HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES
Communication Best Practices
Agency Response

• Updated contact list for all affected agencies/entities
• Protocol for contacting affected agencies/entities: DEQ Spill Line
• Protocol for coordinating HAB response with affected entities
  o Conference call schedule
  o Single, dedicated coordinating agency/entity for all bloom events
  o Roles and responsibilities for each agency/entity during blooms
• Emergency Management System assistance with communication/bloom response within affected agencies
Messaging

• Single Overriding Communication Objective (SOCO) (Message Map)
  o Consistent template
  o Coordinated messaging for all agencies/entities
  o User-group SOCOs prepared prior to bloom season
  o Waterbody SOCOs prepared on a case-by-case basis during bloom events
  o Forecast SOCO for upcoming season
• “One source of truth” fact sheet

---

Single Overriding Communications Objective (SOCO) Work Sheet*

Key Message:
In one brief paragraph, state the key point or objective in doing the interview or press event. This statement should reflect what you would like to see as the lead paragraph in a newspaper story or broadcast news report.

Key Facts:
What are the three facts or statistics you would like the public to remember as a result of reading or hearing about this story?
1. 
2. 
3.

Target Audience:
Who is the main audience or population segment you would like this message to reach?
• Primary:
• Secondary:

Interview Objective:
What is the one message the audience needs to take away from this report/interview?

Primary Media Contact:
Who in your office/organization will serve as the primary point of contact for the media?
• Name:
• Phone:
• Date and time available:

*Developed by Bob Howard, assistant to the director, National Center for Infectious Diseases
Press Release Coordination

• Contact list for agency/entity/LHD PIOs along with protocol for contacting PIOs
  o Communication Coordination Plan
  o DEQ: lead for coordinated press releases
  o LHDs: lead for advisories on specific waterbodies

• Dedicated conference-call number during bloom season

• Google Docs for drafting press releases
Social Media Coordination

- Coordinated sharing/consistent hashtags for Facebook and Twitter posts by all affected entities to strengthen messaging
- Reiteration of main message(s) across all social media posts
  - Advisories and what they mean
  - Poison Control phone number
  - DEQ webpage URL (habs.utah.gov) for updates
- Facebook Live for real-time question-and-answer opportunities between agencies/officials/LHDs and the public/media
Central Repository for Information

- Shared Google Drive folder with subfolders
  - Press releases
  - FAQ sheets
  - SOCOs
- Shared spreadsheet with contact emails and phone numbers
- Shared sampling and toxin datasheets
- Shared satellite data
- Shared photos
- Shared Google Doc with links to agency/entity HABs webpages
Signage Updates

Distribution of signage templates to LHDs, State Parks, UDAF, municipalities, irrigation companies, and any other entities that may need to post signage

- Clear advisory language to address major public-health concerns
- Prominent link to DEQ HABs webpage for more information
- “Date posted” and DEQ 24-hour Spill Line phone number included on sign
- Field for LHD phone number
- Utah Poison Control Center phone number prominently displayed to improve data collection on human and animal exposures
Website Layout

- DEQ website as central repository of all information for public/media
- Simplified landing page with important information
  - Current advisories (Interactive map in progress)
  - Report a bloom
  - Protect yourself
  - Health risks
  - Photo gallery

Harmful Algal Blooms Home

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Visit the Utah Lake HAB Network (Water Quality Data Buoy)
- Visit the Jordan River Storm Central Water Log Network
- Division of Drinking Water Harmful Algal Bloom and Cyanotoxin Response Plan
- UDAF Response Plan
- Department of Health HAB Guidance Summary
- Department of Health HAB Public Health Tier Diagram

2017 Monitoring Updates

- Deer Creek Reservoir
- Echo Reservoir
- Hoop Lake
- Jordanelle Reservoir
- Mantua Reservoir
- Matt Warner Reservoir
- Ogden City 21st Street Pond
- Rockport Reservoir
- Strawberry Reservoir
- Upper Box Creek Reservoir
- Utah Lake

Areas with values above Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Last Sample Date</th>
<th>Advisory Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Blackridge Reservoir</td>
<td>August 22, 2017</td>
<td>Closed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mantua Reservoir</td>
<td>October 31, 2017</td>
<td>Warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogden City 21st Street Pond</td>
<td>September 13, 2017</td>
<td>Warning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utah Lake</td>
<td>October 16, 2017</td>
<td>Warning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Website Layout

• “At a glance” template with a weekly snapshot of activities/advisories
  o Date samples taken
  o Date sample results received
  o Waterbody
  o Cell counts
  o Toxin levels and type
  o Advisory (link to signage)
• Daily/periodic updates with detailed information (current update format) in addition to ‘at-a-glance” info
• Email alert signup (Listserv) on HABs webpage

---

Echo Reservoir Algal Bloom 2017

Update November 1, 2017
The Summit County Health Department (SCHD) sampled Echo Reservoir on October 31, 2017. Toxin test strips results for the samples were all below the UDEQ-UDOH action level for microcystins, cylindropermopsin, and anatoxin-a. Based on these findings, SCHD lifted the “Warning Advisory” for Echo Reservoir on November 1, 2017, and removed the warning signs.

Update October 26, 2017
Samples collected on October 17, 2017 and October 19, 2017, were sent to the Utah Public Health Lab for ELISA testing to quantify the strip-test results. ELISA test results showed microcystin levels well below the UDOH-UDOQ recommended health-advisory threshold for a warning advisory.

However, cyanobacteria cell counts exceed 14.7 million cells per milliliter (cells/ml), placing the sample site above the health advisory threshold. Multiple cyanobacteria taxa capable of producing toxins were present, including *Aphanizomenon* and *Pseudanabaena*, but the sample was dominated by *Dolioclostridium* at 14,715,737 cells/ml. *Dolioclostridium* and *Aphanizomenon* are potential toxin producers for microcystin, anatoxin-a, and cylindropermopsin. *Pseudanabaena* is a potential toxin producer for microcystin and anatoxin-a. The bloom is currently limited in extent and located along the shoreline.

UDOQ UDEQ guidance recommends two consecutive sample periods during which all indicators are below guidance thresholds before health officials lift an advisory.
Questions?