Boating Association of Ohio provided links on Algal Bloom August 2014:

News Clips 8/6/14

 The Port Clinton News Herald

[**Tourism officials fight toxic algae fears**](http://www.portclintonnewsherald.com/story/news/local/lake-erie/2014/08/05/tourism-officials-fight-toxic-algae-fears/13646989/)

(8/6)

Toledo's weekend drinking water crisis brought international attention to a serious issue plaguing Lake Erie: toxic algae.  That's a bonus for people like Ottawa County Sanitary Engineer Kelly Frey, who has been asking for months for help, research and guidance for testing and treating drinking water for the toxin the algae produces.  But it also has a downside.  Fears of toxic green slime could keep people from visiting the Lake Erie coast, a large portion of which is not affected by harmful algal blooms, said state Sen. Randy Gardner, R-Bowling Green.  "At least today, toxic algae is not blanketing the entire Lake Erie Western Basin," he said. "Perhaps the whole country might get the idea that this is not a good place to go or a safe place to go, and that's not true.  "As far as I'm concerned, Lake Erie is still the place to be."  The harmful blue-green algae can produce microcystin, a nerve toxin that can cause liver problems and gastrointestinal illness.  Over the weekend, the Ottawa County Visitors Bureau received three calls from people concerned about whether they would have safe drinking water if they visited the area, bureau executive director Larry Fletcher said. The Put-in-Bay Chamber of Commerce also received similar calls, he said.  To combat the concern, the visitors bureau uses its social media accounts to keep people updated and continues to promote the area's attractions, Fletcher said. It also works with local businesses and residents to educate them about the algae, the toxin and how wind, waves and storms affect where algae goes on the lake.  "We try to educate people as much as possible so they have all the facts about what this is," Fletcher said. "That can keep people from making generalizations and making incorrect assumptions."  Locally, the toxin has not affected drinking water or state park beaches in Ottawa County or the Port Clinton city beach this year, officials said. East Harbor State Park and the city beach had plenty of swimmers on Sunday.  "By no means is the lake closed for business," said Mark Bruce, Ohio Department of Natural Resources spokesman. "It's still safe to boat on Lake Erie. You can still eat the fish from Lake Erie."  When a harmful algal bloom is spotted, ODNR tests the water at the beaches. If the level of microcystin exceeds 6 parts per billion, the park posts an orange advisory sign that recommends the elderly, young children and anyone with a compromised immune system not swim.  "We are not in the business of closing beaches," Bruce said. "The ultimate decision is up to the guest if they want to swim."  White signs explaining what harmful algal blooms look like have been posted at East Harbor and other state park beaches along Lake Erie. These are educational signs and do not mean the beach is under an advisory, he said.  Once a beach is under an advisory, it must have two weeks of tests where the microcystin level is below 6 parts per billion before the advisory can be lifted, Bruce said.  "Lake Erie is a dynamic body of water," he said. "Winds are a big factor on Lake Erie. If the wind shifts, it can move that algae away."  Although a bloom might dissipate, the toxin could still be in the water, requiring the continued testing before lifting an advisory. The algae releases the toxin when it dies.

The Sandusky Register

**Gardner: Algal bloom needs to be fixed**

(8/6)

State officials need to help local communities meet a historic challenge in providing clean water to their citizens, state Sen. Randy Gardner said Tuesday.  Gardner, a Bowling Green Republican, discussed the algae toxin problem in Lake Erie as he toured the Ottawa County Water Treatment Plant, which provides drinking water for Port Clinton and much of Ottawa County.  The senator, often active on Lake Erie issues, spent much of the day Tuesday studying the water safety crisis that erupted last weekend when Toledo asked its water customers not to drink the city’s water.  Toledo restored its water service Monday.  Gardner went first to the University of Toledo Lake Erie Center, then toured the Ottawa County Water Treatment Plant, then visited Sandusky’s water treatment plant. He was scheduled to end the day by attending a University of Toledo forum on toxic algae.  “This is truly a historic moment in clean water history in Ohio” Gardner said.  He said Lake Erie’s harmful algal bloom problem needs to be fixed, but that can’t be done right away. In the meantime, the public needs to be assured that drinking water drawn from the lake is safe, Gardner said.  The Ottawa County plant serves about 8,000 customers. The 9-million-gallon-a-day facility, built in 1999, serves Port Clinton, Oak Harbor, and the townships of Catawba Island, Danbury, Portage, Erie, Salem, Bay and Harris.  It also supplied emergency water last year to Carroll Township when algal bloom toxins forced the township’s own water treatment plant to shut down temporarily.  The plant had been testing for microcystin every week, as the Ohio EPA calls for, said Gino Monaco, administrator for the Ottawa County Sanitary Engineering Department. When the Toledo emergency hit, the plant began testing every day.  Monday’s results showed 0.63 micrograms   per liter of microcystin toxin the raw water the plant uses, but none in the treated water supplied to customers. The toxin has never been detected in the plant’s treated water, Monaco said.  Ottawa County water officials gave Gardner a tour of the plant and told him they need better advice from the Ohio EPA on how best to treat the water to make sure the microcystin toxin is removed.  Gardner said he’s listening. He said he’s already arranged to speak to Craig Butler, administrator of Ohio EPA, when he finishes studying the algae toxin issue Tuesday.

The microcystin crisis has also raised costs for plants along the western basin of Lake Erie, with plant officials shelling out for   frequent tests and for additional chemicals to remove the toxin from the water.  Last year, algal bloom toxins cost the plant an additional $50,000, said James Frey, Ottawa County’s sanitary engineer.  Monaco said that with the problem cropping up early this year, the additional cost is likely to range from $60,000 to $80,000.  Gardner said local communities need to be able to treat for algal bloom toxins without worrying about the cost. He said the state may have to step in to help.  The cost of treatment is dwarfed by other problems when water treatment goes wrong, Gardner said, noting that businesses in Toledo had to shut down because of the water problem.

The Toledo Blade

[**Speakers at UT forum call crisis turning point**](http://www.toledoblade.com/local/2014/08/06/Speakers-at-UT-forum-call-crisis-turning-point.html)

(8/6)

Last weekend’s algae-induced water crisis needs to become as much of a galvanizing moment for the Great Lakes region as the release of Rachel Carson’s landmark 1962 book, Silent Spring, and the 1969 Cuyahoga River fire, one of the University of Toledo’s top Lake Erie researchers said on Tuesday.