

Regional Water Quality Monitoring Subcommittee Meeting



**RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE
AUGUST 9, 2012 MEETING**

Potomac River Algal Bloom Presentations



- COG provided an overview of the 2011 blooms and our role
 - **Microcystis first developed in the Potomac in early July 2011 near Mattawoman Creek in Maryland and Aquia Creek in Virginia.**
 - COG held four **conference calls** throughout the summer and created a Web Site to support this algal bloom effort
 - **Map:** Drafted a comprehensive map of water quality monitoring stations that collect data to assess algae blooms
 - **Press Releases:**
 - ✦ **COG issued a press release on August 15th – Headline: Potomac Algae blooms are beginning to dissipate but dense patches still exist in localized areas.**
 - Stated that COG is working with state and local governments, universities, and scientists from around the region to monitor and provide up-to-date information on the algae blooms
 - ✦ **COG issued a press release on September 15th – Headline: Potomac River Algae Largely Dissipated – Tropical Storm Lee and Hurricane Irene** and work to leverage efforts, do same-day sampling events in order to gather additional samples and conduct analysis

Presentations from RWQMSc Members



- **Multiple presentations from members that summarized the 2011 blooms and a historical context:**
 - Cathy Wazniak and Bruce Michael from MDDNR
 - Chris Jones from GMU (monitored at Gunston Cove)
 - Lora Harris from UMCES (monitored near Blue Plains)
- **Collectively they explained**
 - Their individual monitoring programs and data collected;
 - Differences between algal blooms observed this year compared to 2011;
 - A historical context and analysis of trends related to algal blooms
 - ✦ Looked at TN, TP, DIN

Recommendations/Conclusions



- **Historical Data Analysis**
 - Nutrient declines have led to decreased blooms
 - Looked at 1985-2011, showed TN, TP, DIN declines
- **High spring inputs in 2011 set the stage for bloom**
 - 2012 not a wet at 2011 – *Microcystis* levels very low compared to 2011
 - Third highest spring fall at Little Falls
- **Toxin monitoring necessary**
 - Important component for Press Releases/ Public Health
- **Need to obtain data to complete Algal Encouragement Index**
 - Uses % sunshine, wind velocity
 - Need percent sunshine from Ronald Reagan station
- **Continued coordination with COG and other partners is very important/useful**
- **Evaluate loadings (including nutrients and alkalinity levels) at Potomac Fall Line (i.e., Chain Bridge)**
 - Will discuss our plans for this analysis

Proposed Next Steps for RWQMSc



- **Work with select members of the RWQMSc to obtain missing data for the Algal Encouragement Index**
- **Work with committee (with OWML, USGS, MDE, and others) to evaluate loadings at Chain Bridge – and for the overall Potomac**
 - incorporate this project/analysis into a proposed Potomac Water Quality Fact Sheet