



GICIA addresses common red tide questions

Commentary, Editorial, Letter to Editor, The News August 17, 2018

To the Editor:

As you know, the GICIA Alert List originated during Hurricane Charley and was reinstated during Hurricane Irma. Although the intention was to only use this list for Hurricane-related emergency information, the GICIA Board of Directors has determined that the red tide issue has reached emergency status. Therefore, we have decided to use the GICIA Emergency Alert List to provide interested residents with helpful information.

For up-to-date information, you can go to <http://myfwc.com/RedTide>.

There is a great deal of discussion regarding red tide. Unfortunately, there are also conflicting opinions, even among experts in the field of algae blooms. So, we are going to simplify the information and then provide many links (see below) where you can research the issue and draw your own conclusions.

Is the current the red tide bloom we are experiencing bad?

Yes.

Is it the worst on record?

No.

Should concerned citizens oppose the freshwater discharge of water from Lake O?

Yes.

Is the discontinuation of freshwater from Lake O going to stop the blue-green algae outbreak on and around the Calusahatchee River?

Yes.

Is it going to eliminate red tide blooms that affect our shores?

No.

And yes, there is debate as to whether the discharge from Lake O has any affect on red tide in our area of Boca Grande and parts north, but that is for another day. Self-awareness is crucial, as everyone contributes to the pollution/nutrients that find their way through stormwater management/runoff to the bay and/or Gulf and feed the algal blooms.

Yes, all of the drainage that keeps the water from standing on roads and around homes eventually flows into ditches that trickle into creeks that flow into rivers that then discharge into the bay and Gulf. And because of the systematic destruction of wetlands, there is NO natural filtration, which means all of the pollutants end up in our estuaries and oceans.

Suggestions as to what you can do as a homeowner and resident of Florida:

1. Support politicians, organizations and individuals who are working to minimize the flow of freshwater from Lake O. There are various organizations working on this issue. See below for a few links but do your own research and decide what organization you feel good about supporting.
2. Support politicians, organizations and individuals that are pushing for phosphate mining regulations to better protect our rivers.
3. Look within yourself and commit to (as individuals and households) reducing the amount of pollutants that are being contributed (reduce fertilizer and pesticide use, recycle, support golf courses that are environmentally aware, properly maintain septic systems etc.).

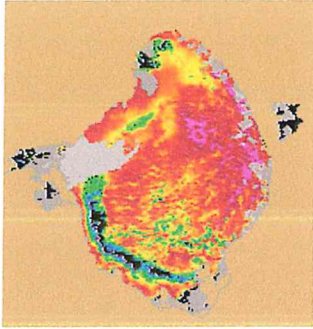
But don't stop there, because red tide is a naturally occurring organism and has been documented long before the population explosion of our great state we citizens should also be supporting scientific efforts to find ways to minimize the impact of these blooms.

In our area, Mote Marine Laboratory has worked for years to understand and protect our coast and estuary (and is currently researching such measures – see below link). There are other research organizations working on Red Tide – do some research of your own and decide for yourself what organization you feel good about supporting. There are also conservancy organizations, including the GICIA, that are purchasing land for protection and I encourage everyone to research the groups doing good work in your local areas and support them.


It is also worth while to support the proper implementation of Amendment 1, which was passed by the voters to support the State's purchase and protection of important properties. Unfortunately, there is no quick fix to the Red Tide issue but it is our hope that the media attention on this matter will unite us as a community and begin to make a difference.

Links

The Algae Bloom is Back. But Why?



Satellite imagery has indicated that a bloom of blue-green algae has formed in Lake Okeechobee.

 Florida Sea Grant

<http://www.fau.edu/newsdesk/articles/septic-system-study.php#.W2smTbUsqtv.facebook>

<http://jimbodouglass.blogspot.com/2018/07/eutrophication-word-every-floridian.html>

Note discloses truth about Boca Grande's impact from blue-green algae: There is none

<https://www.sarasotamagazine.com/articles/2017/3/15/experts-say-no-easy-fix-for-red-tide#.W2BVxfCh99Q.email>

<https://mote.org/news/article/red-tide-what-mote-is-doing-now>

<http://theevergladesstory.org/journey/>

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