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## NUTRIENT LEVELS BECOMING MORE OF A CONCERN

The total daily load for nutrients proposed by EPA for the Chesapeake Bay has been upheld by federal court, but concerns are growing about nutrients in other parts of our nation. There is, according to the Washington Post, a "Dead Zone" in the Gulf of Mexico which will reach 8,200 square miles this summer, more than 50% its average size. There are also concerns in Utah, where an early warning system has been established involving three algae sensors. There is also new equipment for measuring cyanotoxins at the Utah Department of Environmental Quality Laboratory. In the Northeast, New York, Vermont, and Quebec officials are preparing an updated plan limiting nutrient runoff to help improve water quality in Lake Champlain.

From around our nation:

- An oxygen-poor "dead zone" in the Gulf of Mexico, which can prompt harmful algae blooms and threaten marine life, could approach the size of New Jersey this summer, according to federal scientists, making it the third-largest the Gulf has seen. A forecast from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicts that the annual dead zone will reach an area of nearly 8,200 square miles in July, more than 50 percent larger than its average size. (Chelsea Harvey - The Washington Post)
- Algal Blooms are an increased concern in Utah.

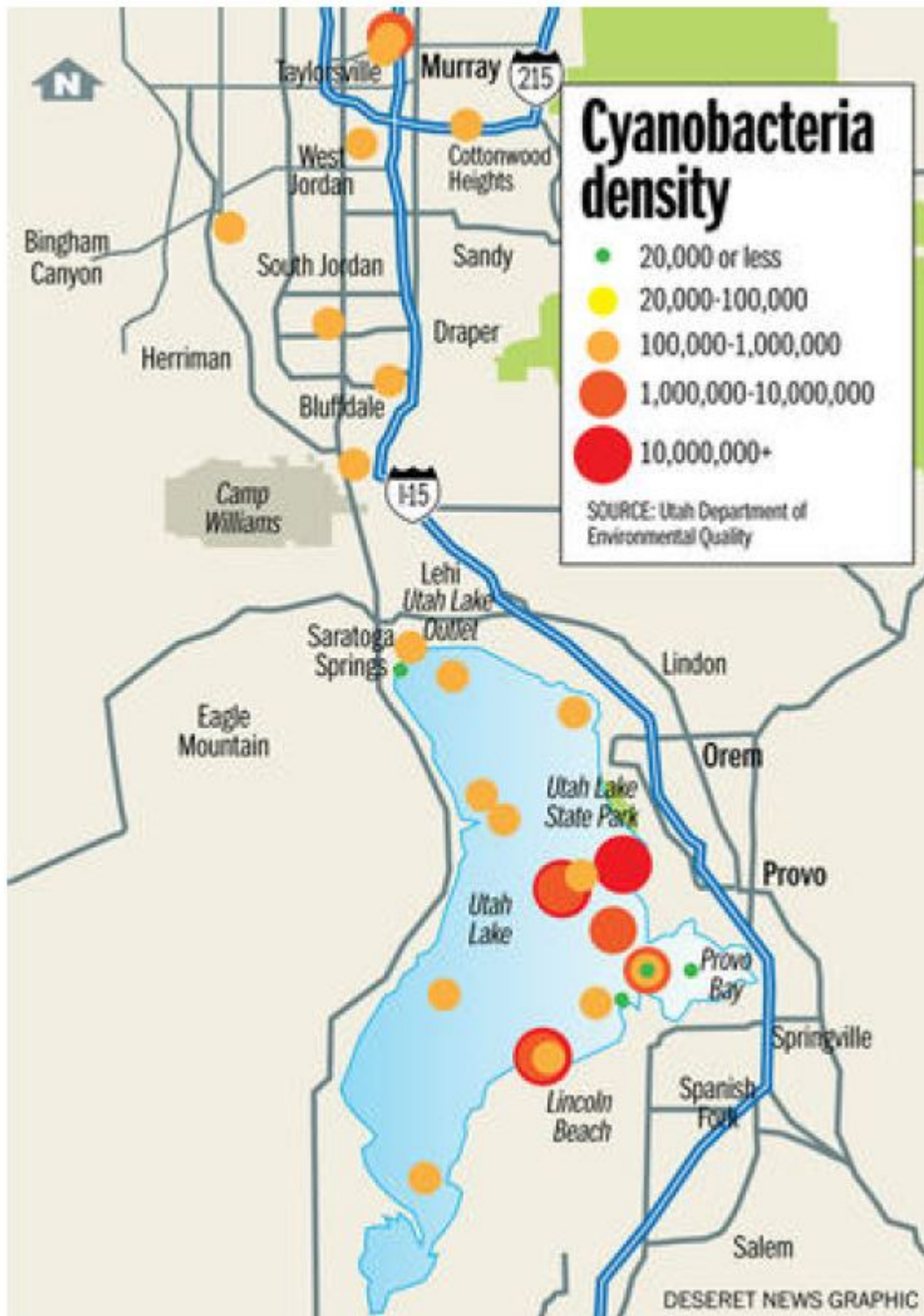
Walt Baker, head of the water quality division for the state, said an individual conducting monitoring at Utah Lake last year became violently ill which has heightened concerns over the safety of response teams.

The problem here may related to cyanobacteria, and there is an agricultural concern. While there is evidence cyanobacteria can infect plant systems, agricultural officials can't know the degree of contamination that may exist because of so many variables including the actual type of watering system used, the time between potential exposure and consumption of the food, and the density of toxins in contaminated water.

Baker said if this is a toxic species of algae, the degree of toxins in the water will increase as the single-cell plants die off. As the plants start to decompose, the dissolved oxygen levels in the water will go down. Excess organic matter in water consumes the dissolved oxygen needed by fish and other aquatic species to survive. In extreme situations, the water can become a hypoxic dead zone.

- Nationally, algal blooms impact 65 percent of the country's major estuaries, costing \$2.2 billion each year, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. There are an estimated 166 coastal hypoxic dead zones
- A state of emergency was declared last year for southern Florida after blooms from the state's largest freshwater lake, Lake Okeechobee, spread to the coastal region and prompted beach closures.

- Pyramid Lake was shut down last summer in Los Angeles County, California, and a 636-mile stretch of the Ohio River was blanketed with scum. Drinking water supplies were impacted when the intake at Lake Erie was covered with algae the previous August. (by Amy Joi O'Donoghue; Contributing - Nicole Vowell, KSL.com)





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