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The following Pre-Season Bloom Watch was developed for our Pure Waters HABs/Cyanobacteria volunteers. We are also distributing this note to our broader distribution list as well, so the general public can be aware of all the work our volunteers are doing to keep the public and pets safe this summer. We are very proud of our program, which is considered to be one of the best in NY State.

To learn more about us or to become a member of Pure Waters, visit our website at www.senecalake.org.



Seneca Lake **PURE WATERS** Association

BLOOM WATCH UPDATE

Pre-Season Update



SHORELINE MONITORING UPDATE

Observation Dates: Aug 5-Oct 6, 2019
Zones Monitored: Zones being finalized
Shoreline Coverage: 56 miles or more

Suspicious Blooms: 0
Confirmed Blooms: 0

Welcome Everyone!

As is the tradition, we will be utilizing our weekly Bloom Watch newsletter to keep our volunteers informed of our progress as we move through the Harmful Algal Bloom/Cyanobacteria season on Seneca Lake. Bloom Watch will be distributed each week during our monitoring period so everyone is kept up to speed on our findings as well as any other current events volunteers should be aware of. This particular release is being called a pre-season update, since official monitoring of the shoreline does not begin until August 5.

After a long, wet spring, it appears summer has finally arrived. The arrival of summer brings us all to the classroom to prepare for our HABs/Cyanobacteria season on Seneca Lake. Our first series of classes were completed on June 17 and the remainder of our volunteers will be trained on July 8. We will be even bigger and stronger than previous years. The Shoreline Monitoring program began in 2014 with a simple phone number, the HABs Hotline. In just four short years, the program has evolved into a very successful collaboration with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) and Finger Lakes Institute (FLI) at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. We have grown from 40 volunteers in 2014 to over 125 volunteers this year. Eighty-four Volunteers returning from last year and 41 new volunteers joining our team for the first time. Remarkable!! Our HABs Regional Coordinators and I really appreciate the support and dedication of our volunteers. We have one of the largest and best programs in NY state because of our volunteers. We thank you once again.

What is the same for 2019?

Lots of things are the same for 2019. For one, our Regional Coordinators are the same.

- Bill Roege – Northeast
- Peter Muller – Southwest
- Maura Toole – Southeast
- Rich Adams – Northeast

Our Regional Coordinators (RC) are a wealth of information and are very familiar with all the details surrounding our program. RCs will communicate with you often. Make sure and keep a close relationship with your RC as we work through the season.

Like last year, we are providing you with a Reference Guide, which contains all you need to know when monitoring the shoreline and reporting your results. Keep your Reference Guide handy throughout the season.

Recommended conditions for monitoring are the same. Look for warm temperatures, calm water and bright sunlight. Mid-day seems to be the most popular time for blooms.

The sampling process and the sample packaging process is the same. Review your Reference Guide to brush up on the details of sample prep and delivery to FLI.

What is new for 2019?

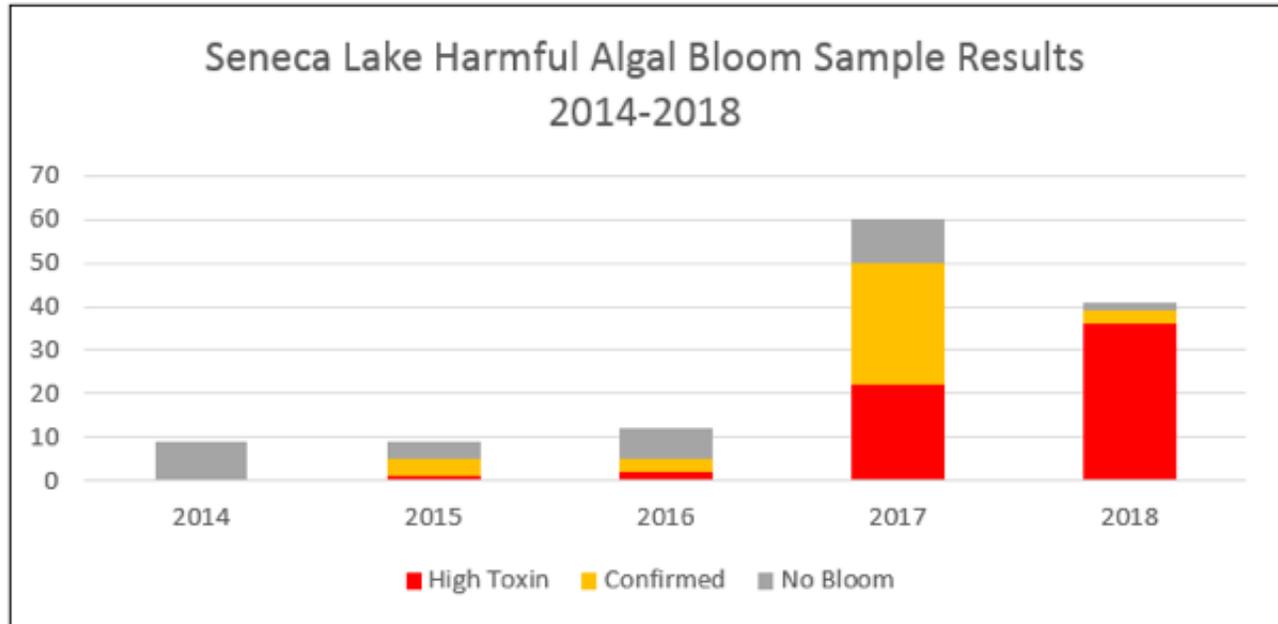
Last year, it was sometimes inconvenient to go out and monitor the shoreline between Saturday and Monday. In addition, blooms could occur outside this window. This year, we have decided to move to 7-day monitoring. This makes monitoring more convenient and increases the probability of observing and sampling more blooms.

Based on our experience the last 2 years, we are starting and ending our shoreline survey period a week later than before. Our official monitoring period is from **August 5 to October 6** – 9 full weeks. Still, once you have been trained, you should always keep your eyes open for blooms. Many lakes have already reported blooms across the state. If you see something suspicious before our official season begins, contact your RC.

We are using a new software platform for reporting called ArcGIS for our Shoreline Observation Survey (SOS) system. This system will provide us with much more flexibility in developing maps and other real time information for our Pure Waters website. This year you will see improved website information available to keep the public and pets safe throughout our season. We will talk more about website information in a later issue.

Seneca HABs Over the Years

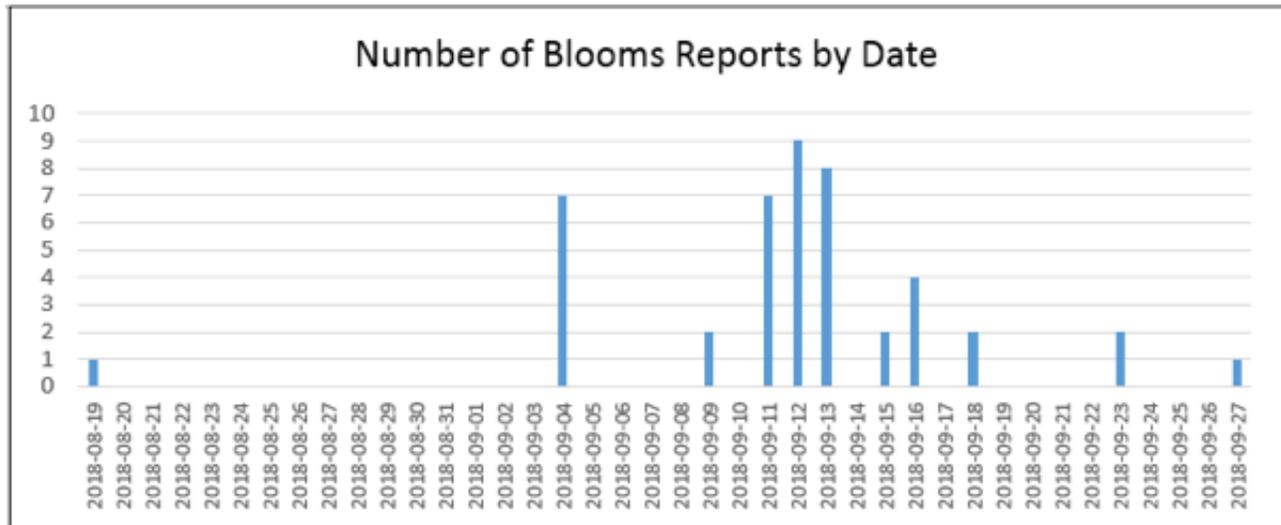
The chart below summarizes our HABs/Cyanobacteria results for 2014-2018:



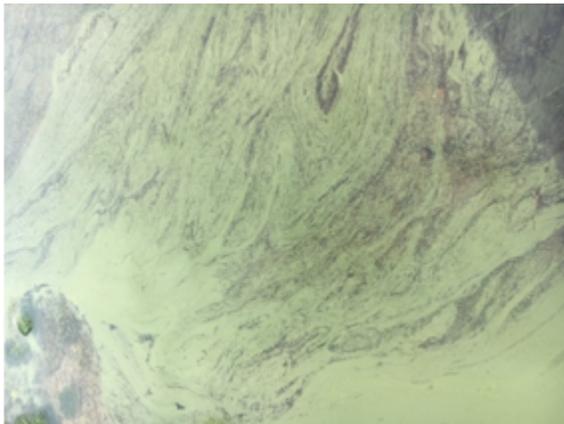
In 2018, 41 samples were collected and analyzed. Of the 41, 39 were confirmed blooms (greater than 25 micrograms/liter blue-green chlorophyll) and 36 of the 39 were also highly toxic (greater than 20 micrograms/liter microcystin toxin). The relatively large number of samples taken in 2017 and 2018 are a result of more volunteers looking for and taking samples.

Key takeaways are 1) the high confidence we now have that volunteers know a bloom when they see it and 2) that it appears the percentage of blooms that are highly toxic may be increasing. The high percentage of toxic blooms underscores the official guidance to treat all blooms as toxic and avoiding them.

The graph below shows the pattern for bloom reports over the 2018 season. There were 11 “bloom-days” total, but the vast majority of blooms we found were concentrated in September, especially between September 9 and 16. The 2017 results showed a similar pattern.



What did some of the Blooms look like on Seneca in 2018?



Note the typical spilled paint, blue green streaks that we normally see with blooms. Just like we discussed in our training class.

What else is new?

Dock Monitoring!!! This is an exciting new program for 2019. The Tripp Foundation awarded Seneca Lake Pure Waters a grant for \$15,000 dollars to place Dock Monitoring stations at 8 different monitoring locations around the lake and sample water quality at 4 of them. The stations will monitor wind, temperature and other HABs-related parameters. A camera for monitoring HABs is also part of the station. The picture below shows of one of the units.



We will talk more about the Dock Monitoring Program and two other new programs—an Invasive Species Volunteer Program and a Lake Friendly Living Program—in a future Bloom Watch.

Well that is all for now. As you can tell, lots happening with our Pure Waters HAB Program. I would like to thank you once again for all your support and your dedication to this volunteer effort. Always remember that our number one goal is to provide timely information to the public so we can keep both people and pets safe this year. I look forward to keeping you up to date as we progress through our HABs/Cyanobacteria season. Enjoy your summer!!

Frank DiOrio
HABs Director
Seneca Lake Pure Waters Association

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