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Despite Moderate Harmful Algal Blooms Forecast, Pollution Continues to Threaten Lake Erie

CLEVELAND (June 29, 2023) — The moderate, smaller-than-average Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) outbreak predicted by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is simply a consequence of the low rainfall during the spring season. Despite the moderate forecast, communities around Lake Erie are still vulnerable to high levels of pollution, and more needs to be done to clean and protect the water for the people and wildlife who rely upon it.

"The region is not meeting pollution reduction goals to protect the drinking water, public health, jobs, and way of life for millions of people in the region," said **Gail Hesse, Great Lakes water program director for the National Wildlife Federation**. "This forecast should catalyze action to adopt management practices on the land that work for farmers and communities alike. We have solutions to reduce runoff pollution that causes Harmful Algal Blooms, and we look forward to working with elected officials in Ohio, Michigan, and across the region to act with urgency and purpose to protect our environment and economy."

"A toxic algal bloom of any size is harmful to businesses across the region who rely on recreational tourism," said **Mark Pecot, owner of 41 North Kayak Adventures in Lakewood, OH**. "Targeted action is needed to protect the Great Lakes and all who live, work, and play on our waters."

Harmful Algal Blooms outbreaks are rapid accumulations of microscopic algae that produce toxins harmful to aquatic ecosystems and human health. These blooms disrupt the ecology of the lake and can lead to adverse effects on aquatic life, recreational activities, and local economies.

Over the past 20 years, much has been invested in understanding not only the science behind what's driving the blooms but also strategies to reduce them. Scientists and engineers have developed monitoring and treatment technologies needed to protect drinking water for millions of people who rely on Lake Erie. Further research has investigated the runoff from those spring rains, monitoring everything from how and why the nutrient phosphorus leaks off of farm fields to what happens once it reaches the lake. For more information, read [Gail Hesse's latest article on HABs](#), or see the Great Lakes Business Network and National Wildlife Federation's report, "[The Impacts of Lake Erie's Harmful Algal Blooms on Great Lakes Businesses](#)."

The National Wildlife Federation and Groundwork Center for Resilient Communities are the acting facilitators and fiscal agents for the Great Lakes Business Network.

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