

Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board

The Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) is hosting two workshops to improve the efficiency in responding to harmful algal blooms (HABs) that occur throughout the Lahontan Region. To prepare for HAB outbreaks that may increase in abundance, frequency, and duration during the 2018 growing season and beyond, staff has realized the need to develop a more timely and efficient response plan.

To achieve this goal, the Water Board will host two regional HAB workshops to provide local partners with the technical understanding needed to efficiently and effectively (1) collect water samples for HAB analysis, and (2) post health advisories if harmful levels of cyanotoxins are present. Please join us at one of these workshops:

Regional Workshops – Responding to Harmful Algal Blooms

Bishop, CA

June 27, 2018; 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

**Owens Valley Paiute Shoshone
Cultural Center**

Victorville, CA

August. 2018; 8:30 am – 3:30 pm

Workshop will be scheduled between Aug. 6-9, 2018

Victorville area – Location to be determined

Background. In recent years, Water Board staff (staff) has responded to increasing reports of HABs. Extended periods of drought, warmer air and water temperatures, low flows, stagnant water conditions, and resultant high nutrient concentrations have caused cyanobacteria (also known as blue-green algae) to rapidly multiply into HABs. HABs can consist of both toxic and non-toxic algae. Toxic HABs can produce excessive amounts of cyanotoxins (e.g., microcystins, Anatoxin-a) potent enough to threaten the safety of humans, wildlife, and pets sometimes to the point of causing serious illness or mortality. Both toxic and non-toxic algal blooms have the potential to impact beneficial uses of water by decreasing dissolved oxygen levels, imparting unpleasant tastes and odors to water and fish, and reducing aesthetics.

In 2017, staff received and responded to over ten reports of algal blooms throughout the Lahontan Region that impacted surface waters and reservoirs at elevations ranging from 3200-7200 feet and located as far south as San Bernardino County and as far north as Lassen County.

To verify the presence and potential risks associated with HABs, it is often necessary to conduct a site visit and collect samples for laboratory analysis. Given the vast

geographical area that our region covers, it is often difficult to investigate these events in a timely manner. For some of the HAB events reported during 2017, staff worked with the appropriate local agencies or a homeowner's association to ensure a more timely response when the outbreak was not located within close proximity to Water Board offices located in South Lake Tahoe and Victorville.

Local partners (e.g., County Environmental Health Departments, County Parks and Recreation Departments, United States Forest Service [USFS], homeowner associations) assisted by conducting the necessary site reconnaissance and by collecting, handling, and shipping water samples for laboratory analyses. When laboratory results confirmed the presence of cyanobacteria, local partners also posted appropriate advisories to protect public health.

Staff believes that offering workshops throughout our region will not only help foster partnerships and improve technical capacity of local agencies and other cooperating partners, but also improve the efficiency and efficacy of HAB event response when staff are not readily available. Similar to last year, the State and Regional Surface Water Ambient Monitoring Program may support a limited amount of sampling supplies, shipment costs, and analysis of water samples associated with HAB investigations.

The intended audience for the workshops includes land and waterbody managers (e.g., County Environmental Health Departments, Department of Water Resources, Bureau of Land Management, USFS), California Native American Tribes, homeowner associations, watershed groups, and Resource Conservation Districts. Objectives of the workshops include providing participants with adequate information to: (1) respond to reports of HABs - from receipt of report to lab result interpretation; and (2) provide involved partners with up-to-date and relevant information about cyanobacteria and HABs within the Lahontan Region including causes and controls, management, and mitigation strategies. A detailed agenda will be provided prior to the meeting.

We hope that you can join us at one of these upcoming workshops. Since space may be limited, we kindly ask you to reply to confirm your attendance at one of these workshops by **June 1, 2018**. Please respond and direct any questions or comments regarding these workshops to me by email at mary.fiore-wagner@waterboards.ca.gov or by phone at (530) 542-5425.



Mary Fiore-Wagner
Senior Environmental Scientist

MFW/ma/T: Notice_HAB_Workshop_05.2018

File Under: ECM / Special Projects/Communication & Outreach/Other/Harmful Algal Blooms