

Contact Information:

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 5/27/2026

Public Health Advisory: Harmful Algal Bloom Confirmed at Lake Ovid (Sleepy Hollow State Park) in Clinton County

Clinton County, MI – During routine beach monitoring at Sleepy Hollow State Park in Laingsburg, it was noted and confirmed by The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) that an algal bloom had formed and tested positive for algal toxin microcystin.

MMDHD is recommending people and pets visiting the park avoid areas of the lake where the algal bloom is present, until the bloom dissipates.

Algae are naturally occurring plant-like organisms found in water. When conditions are right (during periods of warm temperatures, lots of sun, and high nutrient content), these organisms can increase rapidly to form an algal bloom. Blooms can take on many appearances. They can be different colors, can look foamy or scummy, look like a mat on the surface of the water, look like spilled paint, have a green sheen to it, or even look clumpy. Most blooms are harmless, but some produce toxins, which can be poisonous to humans, animals, and aquatic life. It's difficult to tell by looking at a bloom if it is harmful or not, so when in doubt, keep yourself and animals out of the water. To see examples of what an algal bloom looks like, visit:

<https://www.mmdhd.org/recreational-water/> and click on "Harmful Algal Bloom Picture Guide."

Actions to take where an algal bloom is present include:

- Obey posted public health advisory signs and/or beach closings.
- Do not let people, pets, or livestock near the shore or in the water in affected areas.
- Do not let people, pets or livestock drink the water.
- Do not let people, pets, or livestock eat scum on the shore.
- Rinse off people and pets with fresh water after contact with the water.

Breathing in or swallowing water containing harmful algal blooms and their toxins may cause the following symptoms in people: diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, headache, weakness, numbness, tingly fingers, dizziness, difficulty breathing, asthma-like symptoms, runny eyes and nose, allergic reactions, sore throat, headache, and allergic reactions. Skin contact can cause rashes, blisters, or hives. If you or a loved one experiences any of these symptoms after contact with water that may have a harmful algal bloom, call your doctor right away.

Animals, especially dogs, can become ill or die after contact with a harmful algal bloom. Signs of illness include vomiting, diarrhea, staggered walking, and convulsions. If your pet or livestock

animal becomes sick after contact with water that may have a harmful algal bloom, contact your veterinarian right away.

If you think you may have found an algal bloom, you can report it to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) by emailing AlgaeBloom@michigan.gov (pictures are encouraged) or by calling 800-662-9278.

For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/habs.

About the Mid-Michigan District Health Department: *The Mid-Michigan District Health Department has proudly served the residents of Clinton, Gratiot, and Montcalm Counties since 1966. We take action to protect, maintain and improve the health of our community.*

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Public Health Advisory: Harmful Algal Bloom Suspected at Hubscher Park in Gratiot County

Gratiot County, MI – During routine beach monitoring at Paul Hubscher Park in Sumner, it was noted and suspected by The Mid-Michigan District Health Department (MMDHD) that an algal bloom had formed and tested positive for algal toxin microcystin.

MMDHD is recommending people and pets visiting the park avoid areas of the lake where the algal bloom is present, until the bloom dissipates.

Algae are naturally occurring plant-like organisms found in water. When conditions are right (during periods of warm temperatures, lots of sun, and high nutrient content), these organisms can increase rapidly to form an algal bloom. Blooms can take on many appearances. They can be different colors, can look foamy or scummy, look like a mat on the surface of the water, look like spilled paint, have a green sheen to it, or even look clumpy. Most blooms are harmless, but some produce toxins, which can be poisonous to humans, animals, and aquatic life. It's difficult to tell by looking at a bloom if it is harmful or not, so when in doubt, keep yourself and animals out of the water. To see examples of what an algal bloom looks like, visit:

<https://www.mmdhd.org/recreational-water/> and click on "Harmful Algal Bloom Picture Guide."

Actions to take where an algal bloom is present include:

- Obey posted public health advisory signs and/or beach closings.
- Do not let people, pets, or livestock near the shore or in the water in affected areas.
- Do not let people, pets or livestock drink the water.
- Do not let people, pets, or livestock eat scum on the shore.
- Rinse off people and pets with fresh water after contact with the water.

Breathing in or swallowing water containing harmful algal blooms and their toxins may cause the following symptoms in people: diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, headache, weakness, numbness, tingly fingers, dizziness, difficulty breathing, asthma-like symptoms, runny eyes and nose, allergic reactions, sore throat, headache, and allergic reactions. Skin contact can cause rashes, blisters, or hives. If you or a loved one experiences any of these symptoms after contact with water that may have a harmful algal bloom, call your doctor right away.

Animals, especially dogs, can become ill or die after contact with a harmful algal bloom. Signs of illness include vomiting, diarrhea, staggered walking, and convulsions. If your pet or livestock

animal becomes sick after contact with water that may have a harmful algal bloom, contact your veterinarian right away.

If you think you may have found an algal bloom, you can report it to the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) by emailing AlgaeBloom@michigan.gov (pictures are encouraged) or by calling 800-662-9278.

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Toxic Algal Bloom Advisory Issued at Hubscher Park

By Admin - June 3, 2026031



Michael MacDonald

Herald Editor

A harmful algal bloom was suspected at Hubscher Park in Sumner after testing showed the presence of microcystin, prompting the Mid-Michigan District Health Department to recommend people and pets avoid affected areas of the county-owned, man-made lake.

MMDHD issued a public health advisory last Wednesday after routine beach monitoring, according to Brady Guilbault, public information officer for the agency.

As of the weekend, Guilbault said the bloom appeared to still be occurring, with a water sample sent to a state laboratory.

Microcystin is a toxin produced by some blue-green algae that can pose health risks, particularly if contaminated water is swallowed.

The advisory comes at a park that has drawn past public health concerns. A sign posted at the lake states MMDHD monitors the site for E. coli bacteria discovered in 2021, with samples routinely collected once a week throughout the summer. It cautions visitors that levels may be higher after heavy or prolonged rain.

Hubscher was also under a harmful algal bloom advisory in 2023.

The Herald asked MMDHD whether the department keeps historical data on advisories, but that information was not made available by press time.

Tim Lambrecht, chair of the Gratiot County Parks and Recreation Board, said algal blooms first began occurring in county parks three years ago. Since then, a contractor has treated Reed and Hubscher parks for algae and weed growth on an as-needed basis.

The treatment is done only as needed because park officials are trying to keep swimming areas safe without harming the fish population.

“This year was the earliest we’ve had a bloom,” Lambrecht said.

He added MMDHD has since retested the water and found it to be fine. Lambrecht also cautioned that swimming in parks is always at a person’s own risk.

“Though most algae are not harmful, I can’t tell the difference, so I avoid all of it,” he said. “That’s true not just for our parks, but all bodies of water.”

Blue-green algae are a natural part of lakes, rivers and ponds. When conditions are right, the organisms can rapidly increase and form harmful blooms that last a few days, weeks or longer. They also can change in size, severity and location within the same day, and may disappear from a body of water before forming again weeks later.

Blooms can occur when temperatures are warm, water is calm and high levels of nutrients, including phosphorus or nitrogen, are present, Guilbault said. They can be caused by natural conditions and human activity, including fertilizer runoff, malfunctioning septic systems, animal manure runoff, stormwater runoff and sewage treatment plant discharges.

“So unfortunately there isn’t much we can do to proactively stop them,” Guilbault said. “We can just detect them and encourage people to avoid the water when they appear.”

Blooms can appear as foam, scum, surface mats, clumps, a green sheen or streaks that look like spilled paint,” he added.

A warning sign posted at the park advises visitors not to touch affected water or shoreline areas, swim near blooms, allow pets in the water, or boat, jet ski or fish in those areas. The sign also advises people to rinse themselves and pets after any water contact.

Exposure can cause diarrhea, vomiting, stomach pain, headache, weakness, numbness, tingling fingers, dizziness, difficulty breathing, asthma-like symptoms, runny eyes and nose, allergic reactions and sore throat, Guilbault said. Skin contact can cause rashes, blisters or hives.

Anyone who develops symptoms after contact with water that may contain a harmful algal bloom should contact a doctor.

Animals, especially dogs, can become ill or die after exposure. Signs of illness include vomiting, diarrhea, staggered walking and convulsions.

Pet owners should contact a veterinarian if an animal becomes sick after possible exposure.