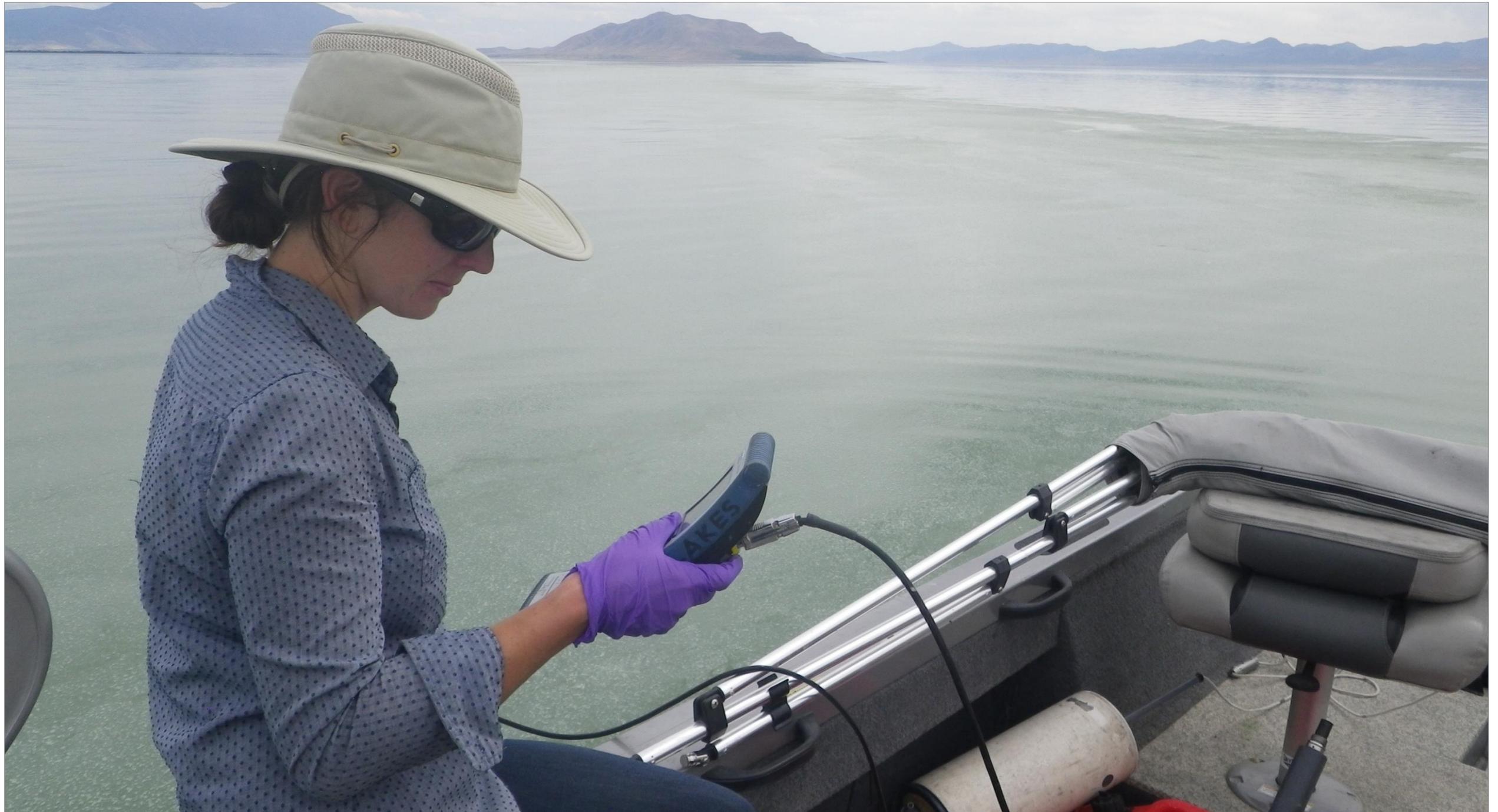




UTAH DEPARTMENT *of*
**ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY**

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
 - Conference call schedule
 - Single, dedicated coordinating agency/entity for all bloom events
 - Roles and responsibilities for each agency/entity during blooms
- Emergency Management System assistance with communication/bloom response within affected agencies



Utah Lake, 2016

Messaging

- Single Overriding Communication Objective (SOCO) (Message Map)
 - Consistent template
 - Coordinated messaging for all agencies/entities
 - User-group SOCOs prepared prior to bloom season
 - Waterbody SOCOs prepared on a case-by-case basis during bloom events
 - 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

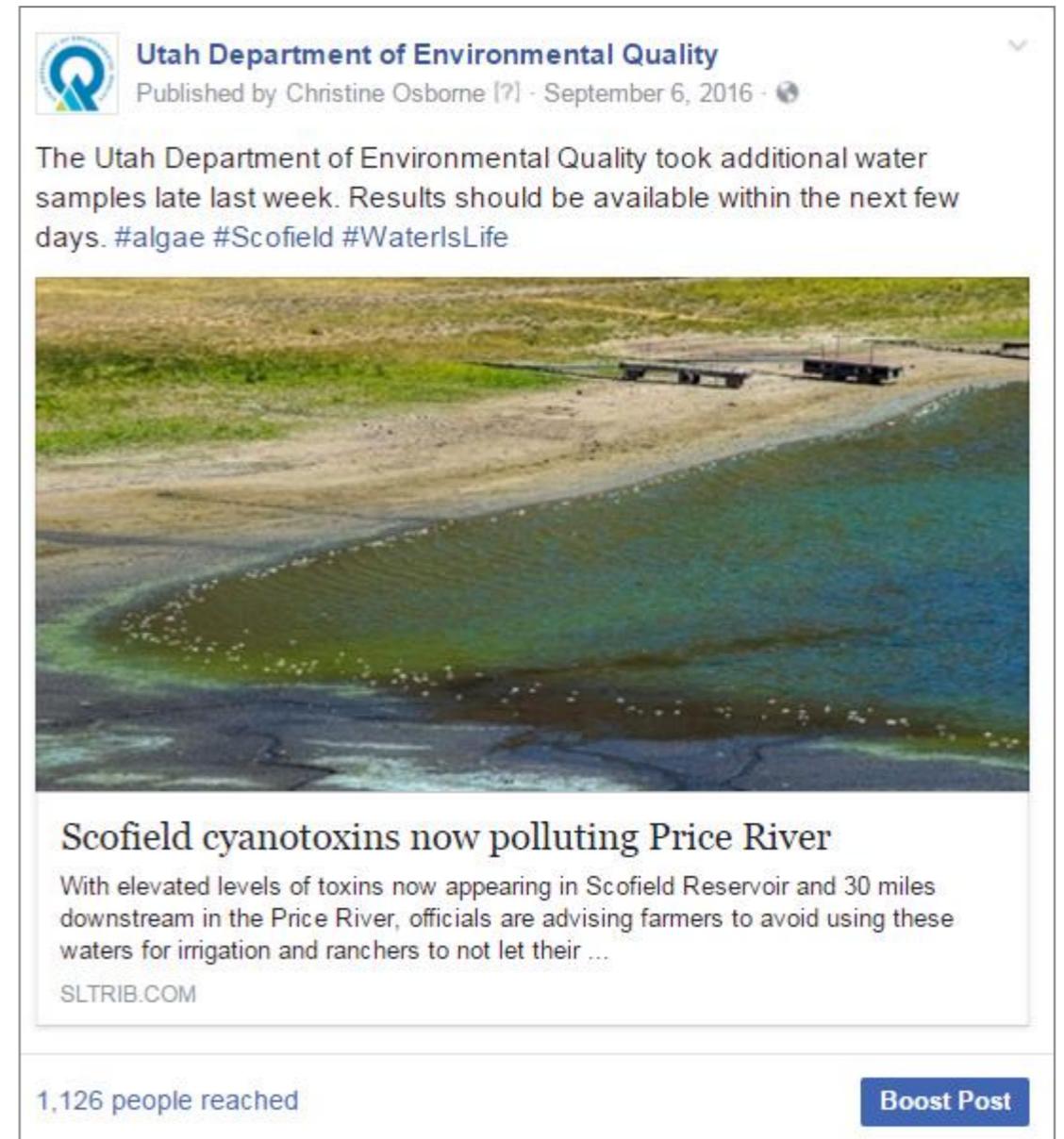
- Contact list for agency/entity/LHD PIOs along with protocol for contacting PIOs
 - Communication Coordination Plan
 - DEQ: lead for coordinated press releases
 - LHDs: lead for advisories on specific waterbodies
- Dedicated conference-call number during bloom season
- Google Docs for drafting press releases



Echo Reservoir Boat Launch, 2017

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



Utah Department of Environmental Quality
Published by Christine Osborne [?] · September 6, 2016 ·

The Utah Department of Environmental Quality took additional water samples late last week. Results should be available within the next few days. #algae #Scofield #WaterIsLife



Scofield cyanotoxins now polluting Price River

With elevated levels of toxins now appearing in Scofield Reservoir and 30 miles downstream in the Price River, officials are advising farmers to avoid using these waters for irrigation and ranchers to not let their ...

SLTRIB.COM

1,126 people reached [Boost Post](#)

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



State of Utah
GARY R. HERBERT
Governor
SPENCER J. COX
Lieutenant Governor

Department of
Environmental Quality

Alan Matheson
Executive Director
Brad T. Johnson
Deputy Director
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NEWS RELEASE
July 12, 2017

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Algal Bloom Spread throughout Utah Lake

SALT LAKE CITY – Blue-green algae recently discovered in Utah Lake’s Provo Bay has now spread to the majority of the lake, prompting the Utah County Health Department (UCHD) to expand its warnings that caution people to avoid immersion in the water due to the presence of algal species that can cause irritation and have the potential to produce toxins.

Warning signs caution people, their pets and other animals to stay out of the lake because contact can cause headaches, gastrointestinal distress and skin irritation even without the presence of toxins. Signs will be posted at popular access sites around the lake.

Based on test results reported on July 12, the level of cyanotoxins in Utah Lake is not considered a health threat to livestock at this time. The Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) will continue to monitor data and provide direction to the agriculture community as the cyanotoxin concentrations change.

The UDAF advises livestock owners to locate an alternative source of water should cyanotoxins rise to unhealthy levels in the future.

The Utah Department of Environmental Quality’s (DEQ) Division of Water Quality analyzed the tests results collected July 6 and July 11. The July 6 results show the cell count concentrations spreading and increasing in density in the southern and western portions of the lake. Toxins were non-detect on the July 6 samples. Tests on July 11 samples confirm the toxins microcystin and anatoxin-a are present. This is an indication of more serious health concerns, but not yet at the level warranting closure.

DEQ and Utah Department of Health developed public health advisories that align with national and international guidelines based on cyanobacterial cell density and toxin concentrations. Two weeks ago UCHD and Utah State Parks first posted warning signs at Provo Harbor, the closest access point to Provo Bay after water tests detected the presence of algal species that have the potential to produce toxins.

Although blue-green algae are a natural part of many freshwater ecosystems, under the right conditions they can expand rapidly. High levels of nutrients in the water, combined with warm temperatures, abundant sunlight, and calm water, can promote growth, resulting in extensive

-MORE-

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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

WARNING

Harmful Algae Present

- Swimming is not recommended in this area.
- Avoid areas of algae scum when boating and water skiing.
- Keep animals away.
- Do not ingest the water.
- Clean fish well and discard guts. Eat only the fillets.
- Algae may move or disperse depending on temperature, wind, and weather.
- Contact the Utah Poison Control Center if you or your animals have unexplained sickness or signs of poisoning. (800) 222-1222

Date Posted

Report An Algae Bloom: **(801) 536-4123**

Call Your Local Health Dept.:

Visit habs.utah.gov for more info.

Logos: UTAH DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY, UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, UTAH ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS

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

The screenshot shows the website header with the Utah Department of Environmental Quality logo and 'WATER QUALITY' text. A 'Feedback' button and a hashtag icon are in the top right. The main content area is titled 'Harmful Algal Blooms Home' and contains a list of links: 'Frequently Asked Questions', 'Visit the Utah Lake HAB Network (Water Quality Data Buoys)', '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', and 'Department of Health HAB Public Health Tier Diagram'. Below this is a '2017 Monitoring Updates' section with a list of locations: 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, and Utah Lake. To the right, a table titled 'Areas with values above Guidelines' lists: Blackridge Reservoir (August 22, 2017, Closed), Mantua Reservoir (October 31, 2017, Warning), Ogden City 21st Street Pond (September 13, 2017, Warning), and Utah Lake (October 16, 2017, Warning). At the bottom right is an interactive map of Utah Lake with colored markers indicating bloom locations.

Website Layout

- “At a glance” template with a weekly snapshot of activities/advisories
 - Date samples taken
 - Date sample results received
 - Waterbody
 - Cell counts
 - Toxin levels and type
 - 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

| [Updates](#) | [Data](#) |

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, cylindrospermopsin, 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-UDEQ recommended health-advisory threshold for a warning advisory.

However, [cyanobacteria cell counts](#) exceeded 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 *Dolichospermum* at 14,715,737 cells/ml.

Dolichospermum and *Aphanizomenon* are potential toxin producers for microcystin, anatoxin-a, and cylindrospermopsin. *Pseudanabaena* is a potential toxin producer for microcystin and anatoxin-a. The bloom is currently limited in extent and located along the shoreline.

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

Questions?



Scofield Reservoir, 2016