

For immediate release:

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Press wanting to go on Jet at 3 pm Aug.4 text or call 419-367-1691

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Come on the Jet at 3 pm August 4 at Toledo Yacht Club – text call 419-367-1691 to reserve a space on the boat. The Jet and other boats joining will go to the Maumee River and out to the Toledo Intake where there will be a Boat Honk Asking for Algae to be Reduced.

Background:

Hundreds of millions of dollars invested to reduce phosphorus causing harmful algae in Lake Erie are yielding zero results. Growing amount of excess untreated manure being applied to fields.

TOLEDO, OH – Saying the Lake Erie algae problem is being addressed when there is no phosphorus reduction has to stop. And investing millions and millions of dollars to reduce phosphorus without ever reporting how much phosphorus is reduced with the funds is wrong.

On 10th Anniversary of Toledo Water Crisis, Lake Erie Waterkeepers planning boat parade to Intake

On August 4, the 10th anniversary of the 2014 Toledo Water Crisis, when toxic Cyanobacteria caused the City of Toledo to warn its over 400,000 water customers to not drink, nor touch their provided water, the Lake Erie Waterkeeper organization is hosting an event to observe this somber milestone.

Elected officials, researchers, agency officials, members of the local press, Lake Erie Waterkeeper members, and other invited guests will board the Jet Express IV ferry at the Toledo Yacht Club for a trip out to the Toledo Water Intake, the source of the city's raw water.

Planned activities include leading a boat parade there to take a water sample and view the 2024 Harmful Algal Bloom, make presentations and announcements regarding the unfortunate lack of progress achieved toward fixing the problem.

The vessel will leave the Toledo Yacht Club at 3pm. Other boaters who wish to show their support for cleaning up the lake can follow the ferry in parade fashion as it passes the U.S. Coast Guard Station on the Maumee River or join in on the lake as they reach the Toledo Water Intake around 3:45 pm.

At that time, an announcement will be made to those in attendance to honk their horns in unison there to show their support for cleaning up the lake. Participants can monitor marine radio channel 68 during the ceremony.

The goal of the Lake Erie Waterkeepers commemoration of this dark chapter in Lake Erie's history is to ask boaters, fishermen and other Lake Erie lovers "After 10 years of spending millions of dollars and seeing no improvement in Lake Erie's water quality, are you tired of annually wondering....."

* Will there be a harmful algal bloom this summer?

* Where is the bloom today?

- * Can I let my dog swim in or drink where there are algae in the water?
- * Do I want to fish in green water?
- * Can I safely swim in the green water?
- * Will I get sick from contacting or breathing around green water?

Despite millions of dollars of investments through the H2Ohio Program that paid 2,600 farmers for using a Voluntary Nutrient Management Plan on their 1.8 million acres of farmland; 170 wetlands completed or in-progress; 65 wastewater treatment and septic system improvements and 9 critical water and sewer projects; why has there been no measurable progress to reduce the annual Western Basin algal bloom size?

The answer, according to several of the experts that advise the Lake Erie Waterkeeper board members is that the H2Ohio Program efforts have been overshadowed by the rampant expansion of factory livestock operations in the Maumee River watershed.

These industrial animal factories now total hundreds of thousands of animals, including dairy cows, beef cattle, hogs, and poultry that produce millions of tons of solid and liquified manure.

The operators are not held unaccountable for their pollution, as long as they keep their animal counts just under the legal thresholds that require getting a permit from the Ohio Department of Agriculture. Once they are defined as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations, they have to follow manure record-keeping and other formal water quality rules.

To skirt the rules, the same number of livestock are simply split up between more operators and numbers continue to multiply.

As a result, millions of tons of untreated animal sewage are annually being washed into Lake Erie through surface water and field drainage tiles into open ditches, streams leading into the Maumee River, and eventually into Lake Erie.

Not only are the algal blooms unsightly, but coastal communities also downstream of these facilities bear the expense of additional costs of treating toxic raw surface water to make it safe for domestic drinking use.

The Lake Erie waterkeepers want the EPA to require factory livestock operators to treat the overwhelming amount of animal manure being dumped onto rural fields as aggressively as is required for human sewage produced, in many cases, in much lower amounts in small villages.

The Lake Erie Waterkeepers has long strived to change the public's perception of the Maumee River as an unappreciated, muddy, and abused polluted stream to recognizing it as a valuable fish-filled natural resource.

On July 18, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) provided some credibility to this claim by commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Maumee River's Scenic River designation.

ODNR Director Mary Mertz commented to the dozens who gathered to celebrate the day with,

"Today, we're not just celebrating the anniversary of the scenic river designation of the Maumee River, but also the foresight of the communities and agencies who supported the designation and have served as caretakers for this magnificent river for 50 years," said ODNR Director Mary Mertz. "The high quality of the river has been maintained and not only provides habitat for native flora and fauna, it also enhances the quality of life in northwest Ohio."

ODNR further notes, "The Maumee River is an important historical and cultural asset in northwest Ohio. The river's watershed is more than 5,000 square miles and drains some of the richest farmland.

The original 1974 "scenic" designation includes 43 miles of the Maumee River from the Ohio-Indiana state line to the U.S. Route 24 bridge, west of Defiance. The scenic river section is characterized by a broad meandering floodplain. Valley walls rise sharply in comparison to the surrounding terrain. Its stream banks support a healthy, forested corridor.

An additional 53 miles, running from the U.S. Route 24 bridge west of Defiance to the U.S. Route 20/S.R. 25 bridge at Perrysburg and Maumee, was designated as "recreational.

This portion of the river changes as the floodplain further widens and its channel doubles in size and the forest cover along the bank becomes thinner. This section of the river was also designated for some of the historical features present within the river corridor."

Lake Erie Waterkeeper's Executive Director Sandy Bihn urges lovers of the lake to embrace their goal to, "Make Lake Erie Blue not Green!"

For further information on how to donate to the non-profit organization, participate in the boat parade on August 4, or order a yard sign supporting their efforts to reduce livestock manure pollution and the algal blooms, e-mail her at: sandylakeerie@aol.com

Hope you will join us on the Jet Express Sunday August 4th on Jet Express at 3 pm at Toledo Yacht Club.