

## Ohio Sea Grant Releases Summary of Second Year of ODHE Harmful Algal Bloom Research Initiative

8:00 am, Tue July 11, 2017 – The second-year report reveals that the state of Ohio has already benefited from the initiative

**COLUMBUS** – [Ohio Sea Grant \( /home \)](#), on behalf of [The Ohio State University \( http://www.osu.edu/ \)](http://www.osu.edu/), [The University of Toledo \( http://www.utoledo.edu/ \)](http://www.utoledo.edu/) and the [Ohio Department of Higher Education \( https://www.ohiohighered.org/ \)](https://www.ohiohighered.org/) (ODHE), has released the second-year research progress update for the statewide [Harmful Algal Bloom Research Initiative \( /research/collaborations/habs \)](#) (HABRI), which seeks solutions for harmful algal blooms in Ohio.

The initiative consists of more than 30 science teams working on different critical knowledge gaps identified by front-line state agencies that include the [Ohio Environmental Protection Agency \( http://www.epa.state.oh.us/ \)](http://www.epa.state.oh.us/) (OEPA), [Ohio Department of Agriculture \( http://www.agri.ohio.gov/ \)](http://www.agri.ohio.gov/) (ODA), [Ohio Department of Health \( https://www.odh.ohio.gov/ \)](https://www.odh.ohio.gov/) (ODH), and [Ohio Department of Natural Resources \( http://ohiodnr.gov/ \)](http://ohiodnr.gov/) (ODNR).

Although research is still under way, the second-year report reveals that the state of Ohio has already benefited from the initiative:

- Early warning systems in Maumee and Sandusky bays have given water treatment plants a higher-resolution picture of what's coming in from Lake Erie.
- HABRI research has provided new answers and practical guidance about producing safe drinking water for cities and towns dealing with algal toxins in their water sources.
- HABRI teams have provided the building blocks for agencies to understand the risks that algal toxins present for human health.
- HABRI has driven information sharing and priority setting between universities and agencies, positioning Ohio to better prevent and manage future crises.

"HABRI has put Ohio at the leading edge of coordinated HABs management compared to other state and even national counterparts," said Beth Messer, acting chief of the [Division of Drinking and Ground Waters \( http://www.epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/DrinkingandGroundWaters.aspx \)](http://www.epa.ohio.gov/ddagw/DrinkingandGroundWaters.aspx) for the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA). "Being able to comment on the research projects from the proposal stage onward, we can make sure that the results will be applied and scalable—and often, we see water treatment plants are able to put preliminary data to use right away."

HABRI is funded by the Ohio Department of Higher Education, with \$4 million made available for two rounds of research funding (before matching funds by participating universities) since 2015. Ohio Sea Grant, which manages the research, is [currently soliciting proposals \( /research/funding \)](#) for a third round of funding, which includes a \$500,000 match from OEPA in addition to \$2 million of ODHE funds.

"This is a complex issue, so we knew that we needed to attack it in an integrated way," said ODHE Chancellor John Carey. "We put our university assets to work answering critical operational and policy questions that state agencies need to be able to protect the public and keep our water clean."

HABRI comprises 33 expert research teams from [Bowling Green State University \( http://www.bgsu.edu/ \)](http://www.bgsu.edu/), [Central State University \( http://www.centralstate.edu/index.php \)](http://www.centralstate.edu/index.php), [Defiance College \( http://www.defiance.edu/ \)](http://www.defiance.edu/), [Heidelberg University \( http://www.heidelberg.edu/ \)](http://www.heidelberg.edu/), [Kent State University \( http://www.kent.edu/ \)](http://www.kent.edu/), [Sinclair Community College \( http://www.sinclair.edu/ \)](http://www.sinclair.edu/), the [University of Akron \( https://www.uakron.edu/ \)](https://www.uakron.edu/), the [University of Cincinnati \( http://www.uc.edu/ \)](http://www.uc.edu/), and consortium leaders The University of Toledo and The Ohio State University.



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