



Public Health: Harmful Algal Blooms

Chair: Jodi Gardberg, Utah Division of Environmental Quality

Thursday, March 30, 2017

1:30 pm – 3:30 pm

The Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), Division of Water Quality (DWQ) has identified over two dozen waterbodies in the State of Utah that are at-risk of excessive algal production including cyanobacteria. These blooms pose a health risk to the public, including the release of liver and/or neurotoxins in some cases, and can result in broad economic and ecological hardship for Utah citizens. Not only are harmful algal blooms (HABs) a concern for recreational users, but the majority (>80%) of these waterbodies are protected as source water for drinking water supply or are used for secondary water sources downstream. In 2016, HABs caused the closure of Utah Lake, the four Payson Lakes and Scofield Reservoir for periods during the summer season. Secondary water uses downstream of these waterbodies were also affected and advisories were issued by the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food to avoid using the water for irrigation or livestock watering. In 2016, the Utah Poison Control Center received 672 calls from the public regarding algal blooms, 31% of which noted symptoms consistent with exposure including gastrointestinal distress (vomiting, diarrhea, nausea), headaches, and skin and eye irritation after recreating in these waterbodies. The presentations in this session will provide background information on cyanobacteria and cyanotoxins, the health implications and the State of Utah response to protect drinking water and recreation from HABs.

Order of Presentations

Introduction

Jodi Gardberg - Utah Division of Environmental Quality (Session Moderator) - Introduction

Cyanobacteria and Cyanotoxins

Sam Rushforth, Utah Valley University

Cyanotoxin Health Implications

Nathan LaCross, Utah Department of Health

Utah's Response to HABs

Ben Holcomb, Utah Division of Water Quality

Drinking Water HAB Response Plan

Rachel Cassady, Utah Drinking Water Division