Harmful Algal Blooms & Cyanotoxins Provisions

Outreach & Engagement Meeting
October 23, 2026

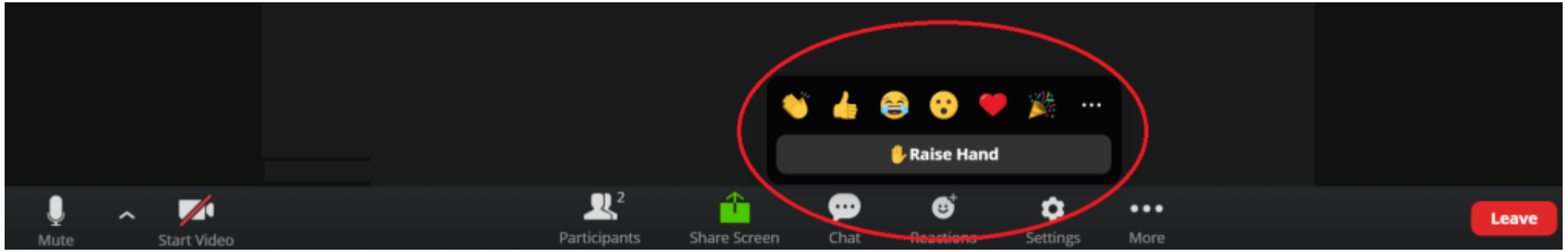


CALIFORNIA
Water Boards

Division of Water Quality

Virtual Zoom Housekeeping

- Please keep your microphone muted, unless speaking
- Please raise your virtual hand if you'd like to speak
- Please type your questions in the chat



Purpose of Today's Meeting

1. For Water Boards staff to share a high-level overview of the project.

2. For Water Boards staff to share future opportunities for engagement.

3. For everyone to share feedback, ask questions, and discuss the project.

Meeting Overview

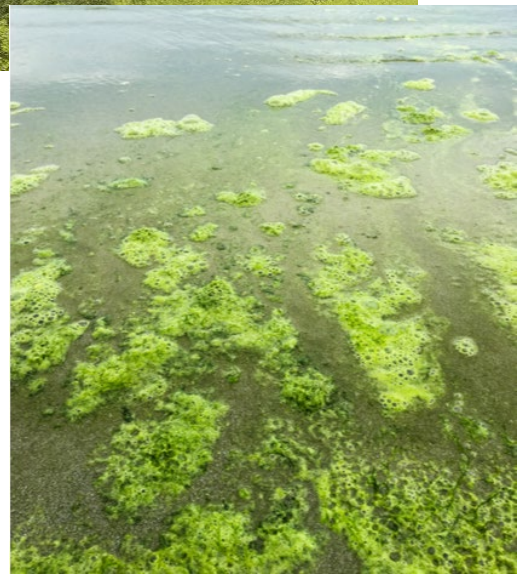
- Why the Project is Needed
- Project Scope
- Next Steps & Future Engagement Opportunities
- Open Discussion & Questions

1. Why the Project is Needed

What are Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)?

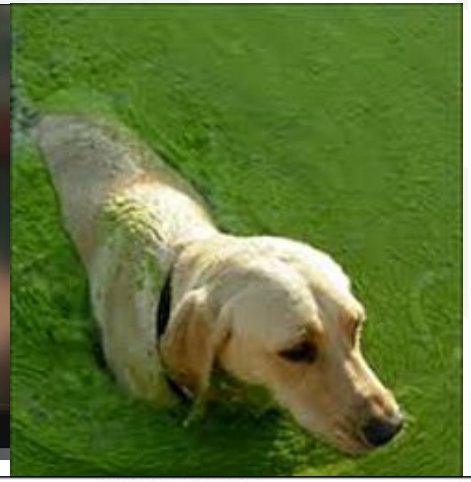
- Algae and cyanobacteria are **naturally occurring aquatic primary producers.**
- An algal bloom is an **overgrowth** of algae, cyanobacteria, or other algae-like organisms.
- Harmful algal blooms are algal blooms that cause **nuisance** or **adversely affect beneficial uses**.
- HABs can produce **cyanotoxins.**





HABs Impact Several Beneficial Uses





News Advisory

Water Boards

Harmful algal bloom "Danger" advisory issued for portions of Eastman Lake in Madera County

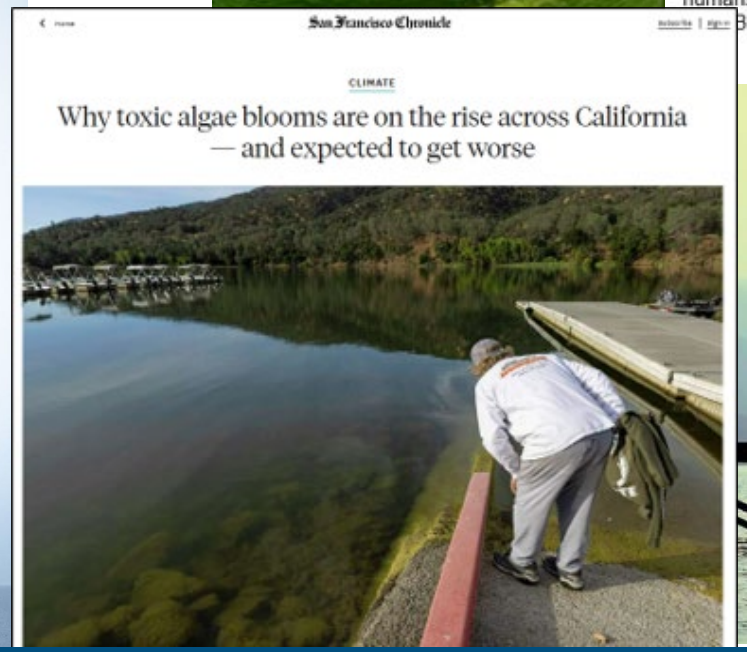
May 14, 2026 **Contact:** Blair Robertson

SACRAMENTO – The Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board and Madera County are advising visitors to avoid contact with portions of Eastman Lake due to a harmful algal bloom that could pose health risks to people and animals, especially children and dogs.

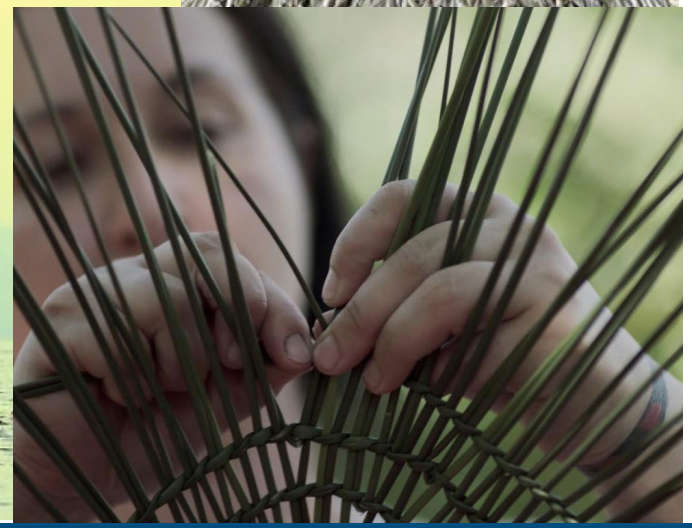
Water samples collected May 4 found elevated levels of microcystins – toxins that can sicken humans and dogs – near the west boat ramp area of the lake. Based on California's Harmful Bloom guidance, the area is now under a Danger advisory.











HABs are Increasing Across California



Satellite image of Clear Lake taken on May 15, 2024

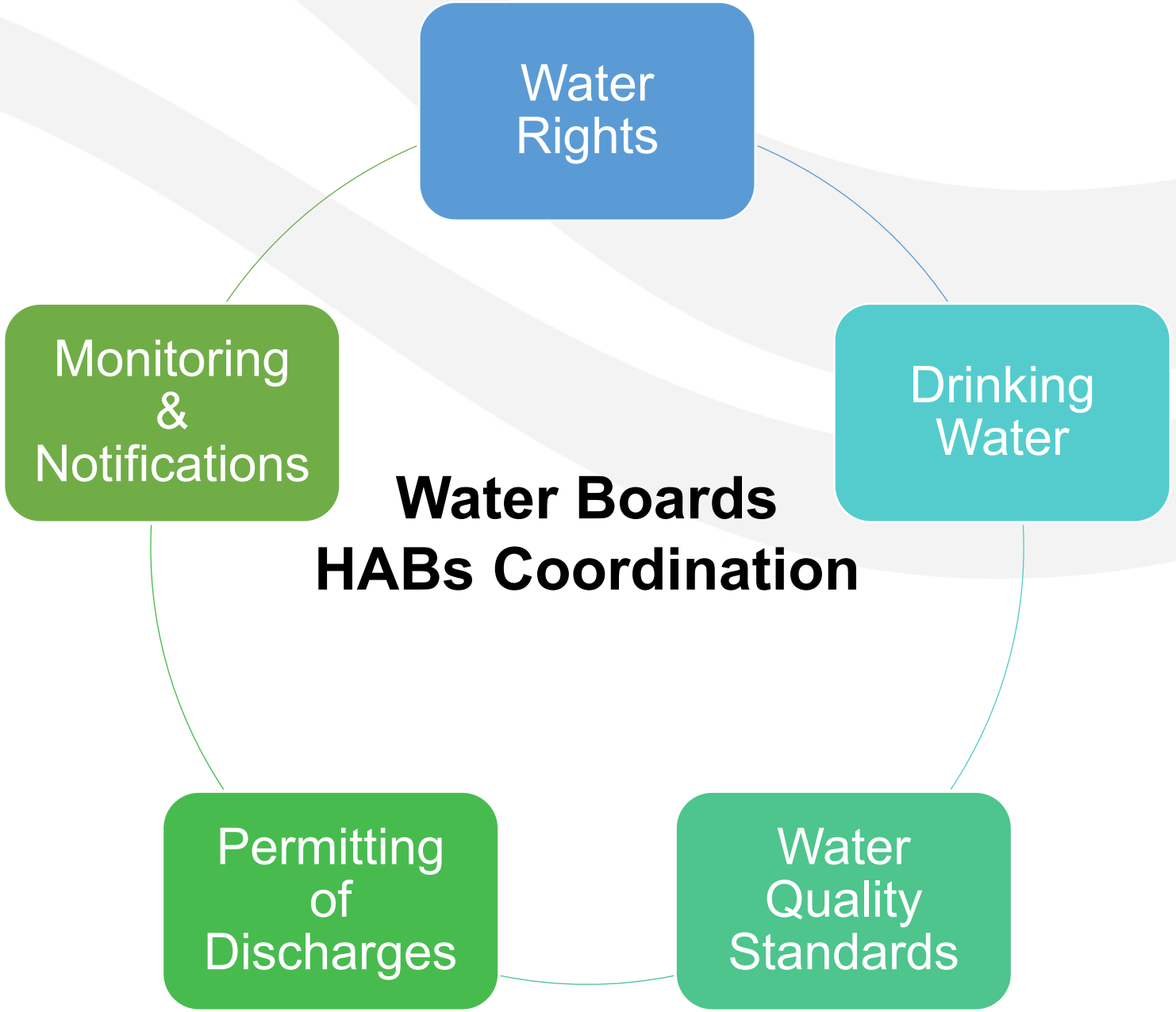
- HABs have been increasing for **40+ years**.
- HABs occur statewide and may last **6–12 months**.
- From 2018 to 2025, at least **214** freshwater HAB-related human and animal illnesses have been reported.
- Recurrent problem areas: **Clear Lake, Klamath watershed, Pinto Lake, Delta, Lake Elsinore**, and **East Bay lakes**.
- Monitoring gaps persist due to limited resources.

Why the Project is Needed

- **To better identify when an algal bloom is harmful** so that **appropriate actions can be taken to reduce the HAB**.

- The project is needed to understand:
  - **What is causing HABs.**
  - **What can be done to reduce HABs.**

- The causes and management of HABs are **likely to be different**.


Water Rights
Drinking Water
Water Quality Standards
Permitting of Discharges
Monitoring & Notifications
Water Boards HABs Coordination

Thank you!

2. Project Scope

Goal of the Project

To help **protect** and **restore** beneficial uses impacted by HABs in California's inland waters, estuaries, lagoons, and enclosed bays by establishing a statewide water quality control plan and associated state policy for water quality control.





Project Scope

The project scope includes three key components:

A. Statewide numeric objectives for cyanotoxins

B. Statewide narrative objective for HABs

C. Program of implementation and a monitoring program

Project Scope

A. Statewide numeric objectives for cyanotoxins

- Currently researching **four water column cyanotoxins**:
  - **Microcystins**
  - **Anatoxin-a**
  - **Cylindrospermopsin**
  - **Saxitoxins**

- To protect human health for **water contact recreation (REC-1)** and **drinking water (MUN)** beneficial uses.





Project Scope

B. Statewide narrative objective for HABs

- To **protect against HABs that produce other cyanotoxins**.
- To **protect for other beneficial uses**.



Project Scope

C. Program of implementation and a monitoring program

- Goals:
  - **Reduce the occurrence of HABs**.
  - **Attain the numeric and narrative objectives**.

- Will rely upon **existing tools and Water Board authorities**.

- **Monitoring HABs and public health postings** in recreational waters will continue to be critical.

What is Not in Scope

- Other waterbody types: ocean waters, open bays, and ground water
- Water quality objectives and a program of implementation for biostimulatory substances, such as nutrients
- Numeric objectives to protect all beneficial uses

3. Next Steps & Future Engagement Opportunities

Multi-Year Project Schedule

Timeframe	Milestone
2027	Public Workshop
2028	AB52 Tribal Consultation
2028	CEQA Scoping
2028	Peer Review
2029	Public Comment Period
2029	Board Hearing
2030	Board Consideration of Adoption
Available at Anytime	1:1 Meetings

Multi-Year Regulatory Process



4. Open Discussion & Questions

4. Open Discussion & Questions

1. Do you have any questions regarding the project scope?

2. What should the Water Boards be considering when developing this project?

3. How can we best engage with you throughout the development of the project?

Thank you!

Contact Information:

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Program Webpage:

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/habs-objectives/index.html