



New York Sea Grant-organized Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) workshops connected diverse stakeholders with HAB science experts to help mitigate the environmental and economic impacts of HAB outbreaks

NYSG Harmful Algal Bloom Workshops a Model for Helping Great Lakes Stakeholders

Increased incidence of harmful algal blooms (HABs) in the Great Lakes threatens human, fish and wildlife health, and is a significant impediment to recreational water use and coastal community economies. One Lake Ontario community, Sodus Point, NY, reported a \$200,000 revenue loss from a HAB outbreak in 2010.

HABs are increasing due to heavy nutrient input from watersheds and climate changes. HABs occur when populations of certain noxious blue-green algae (classified as cyanobacteria) produce toxins in embayments and nearshore areas. The toxins cause human illness from direct contact or ingestion of lake water and kill fish and wildlife.

NYSG Responds

With NOAA Oceanic and Atmospheric Research (OAR) funding, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) organized workshops for Lakes Erie and Ontario bringing together 60 diverse stakeholders representing county government, marinas, lakefront communities, sportsmen groups and internationally-renown research institutions to discuss HAB formation, impacts, and citizen monitoring and reporting guidelines.

With Pennsylvania Sea Grant, NYSG developed a companion workshop for 60 stakeholders representing county and state agencies and academia in PA, NY, and Ohio. One participant commented: *“The timing of the workshop for health and environmental managers on HABs could not be more perfect as the discovery of harmful blue-green algae was recently confirmed in Presque Isle Bay.”*

Workshops A Model for HAB Education

NOAA OAR Program Analyst John Wickham reported the workshops as the best Sea Grant HAB workshops he has seen and recommended the NYSG HAB workshops as templates for other Sea Grant outreach programs on HABs.



Harmful algal bloom along Lake Ontario; photo: SUNY ESF

As a direct result of the workshops, Sodus Bay is incorporating workshop information into its watershed management plan to mitigate HAB outbreaks. Pennsylvania state agencies developed a HAB response plan at the workshop in their state.

These NYSG-organized HAB workshops connected diverse stakeholders with harmful algal bloom science experts to help mitigate HAB-related environmental and economic impacts in two states.

Partners: Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Pennsylvania Sea Grant, State University of New York (SUNY) College of Environmental Science & Forestry, SUNY Stony Brook, citizen environmental groups

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Healthy New York Coastal Ecosystems.

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