



Harmful Algal Blooms, also known as HABs, occurred on Black Lake in summer 2020.

HABs begin with cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae. This type of algae is capable of producing a toxic bloom that can damage your liver and digestive system, cause skin rashes, or irritate your eyes, nose, or throat, depending on your exposure. It can kill pets, livestock, and wildlife that swim in and drink from an infested lake. It's a problem that requires immediate attention so that we can continue to enjoy our Black Lake heritage.

While many of the contributors of HABs cannot be eliminated, there are some things that we, as property owners, can do. By taking simple actions to decrease nutrients that flow to the lake, we can help to reduce the size, frequency, and toxicity of these blooms. If the Black Lake community works together, we can turn the tide on Harmful Algae Blooms.

We can all be part of the solution if we:



Have a Healthy Septic System



Avoid Fertilizers



Build A Better Buffer



Self-Assess Your Property

Turn the page to read about the ways Black Lake residents are already working to prevent the spread of harmful algal blooms. Join us!



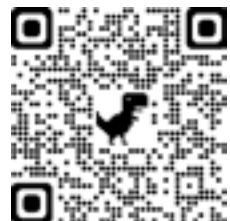
H

Have a Healthy Septic System

Poorly performing septic systems are suspected to be a key contributor to HABs on Black Lake. A leaky septic system can release nutrients into Black Lake and feed harmful algal blooms. Fresh Start is our campaign to encourage everyone to inspect their system and pump their tank this year, and to get on an ongoing program to maintain a healthy septic system.

The health department recommends regular septic system maintenance every two or three years. Regular maintenance saves money, preserves your property value, and prevents the worry of an unexpected repair. If enough of our community establishes a regular schedule of inspection and pumping, starting this year, we can make a big impact.

Participate in Fresh Start and make an appointment today!



A

Avoid Fertilizers

Reducing the application of fertilizers in our watershed will help to prevent algal blooms. Fertilizers feed the algae that turn to HABs in the same way that they feed your lawn. Rain water dissolves fertilizers, and if those dissolved nutrients are not soaked up by roots they will flow over or soak through our sandy soils and find their way into Black Lake. High levels of nutrients make water conditions right for HABs.

What can you do to avoid fertilizers? Choose hearty grass seeds developed in local conditions, use mowing methods that save water use and need less fertilizer, and switch to organic approaches to weed control. You can also test your soil to see what is lacking, use lake water to water your lawn or garden, and use compost. Compost improves the soil, retains moisture, and stays put instead of washing away in the rain. Finally, you can leave lawn clippings to decompose in your yard—they are natural fertilizers!



B

Build a Better Buffer

Once rain falls on your property, it picks up eroded soils and nutrients from pet waste, fertilizers, decaying plant matter, and other sources. Without long-rooted plants to trap stormwater, nutrients from those sources seep into the lake. Residents can prevent runoff from feeding HABs by planting trees and buffer zones in their yards to slow, divert, and infiltrate rainwater.

A natural buffer is the last line of defense to capture nutrients and starve HABs. For an easy start, stop mowing three feet away from the shoreline. You can expand your “no mow zone” each year. Or, plan for a vibrant garden full of native plants, shrubs, and trees. Some shoreline residents band together to create beautiful buffer zones full of native flowers that stretch across properties.

Buffer zones will also discourage geese and prevent shoreline erosion, which are key contributors of phosphorus!



S

Self-Assess Your Property

The Michigan Shoreland Self Assessment survey is an educational tool that can give you ideas to help you decrease nutrients that flow to the lake. From these ideas, you can put together a plan that meets your budget, pace, and priorities. Many improvement ideas are simple and low- or no-cost.

Take the property self-assessment survey developed by the Michigan Natural Shoreline Partnership.



Visit

www.mishorelandstewards.org

- click on “Rate Your Shoreland.”
- click “Start Registration.”
- make sure to use your Black Lake address.
- complete the survey.

Take charge of the flow of excess nutrients into Black Lake and protect your heritage.



HABs look like:

- green, pinhead sized particles
- green paint spill
- pea soup

Not all algal blooms are harmful, but we can't know for sure unless the bloom is tested. Report potential HABs sightings at www.blacklakepreservationsociety.org/eyes-on-the-lake by clicking on "Enter Your Observation Here." Or, contact the Environmental Assistance Center at 1-800-662-9278 or AlgaeBloom@michigan.gov. We can protect the lake together as we engage in our toughest challenge.



www.blacklakepreservationsociety.org

Black Lake Preservation Society
2014 N Saginaw Rd.
Box 260
Midland, MI 48640

This brochure was created in consultation with Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.

