

Sea Grant Leads Suffolk County Effort for Harmful Algal Bloom Mitigation Planning

Incidents of harmful algal bloom (HAB) events continue to increase in occurrence and severity in waters around Long Island. This disruption results in significant economic loss to the fishing and outdoor recreation sectors when shellfish beds are closed for harvesting and swimming restrictions are imposed on beaches.

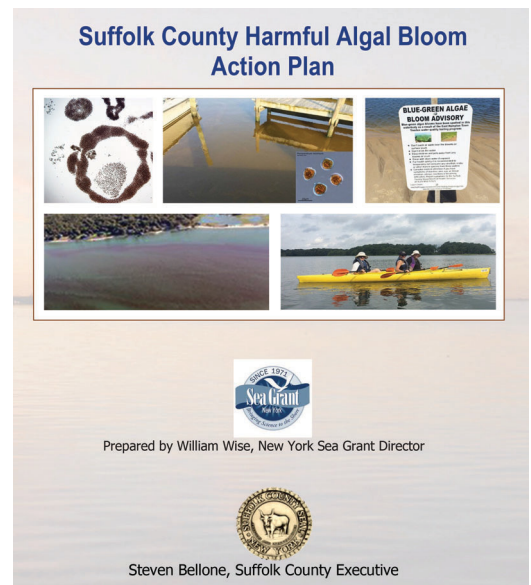
New York Sea Grant (NYSG) and the Suffolk County Department of Health Services facilitated a preliminary public consultation in 2016 to gauge the severity of the HAB problem on Long Island. This consultation resulted in a year-long discussion between HAB researchers and managers to achieve consensus about likely sources and actions necessary for nitrogen mitigation.

Under this partnership, a Suffolk County Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan was published and formally released at a public meeting in 2018.

NYSG co-chaired the meeting planning committee with membership from Suffolk County government, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) marine and freshwater departments and three estuary programs. By way of this coordination, NYSG helped to fulfill the recommendation to reestablish HAB meetings on Long Island.

The 2018 Harmful Algal Bloom Symposium attracted more than 100 individuals involved with research, government agencies that coordinate HAB response, NGOs, and the general public. Participants learned about the process leading to the development of the Suffolk County Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan, and mitigation strategies being implemented by Suffolk County government and the DEC to improve water quality.

NYSG also facilitated the first meeting of the Suffolk County HAB Technical Workgroup to review HAB monitoring to improve these actions. This secondary commitment by NYSG helped to advance another recommendation that was identified in the Suffolk County Harmful Algal Bloom Action Plan.



*More than 100 people participated in the 2018 Harmful Algal Bloom Symposium to learn about actions being conducted in Suffolk County to mitigate nitrogen impact on water quality.
Photo: NYSG/Ryan Strother*

Partners:

- Suffolk County Department of Health Services
- New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

The Sea Grant Focus Area for this project is Healthy New York Coastal Ecosystems

New York Sea Grant is a joint program of Cornell University, the State University of New York, and NOAA.

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