



Smith Mountain Lake Harmful Algal Bloom

UPDATE (June 23, 2023)

On June 22, 2023, VDH posted an updated Status Report for the Swimming Advisory on the Blackwater arm of SML. Samples taken on June 13th indicate that unsafe levels of cyanobacteria remain at **some** sites in the Blackwater. The toxin testing results show that toxin levels are below detection limits and have improved from the first sampling event. Effectively, although cyanobacteria remain at levels considered unsafe in portions of the Blackwater arm, none of these areas are currently toxic.

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/content/uploads/sites/178/2023/06/SML-Status-Report-6.22.23-1.pdf>

DETAILS: On June 13th DEQ staff collected water samples at nine (9) locations within the Blackwater arm of SML. Three of these samples were collected at the original sites of the bloom; Kemp Ford Road, Virginia Key and Anthony Ford Boat Ramp. The Anthony Ford Boat Ramp site has improved and now contains safe levels of cyanobacteria and no toxins. The Kemp Ford Road and Virginia Key sites still contain unsafe levels of cyanobacteria but no toxins. Of the remaining six (6) sample sites, two (2) contain unsafe levels of cyanobacteria, but no toxins. The remaining four (4) samples contained cyanobacteria at safe levels and no toxins.

The Swimming Advisory has not been lifted at this time. Even though the Anthony Ford Boat Ramp site has improved, one (1) more sampling event must occur before the advisory can be lifted in this area. The remaining sites where cyanobacteria remain at unsafe levels must be sampled two (2) more times, 10 days apart, both events showing safe levels of cyanobacteria. The VDH anticipates that they will issue a new Status Report during the week of July 10th.

DEQ is scheduled to return to SML on Monday, June 26th to test areas on the Roanoke arm which were reported on the VDH HAB report portal last week.

The SMLA has invited the officials from VDH and DEQ to participate in a public information session, here at the lake, which is tentatively scheduled for Thursday July 6th. Stay tuned for more information on time and location. Meanwhile, the VDH will be preparing an informational webinar responding to the commonly asked questions that we at SMLA are hearing from you on social media and through other communications. The tentative date for this webinar is Wednesday June 28th at 11 am. More details on how to join the webinar will be provided.

While this Swimming Advisory remains in place, this does not mean you cannot enjoy the lake. Proper precautions and following the advisory from VDH regarding swimming should be followed. Recreational activities such as boating, fishing, and kayaking are all safe, if you wash with clean water following. Dogs should be kept out of the Blackwater portion of the lake. Keep an eye out for anything that looks like spilled paint, either light green or blue in color. Do not swim in water that is scummy or smells bad.

For a reminder on the advice from VDH, visit <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/waterborne-hazards-control/harmful-algal-blooms/>

For the HAB Resource Center provided by SMLA, visit <https://smlassociation.org/hab/>

For a map of the Swimming Advisory, visit <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/waterborne-hazards-control/algal-bloom-surveillance-map/>