



State of Utah

GARY R. HERBERT
Governor

SPENCER J. COX
Lieutenant Governor

Department of
Environmental Quality

L. Scott Baird
Executive Director

Kim Shelley
Deputy Director

NEWS RELEASE
Wednesday, July 10, 2020

CONTACT
Jared Mendenhall
Public Information Officer
Cell: 801-707-0817
jmendenhall@utah.gov

***EPA Grants One-Time Funds to
DEQ for 2020 Algal Bloom Monitoring***

SALT LAKE CITY — This week, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), received a one-time grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to conduct monitoring of 18 priority waterbodies for harmful algal blooms (HABs).

“This grant from EPA will allow DEQ’s scientists to resume the HABs monitoring program, which was temporarily postponed due to budget cuts,” said Erica Gaddis, director of DEQ’s Division of Water Quality. “The HABs program is an important element of protecting the health of water recreators and the environment. With these funds, DEQ can continue identifying HABs and informing public health partners about the safety of Utah waters.”

Harmful algal blooms occur when stagnant, nutrient-rich water warms up in the summer and becomes the ideal breeding ground for cyanobacteria — commonly known as blue-green algae. Under these circumstances, the bacteria can reproduce quickly, overwhelm the waterbody and in some cases produce skin, liver and nervous system toxins.

For the past five years, DEQ and local health departments have sampled waterbodies for HABs throughout the recreation season (May to October) to keep the public, local health departments and other stakeholders informed of current conditions.

Due to state budget uncertainty, DEQ’s program funding was cut and monitoring was put on hold. With this new funding from the federal government, sampling and updates for harmful algal blooms resumed this week. Updated sampling and advisory information will be available at habs.utah.gov.

For 2020, sampling will be limited to 18 priority waterbodies. These waterbodies include Utah Lake, Deer Creek, East Canyon, Echo Reservoir, Pineview, Yuba Lake and Scofield Reservoir. Water recreators are encouraged to check the website regularly for updates. The public is encouraged to watch for signs of harmful algal blooms and report suspected blooms to DEQ at 801-536-4123.

For concerns about possible human exposure, call your physician or the Utah Poison Control at 800-222-1222. For concerns about possible animal exposure, contact a local veterinarian. For

concerns about possible livestock exposure, contact the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food at 801-982-2232.

To learn more about harmful algal blooms visit habs.utah.gov.

About DEQ

Established in 1991, the Utah Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) mission is to safeguard and improve Utah's air, land and water through balanced regulation. DEQ implements state and federal environmental laws and works with individuals, community groups and businesses to protect the quality of Utah's air, land and water. For more information, visit www.deq.utah.gov, follow DEQ on Facebook ([utahdeq](https://www.facebook.com/utahdeq)) and Twitter ([UtahDEQ](https://twitter.com/UtahDEQ)).