

2025 POTOMAC RIVER CONFERENCE: INTEGRATING SCIENCE, POLICY & MANAGEMENT TO COMBAT HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

Wednesday, October 22, 2025, 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

George Mason University's Potomac Environmental Research and Education Center, 650 Mason Ferry Ave, Woodbridge, Va

Agenda

Coffee and Registration (8:30 am)

Opening (9:00 am)

Moderator: Michael Nardolilli, ICPRB

- **Welcome -**
 - Michael Nardolilli, Executive Director, ICPRB
 - Willem Brakel, Chair, ICPRB Commissioner (DC)
 - Amy Fowler, Interim Director, PEREC GMU

Session I - Research (9:40 am)

Moderator: Mike Selckmann, ICPRB

- **HABs in the upper Shenandoah River Basin** - Brendan Foster, USGS
- **Overview of benthic algal communities, including harmful cyanobacteria, in Shenandoah River, Virginia** - Rosalina Stancheva Christova, GMU
- **George Mason University Research Highlights**
 - **Does temperature impact anatoxin-a-production of the riverine cyanobacterium *Microcoleus*?** - Jacob Mormando, GMU
 - **Effects of nitrogen on *Microcoleus* (Cyanobacteria) growth in laboratory conditions** - Sydney Brown, GMU
 - **Algal Responses to Hydrologic Variability in the North Fork Shenandoah River, VA, USA** - Rwan Alsaadi, GMU
- **Integrative characterization of the anatoxin-a-producing benthic cyanobacterial genus *Microcoleus* in the Shenandoah River** - Bruce Cahoon, University of Virginia

Break (11:00)

Session 2 - Local Level Response (11:15 am)

Moderator: Benjamin Rhoades, Reston Association

- **Predicting HABs and other Water Quality Parameters using Remote Sensing Data** - Josh Weiss, Hazen and Sawyer
- **Fairfax County Park Authority Blue-Green Algae Bloom Response** - John Burke, Fairfax County
- **Increasing Harmful Algal Blooms with Increased Drought in Prince William, Virginia** - Veronica Tangiri and Tom Ligon, Prince William Soil & Water Conservation District
- **Societal Benefits of Cyanobacteria Harmful Algal Bloom Management** - Benjamin Simon, George Washington University
- **Poster Lightning Round** - Poster Presenters

Agenda continues on the following page

Agenda (Cont.)

Lunch & Posters (12:30 pm)

Session 3 - Government Response (1:15pm)

Moderator: Anne Spiesman, Fairfax Water

- **Detection of neurotoxins in benthic cyanobacteria mats in the Potomac River** - Cathy Wazniak, MD DNR
- **Government Panel on HAB Response**
 - Jayne Brown, Associate Director, Inspection and Enforcement, DOEE
 - Amy Hamilton, Harmful Algal Bloom Biologist, MD DNR
 - Heidi Biggs, Water Program Specialist, Clean Water Bureau, Water Quality Division, PA DEP
 - Sarah Sivers, Water Permits and Planning Manager, and Justin Loyd, Water Monitoring Supervisor, Northern Regional Office, VA DEQ
 - Mindy Neil, Assistant Director, Division of Water and Waste Management, WV DEP

Closing (2:40)

Gordon "Mike" Selckmann, ICPRB

Poster Session (2:45)

- **Do native river snails consume toxic and non-toxic *Microcoleus* strains (Cyanobacteria) from Shenandoah River, Virginia, USA?** - Mackenzie Allen, GMU
- **National Costs and Benefits of Freshwater Harmful Algal Bloom Management** - Eva Bailey, UMCES
- **A Novel Lateral Flow Assay that Detects Acetylcholine Receptor Ligand Toxin Anatoxin-a (ATX-a)** - Lance Ford, Attogene
- **Distribution and abundance of benthic mat-forming cyanobacterium *Microcoleus* in Shenandoah River, Virginia, USA** - Armon Ghaffari, GMU
- **Field guide to common macroalgae in the Shenandoah River** - Katia Holguin, GMU
- **Structural Complexity and Environmental Adaptation in Cyanobacterial Hsp90-Hsp70 Chaperone Systems** - Liqun Jiang, University of Maryland
- **North American Lake Management Society's Clean Lakes Advocacy** - Benjamin Rhoades, Reston Association/North American Lakes Management Society
- **Photosynthetic Rate and Pigment Composition of *Microseira wollei*, a toxin-producing cyanobacterium, over an annual cycle in the tidal freshwater Potomac River, VA, USA** - Hannah Toney, GMU

Continue the Conversation (optional) - Join other conference attendees for an optional happy hour at Brickmakers Cafe (9751 Ox Rd, Lorton, VA) to continue the discussion!

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