

Smith Mountain Lake Association and Ferrum College Launch an Algae Bloom Reporting Tool

The Smith Mountain Lake Association (SMLA) and Ferrum College are pleased to announce the launch of a new reporting tool that will facilitate our objective of mapping and responding to sightings of excessive algae in the lake. To use this new tool (you need a Google account for it to operate) please visit <https://bit.ly/SMLAlgae>. Once you have followed the link, please enter all of the required information.

Please ensure you take a photo with your phone of the suspected algae, attach and upload it when requested. After clicking “submit” the next screen will attach your location so we know where the algae was sighted. That’s it!!

You may close the browser window of that screen. You should get a confirmation email to the email address you entered with the option of changing any of the entered data. We will get notification of your report and a representative of the SMLA or the Ferrum College Water Quality Team may contact you if additional information is needed.

Algal blooms are the result of an excess of nutrients, particularly phosphorous and nitrogen, which originate from lawn or agricultural fertilizers washing into the water. The recent spate of heavy rains in May and June has exacerbated this runoff problem. In recent weeks, a number of lake residents have noticed patches of green colored water in certain locations around the lake. These patches are an indication of what is referred to as “algal blooms”, and may be characterized by small green patches confined to the end of a cove, or in more severe cases appear as a green mat covering a somewhat larger area. In some cases, the algae contained in these blooms is harmless and it dissipates within a day or two, but certain types of Hazardous Algae Blooms (HABs) may produce toxins which can be harmful to humans, pets, and some aquatic life. For a **tutorial on algal types**, please look at this YouTube video prepared by the NY Department of Environmental Conservation. https://youtu.be/8nL_s77FV-o

The mission of the Smith Mountain Lake Association (SMLA) is to protect the water of Smith Mountain Lake and promote safe recreation. In this role, it is important for us to be able to identify when and where algal bloom events have occurred around the lake so that timely collection of water samples can be taken for further analysis. This serves two purposes: (1) to determine if the public needs to be alerted to a potential safety issue, and (2) to enable identification of potential mitigation steps that could be taken to reduce or prevent these events in the future.

Thank you for your participation and being a Steward of Smith Mountain Lake.

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