



Phase II Stormwater Program

Fall 2014

Algae Boom: Why is it a Potential Problem?

The water supply in Toledo, Ohio was recently contaminated by toxins from an algae bloom in Lake Erie. The toxin, microcystin, was found to be twice the maximum allowed amount for drinking water. The City immediately issued warning to residents that the water was unsafe for drinking. A Do Not Boil alert was also issued since boiling the water would only worsen the effects because it would increase the concentration of the toxins. Local stores quickly sold out of bottled water and a state of emergency was issued by the Governor of Ohio. The ban only lasted for 3 days but shows how quickly problems can occur and how unprepared people are for such emergencies.

Check it out!!

The Erosion and Sediment Control page has a lot of information and links to other websites.

Go to:

www.phenixcityal.us, click on Departments, then Engineering & Public Works. Select Erosion & Sediment Control

Is there a particular topic you would like to see covered? Give us a call. We'd love to hear feedback and suggestions for future topics.

The Engineering Department is located at 1111 Broad St., Building B and our phone number is 334 448 2760.

Algae bloom is becoming more and more common. They occur in late summer and fall in streams, rivers, and lakes. These algae blooms use up the oxygen in the water and can kill all aquatic life in a lake. In larger lakes, there will be areas where fish cannot live while in smaller ponds and lakes it is possible for all of the fish to die. Algae blooms give off toxins that can cause major problems for humans. The bloom that affected Toledo's water supply was only rated a 5 on the NOAA Algae prediction model. The potential is there for worse problems. The City of Toledo has spent 4 million on resources to combat the problem.

Algae bloom are caused by excess nitrogen and phosphorous. These are the chemicals that are in fertilizer. Overuse and improper use of fertilizer on yards is the main cause of algae bloom. The excess fertilizer runs off into the streets and ditches and from there into our waterways.

Many people do not realize that there are two kinds of sewer systems in use. They think that all pipes lead to a water treatment plant and that all water is treated. That is not true. Sanitary sewer is the sewer system that takes wastewater from houses and business to the water

treatment plant. Storm sewer is the runoff from rain and outdoor water use that goes into drains and ditches. Storm sewer is not treated, it drains into our waterways. So everything that is placed on our streets and in our ditches winds up in the creeks and rivers. How many times

have you seen people change their oil in their driveway and just let the oil run out? That oil goes straight into a stream. How many times have you seen swimming pools emptied? Was the water de-chlorinated? If not, chlorine got into the streams and rivers. Swimming pools can only be emptied into the storm drains if no chlorine is present in the water.



Algae Bloom in Lake Erie

Do you use a leaf blower to clean your yards of loose grass clippings, leaves, and debris? Where does it go? Do you wash your car in your driveway? Where does the soapy water go? Anything that is placed or washed into the street will go down a storm drain and wind up in a stream. How many people actually wash things into the storm drains to get rid of them? By doing that, it becomes everyone's problem. Our lives depend on our streams and rivers. Many cities and communities use the rivers for their drinking water. The water is used for crops and animals. We use streams and rivers for recreation. Do you really want to swim and fish in waters that contain these toxins? What can be done to fix these problems? The EPA has set guidelines and many states and cities are implementing new regulations to combat the problem of water contamination. There are many things you can do at home. Read and follow directions on use of fertilizers and pesticides. Wash your vehicles on the grass, dispose of oils and chemicals properly, de-chlorinate pools and spa's before emptying. Learn your local regulations on water use. Every little bit helps.

For more information please contact the City of Phenix City Engineering Department. We are located at 1111 Broad St, Building B and our phone number is 334 448 2760.