

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. A period of heavy rain may exacerbate this runoff problem, especially on properties where there is no buffer between where the lawn ends and the lake begins. Patches of green colored water may be an indication of an algal bloom. These are typically confined to the end of a cove, but in more severe cases they may appear as a green layer covering a somewhat larger area. In many cases, the algae contained in these blooms is harmless and it dissipates within a day or two, but certain types of Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs) may produce toxins which can be harmful to humans, pets, and some aquatic life. Timely reporting of these events enables us to alert the public to potentially hazardous conditions.

For a **tutorial on algal types**, please view at this YouTube video prepared by the NY Department of Environmental Conservation: https://youtu.be/8nL_s77FV-o

Smith Mountain Lake Association and Ferrum College Collaborate with Virginia Department of Health to Bring Statewide Algae Bloom Reporting Tool to Smith Mountain Lake

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 tool to report suspicious algal blooms please visit:

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/waterborne-hazards-control/harmful-algal-bloom-online-report-form/>

This link will bring you to a Virginia Department of Health (VDH) website that requests information from you regarding the location, date, time, and description of the observed algal bloom, and gives you the opportunity to include a photo of the algae, which we strongly encourage. Where the website requests the Waterbody Name, please indicate "Smith Mountain Lake" to ensure that your report is forwarded to us on a timely basis. A representative of the SMLA or the Ferrum College Water Quality Team may contact you if additional information is needed, and you will be notified of the results of the analysis of the algal bloom.

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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