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State Announces Algal Bloom Monitoring and Advisory Levels for 2011

The State of Ohio is announcing its response strategy for harmful algal blooms in 2011. The strategy includes thresholds for algal toxins, three recreational use advisory levels, and drinking water public notice requirements.

Ohioalgaefinfo.com is now available as a one-stop shop for algae information in Ohio. The public can view a list of current advisories or sampling data, report potential algal blooms, and view some common sense tips about algae.

Recreational Use Advisories

There are three recreational use advisories:

- 1) An **algae bloom advisory** will be posted for a recreational contact area once an algal bloom has been identified and the State has confirmed it is a harmful algal bloom capable of producing toxin. The public would be advised not to ingest water and avoid contact with surface scum.
- 2) The **public health advisory** would be posted when tests conclude microcystin levels are at least six parts per billion (ppb). At this point, the public would be advised that swimming and wading are not recommended, water should not be swallowed and surface scum should be avoided.
- 3) A **no contact advisory** would recommend the public to avoid all contact with the water at that location. A no contact advisory would be posted if test results show microcystin levels at least 20 ppb and there has been a report of human illness or pet death. If a no contact advisory is posted for a recreational contact area, the State may sample the lake to determine if an open water no contact advisory should be posted. Boating and fishing would not be impacted by a no contact advisory.

Once an advisory is posted, the State will periodically sample until microcystin is below acceptable-thresholds or the end of the beach season in Ohio.

Drinking Water Advisories

If microcystin, anatoxin-a, cylindrospermopsin or saxitoxin is found above acceptable thresholds in the finished water of a public drinking water system, the water system will issue a public notice to let customers know there is a drinking water advisory. Depending on the toxin level detected, the water system will issue either a **do not drink** or **do not use warning**. The public water system may remove a public notice when algal toxin levels are below the drinking water thresholds in two consecutive samples collected at least 24 hours apart.

The State will issue a news release when a no contact advisory is posted. All advisories will be listed on the web at Ohioalgaefinfo.com.