

# Harmful Algal Blooms: Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality Announces Management Plan



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The Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment Division of Environmental Quality (“DEQ”) published a document titled:

*Harmful Algal Bloom Management Plan (“Plan”)*

The *Plan* was developed by the Arkansas Harmful Algal Bloom Workgroup (“Workgroup”).

Harmful algal blooms (“HABs”) are overgrowths of algae in water. Such blooms can produce toxins that can cause illnesses in people and animals. They can occur in warm, fresh, marine, or brackish water if abundant nutrients are present.

Besides producing dangerous toxins, HABs can also:

- create dead zones in the water
- increase treatment costs for drinking water in industry facilities that need clean water

The United States Environmental Protection Agency is developing a policy for making determination of what constitutes a freshwater HAB or hypoxia determination that either has occurred and constitutes an event of national significance which provides the agency the authority to mobilize federal resources to assess and mitigate associated detrimental events (if appropriations are available.)

The Arkansas *Plan* notes that in July 2014 the United States Army Corps of Engineers closed swim beaches on Nimrod Lake due to high levels of cyanobacteria. At the time Arkansas did not have a protocol in place to respond to:

- cyanobacterial events
- assign action values
- analyze samples for the presence of toxins

The Lake Nimrod event prompted Arkansas water resource professionals to form the Workgroup. Goals of the Workgroup included:

- Forming a plan for state wide assessment of risks to public health from cyanotoxins
- Developing sampling, testing, and protocols for cyanoHABs
- Developing strategies to reduce nutrient pollution in watersheds across Arkansas to prevent future cyanoHABs

The purpose of the *Plan* is stated to be to:

. . . assist relevant organizations, agencies, and the general public in responding to potentially toxic harmful algal blooms

The *Plan* includes steps for:

- monitoring
- treatment
- communication

Components of the *Plan* include:

- CyanoHAB Overview
- Cyanobacteria
- Avoiding Exposure
- Reporting Harmful Algal Bloom
- Jar and Stick Test
- Recommended Actions
- Notification Procedures
- Appendix 1 – Contact List
- Appendix 2 – Informational Sign Example
- Appendix 3 – Advisories and Closure Sign Examples
- Appendix 4 – Arkansas Recreation CyanoHAB Response Plan Diagram
- Appendix 5 – CyanHAB Chain of Custody Sheet and Field Datasheet
- Appendix 6 – Arkansas CynaHAB Collection and Analysis Log
- Appendix 7 – Jar Test (KDHE: 2019)
- References

A copy of the *Plan* can be downloaded [here](#).