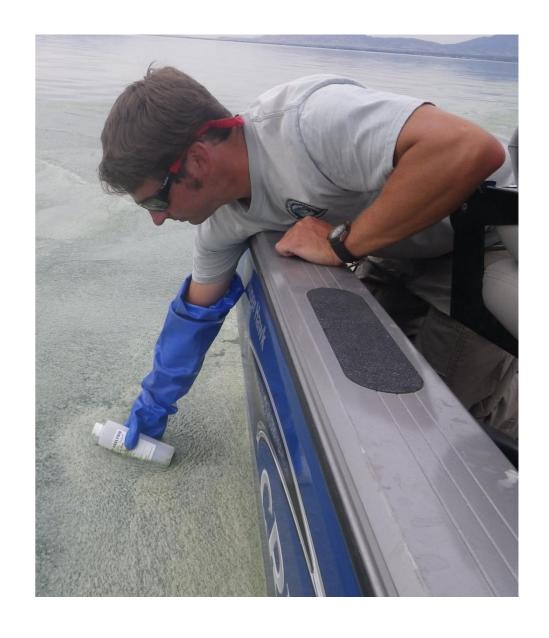
## **Communication Best Practices**





## **Agency Response**

- Updated contact list for all affected agencies/entities
- Protocol for contacting affected agencies/entities
- Protocol for coordinating HAB response with affected entities
  - Conference call schedule
  - Single, dedicated coordinating agency/entity for all bloom events
  - Roles and responsibilities for each agency/entity during blooms





## Messaging

- Single Overriding Communication
   Objective (SOCO) (Message Map)
  - Consistent template
  - Coordinated messaging for all agencies/entities
  - User-group SOCOs prepared prior to bloom season
  - Waterbody SOCOs prepared on a case-by-case basis during bloom events
  - Forecast SOCO for upcoming season
- Development of "one source of truth" fact sheet

### Single Overriding Communications Objective (SOCO) Work Sheet\*

#### Key Message:

In one brief paragraph, state the key point or objective in doing the interview or press event. This statement should reflect what you would like to see as the lead paragraph in a newspaper story or broadcast news report.

### **Key Facts:**

What are the three facts or statistics you would like the public to remember as a result of reading or hearing about this story?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

### Target Audience:

Who is the main audience or population segment you would like this message to reach?

- Primary:
- Secondary:

### Interview Objective:

What is the one message the audience needs to take away from this report/interview?

### **Primary Media Contact**

Who in your office/organization will serve as the primary point of contact for the media?

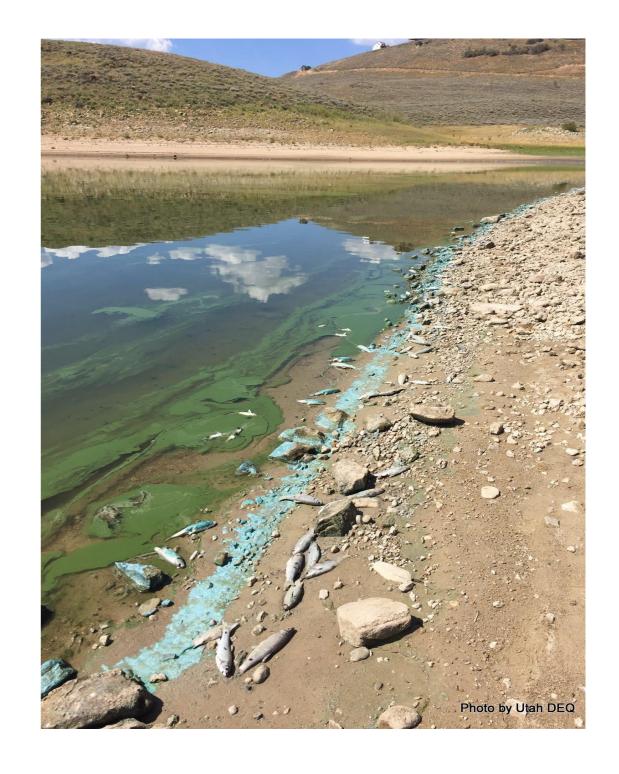
- Name:
- Phone:
- · Date and time available:



<sup>\*</sup> Developed by Bob Howard, assistant to the director, National Center for Infectious Diseases

### **Press Release Coordination**

- Contact list for agency/entity/LHD PIOs along with protocol for contacting PIOs
- DEQ: lead for coordinated press releases
- LHDs: lead for advisories on specific waterbodies
- Dedicated conference-call number during bloom season
- Google Docs for drafting press releases





### **Social Media Coordination**

- Coordinated sharing/consistent hashtags for Facebook and Twitter posts by all affected entities to strengthen messaging
- Reiteration of main message(s) across all social media posts
  - Advisories and what they mean
  - Poison Control phone number
  - DEQ webpage URL (habs.utah.gov) for updates
- Facebook Live for real-time question-and-answer opportunities between agencies/officials/LHDs and the public/media



The Utah Department of Environmental Quality took additional water samples late last week. Results should be available within the next few days. #algae #Scofield #WaterIsLife



### Scofield cyanotoxins now polluting Price River

With elevated levels of toxins now appearing in Scofield Reservoir and 30 miles downstream in the Price River, officials are advising farmers to avoid using these waters for irrigation and ranchers to not let their ...

SLTRIB.COM

1,126 people reached

Boost Post



## Central Repository for Information

- Shared Google Drive folder with subfolders
  - Press releases
  - FAQ sheets
  - o SOCOs
- Shared spreadsheet with contact emails and phone numbers
- Shared Google Doc with links to agency/entity HABs webpages



GARY R. HERBERT

SPENCER J. COX

### Department of **Environmental Quality**

### NEWS RELEASE

July 17, 2016

CONTACT Donna Kemp Spangler Communications Director Office: 801-536-4484 Cell: 801-554-4944 dspangler@utah.gov

Don't Use Water from Utah Lake, Jordan River, or Related Canals

Harmful cyanobacteria are currently present in the water and can cause severe illnesses

SALT LAKE CITY - Elevated levels of harmful algae in Jordan River and lower Little Cottonwood Creek have prompted state and local agencies to post warning signs and limit access to the Jordan River system. Utah Lake remains closed.

Algal blooms can last for days or weeks and toxins can last for days after the bloom. Response agencies don't expect to have a forecast on when the water can be used for any purpose for at least

This warning does not affect drinking water, since it comes from a separate source.

Residents who receive secondary water from the Jordan River should not use it. Secondary water is commonly used for watering lawns and gardens.

Salt Lake County Health Department is posting warning signs at all major recreational access points to the Jordan River within Salt Lake County; the Jordan River and all canals in the county are potentially unsafe for people and animals. The river is not closed at this time.

The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) strongly advises farmers and ranchers against using water from Utah Lake for food production, especially fruits and vegetables, and livestock watering until lab results are available early next week. If farmers and ranchers have access to other sources UDAF advises them to use those alternative sources to water crops, livestock other animals.

Pet owners are also advised to keep animals away from the lake, river and canals and should not let them drink the water. Pets that have been exposed to affected waters and are exhibiting symptoms should be seen by a veterinarian. Symptoms in pets include weakness, fatigue and excessive saliva production.

Anglers are also currently advised not to fish, or consume fish from Utah Lake and sections of the Jordan River that feed in and out of the lake. Anyone who has caught fish from those areas in, or after July 10, is advised to not consume their catch.

North Jordan Irrigation Company has been shutting down weirs to slow irrigation flow to their -MORE-

> 195 North 1950 West • Salt Lake City, UT Mailing Address: P.O. Box 144810 • Salt Lake City, UT 84114-4810 Telephone (801) 536-4400 • Fax (801) 536-0061 • T.D.D. (801) 903-3978 www.deq.utah.gov



## Signage Updates

- Distribution of signage templates to LHDs, State Parks, UDAF, municipalities, irrigation companies, and any other entities that may need to post signage
- Date range on signage rather than date posted
- Larger field available for LHD phone number
- Utah Poison Control Center phone number more prominent

## WARNING

### TOXIC ALGAE PRESENT Lake unsafe for people and pets

### Until further notice:

- Do not swim or water ski No nade o practique el esquí acuático.
- Do not drink the lake water. No tome el agua del lago.
- Keep pets and livestock away. Mantenga alejados las mascotas y el ganado.
- Clean fish well and discard guts. Limpie bien el pescado y deseche las tripas.
- Avoid areas of scum when boating. Evite las áreas con espuma o verdín cuando ande en lancha.





Date Posted:

(801) 536-4123

Call your doctor or veterinarian if you or your animals have sudden or unexplained sickness or signs of poisoning. Learn more: habs.utah.gov

**Utah Poison Control Center** (800) 222-1222

Report new algae blooms to the Department of Environmental Quality:

Call your local health department









## **Website Layout**

- DEQ website as central repository of all information for public/media
- Simplified landing page with important information
  - Current advisories
     (interactive map)
  - Report a bloom
  - Protect yourself
  - Health risks
  - Photo gallery



### Welcome to the freshwater algae site

The purpose of this site is to provide toxin data related to cyanobacteria blooms in Washington lakes, ponds and streams. Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) uses this site to share the data from their ongoing freshwater algae monitoring program.

Cyanobacteria (or blue-green algae) can produce toxins at levels that are harmful to humans, pets, domestic animals, and wildlife. There is no way to detect toxins in an algae bloom except through laboratory analysis. This website provides access to Ecology's results.

### Find your lake

Use our database to locate a lake and find out the most recent testing.

Or find your lake >



### Report a bloom

If you think that your lake has an algae bloom and you want to have the algae identified: Report a bloom.



### See lakes with algae bloom

Examples of local lakes experiencing algae blooms. View our gallery and descriptions.



### Health risks

Learn about the potential health risks to people and pets exposed to algae blooms through swimming or consuming the water.





## **Website Layout**

- "At a glance" template with a weekly snapshot of activities/advisories
  - Date samples taken
  - Date sample results received
  - Waterbody
  - Cell counts
  - Toxin levels and type
  - Advisory (link to signage)
- Daily/periodic updates with detailed information (current update format) in addition to 'at-a-glance" info
- Email alert signup (Listserv) on HABs webpage(s)

### Update: August 15, 2016

### Sampling Results

DWQ has received cyanobacteria cell-count results from August 9, 2016, sampli available later this week. The division will continue to coordinate with the local as results come in.

DWQ and its partners will continue to sample Utah Lake and the Jordan River toxin concentrations are within the low-risk range for two consecutive samples.

### Utah Lake

Cyanobacteria cell-count concentrations remain in the low to moderate health-cells/milliliter(mL) at Pelican Point, 0.5 miles west of Geneva Harbor, and one Cyanobacteria cell concentrations were in the very low range (<20,000 cells/ml Caution signs remain posted.

To date, scientists have identified six species of cyanobacteria at Lincoln Harbot Aphanizomenon (131,000 cells/mL) and Dolichospermum (8,500 cells/mL) to cells/mL), Pseudanabaena (7.7 million cells/mL), Phormidium (3 and 5 million (338,000 and 776,000 cells/mL). The private marina is closed to the public on Department, and recreationists should avoid areas of scum.

### Jordan River

Cyanobacteria cell-count concentrations remain in the low to moderate health-Utah Lake outlet, in the Jordan River Narrows, and in the Salt Lake Canal at 90 count concentrations were in the very low risk range (< 20,000 cells/mL) for th and Ritter East Canals. Caution signs remain posted.



## Questions?



