

*If you wouldn't drink it, don't dump it!*

▶ **Volume 13, Issue 2**

# WaterWatch



## Algal Blooms

Many of you may have heard about a recent toxic event at Utah Lake. Early in October, there a “slime” near the Lindon Boat Harbor on Utah Lake.

Most waters such as lakes, ponds, and slow moving streams or rivers have a certain amount of microscopic algae or bacteria. These are a natural part of the ecosystem and when they are in balance, they do not cause problems for other organisms that share the water.

There are times, however, when the conditions are ripe for rapid algal and bacterial growth. The most common conditions that con-



tribute to this are warm temperatures, calm winds, and a higher than normal concentration of nutrients, such as fertilizers.

As algae and bacteria grow, they consume the nutrients. Then, as the nutrients dissipate, the algae die. The decomposition of these organisms leads to noxious waste from the algae as well as a shortage of oxygen in the water. If these conditions are strong enough, it can lead to large events of fish being killed off or they can cause illness for larger animals and people that come in contact with the water.

To lessen the occurrence of algal blooms, be sure to clean up over-spreading of fertilizers on lawns, gardens, and farms by sweeping it up and putting it back on the fertilized areas. Never wash fertilizer into the gutter or down a storm drain. You should also clean up grass clippings and leaves from gutters.

To avoid problems of exposure to algal blooms, avoid contact with

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## Stormwater Hotline

Several years ago, the City established a stormwater hotline to allow residents to report flooding and activities that may pose a risk to stormwater quality. Over the years we have received tips on oil leaks, taxidermy solutions, food wastes and other contaminants that have been accidentally or intentionally released into storm drains, canals or streams. Here are just a few of the issues addressed because of calls to the hotline.



### Grease from a Restaurant

A contractor that recycles grease from restaurants accidentally released a tank-full of grease in the parking lot of an Orem restaurant. The spill contaminated an underground stormwater detention vault. A call to the hotline alerted City staff who investi-

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**Stormwater Hotline:**

**801-229-7577**

City of Orem Public Works

1450 W 550 North

Orem, UT 84057

801-229-7500

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the green slime. If you do come in contact with an algal bloom, watch for the following symptoms: stomach cramps, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, fever, muscle weakness, and difficulty breathing. You should see a doctor or contact poison control (800-222-1222) if you observe any of these symptoms.

To learn more, visit our website at [stormwater.orem.org](http://stormwater.orem.org) for links to the sources used to create this article.



*(Hotline Continued from front)*

gated. They held the recycling company responsible for the spill and made sure that the company cleaned up the spill quickly.

### **Paint at a Storage Facility**

A contractor working for the City was given the job to do some paint stripping on sports fields. Poor housekeeping practices led to several gallons of paint being spilt. The contractor was cited and held responsible for cleanup which included removal and replacement of groundcover materials.

### **Countertop Cutting Slurry**

City staff were alerted to a discolored slurry leaving a light industrial site. Investigation showed that the business operating inside did not have the proper connections to handle the waste from their operations. The owner installed the proper drains and

filtering system to allow him to discharge safely to the City's sanitary sewer system.

### **Carpet Cleaning Wastes**

An observant apartment resident noticed that a contractor cleaning the carpets in his complex was discharging waste waters directly into a storm drain in the parking lot. He called the hotline and the City investigated. The carpet cleaner was charged by police and was held responsible for the cleanup.

### **How Can You Help?**

There are many similar situations that occur in the City each year. If you see someone putting something in a storm drain, give us a call at 801-229-7577. We will be quick to respond. Thanks for your help in being our eyes in the community regarding water quality.

